

## Remembering with Dad

While riding to the Big Star  
Dad would tell us stories  
About making soap  
With lye in the fireplace.

In the store  
I chose my customary Golden Flake Cheese Curls  
Denise made claim to a bag of Doritos  
Standing  
Watching  
In awe  
Imagining Dad as the boy  
His two little girls

Soap was here on a shelf somewhere  
But not on Mom's list today:  
onion, tomato, ground beef, sugar, ketchup  
She made spaghetti for dinner

What I wouldn't give for another story from Dad  
Him remembering soap  
And us  
Being amazed.

## **My Women**

*For "Mother" and Ma*

I come from ol' cussing ass women  
Women who laugh deep  
with hips and cigarettes  
My women  
trade beer for ice cream  
for their kids  
Sometimes they send their kids  
to live with their fathers  
My women  
don't cry  
They  
lock themselves in rooms  
They  
Sit quietly.  
And sleep.  
My women  
watch cars go by from their upstairs windows  
They  
call just to say hey  
and to tell you that they made stew  
that didn't turn out right.

## The Hardest Thing About Loving Night

I will kiss light upon your skin  
You will fall in love and into a deep sleep  
My light  
Just for the night

I will sleep underneath my moon tonight.

You belong to your world

I long to be in your sky  
Another moon  
Your moon

I am here  
Always

I belong with you.

I am too  
Shadows of time  
Memories  
Fossils  
Histories  
Footsteps  
Whispers

I know.

Lay with me until we are full  
Take my light tonight  
Let it touch  
Let it last

What is and what was.  
Eternal and fragile we both are.

It is all that I have.

This is all I get.

## **Better Half**

I can always tell what parts of you that you love the most.

The parts that make you more  
Half this  
Part that  
Shine lights on those parts  
Point to those parts  
Put frames around those parts  
Place them carefully on mantles

Revere those parts.

The parts of you that aren't like my parts  
The dark parts  
Curly parts  
The parts that are wide  
The parts with roots in Alabama  
And Africa

Quiet those parts.

Half Black  
Part that  
No light to shine there  
No frames for me  
No mantle for mine  
No worship of the parts that made me  
That make me

In our body  
Light and shadow  
Honor and shame  
Remembering ways to forget  
Loving the ways we hate  
What made us

Just to be better than Black.

## **Pasts, Present, and Futures**

I've read skies  
Sunny  
With thick clouds  
And  
Blinding blues  
Birds fly and mock  
Ground dwellers  
who squint from below.

I've watched skies  
Stormy  
With dark clouds  
Where rain falls  
On  
Bowed heads  
that watch the ground and  
walk in circles.

I've waded skies  
Flowing  
With clouds made of silk  
Drank them  
Deep  
While dreaming  
Of new kisses and the possibilities of  
You.