

**Poems:**

**Fairy Tales as Metaphor of Black Girlhood**

Black girls must fight for their happy endings, our lives  
are not love letters, sometimes we feel so weak some of us  
don't make it, there are histories written on our tears, falling  
for generations over a land full of monstrous acts against  
our bodies, our minds, & our souls. Black girls do not seek  
their knight in shining armor, their Prince Charming has  
been killed by the police, imprisoned, or betrayed by one  
of his own, Black girls are left alone to fend for themselves  
& we're told to be strong, but our strength has been poisoned  
like Snow White's apple, because our landscape is steeped  
with so much pain that love seems like a land called far, far away &  
Black girls travel down a yellow brick road that is cracked,  
We only know to go north with guidance from  
women who know this journey, sistas as fairy godmothers,  
passing on remedies to ease our pain & transcend it, their magic  
a narrative of survival, honoring traditions, reminding us  
we, too, are goddesses

**Juxtaposing the Black Girl & the Abuse**

one is stone & the other is moss

one connects & the other is connecting

one is a force & the other is a flower

with petals, wilting & curling

one's whole life is a timeline

both are trying to find someone who will listen

home is a battlefield

both are the subject of conversation

some want to restrain them/some want them to use restraint

& not let the bruises show

## **I'm Broken, But Still Beautiful**

My origins can be discovered  
by sifting through the fragments

God help this child that is me  
a girl - woman trying to be a boss

I am not perfect. I was born a crime.  
Black & female on this wretched Earth

A long way down from perfection  
my world is as wild as the wind

I crave radiance from the holder of dreams  
yet, my grit isn't enough

I'm still trying to piece myself together  
because I was born bright like a torch

This is what happens when a woman falls  
my soul becomes ice

My life is constantly in motion  
There is no option B for me

This is what my truth sounds like  
an awkward ember in the ashes

Every day is a struggle to be epic  
because I can never look back

## **Incognegro**

The subway moves between shadow & brilliance,  
the people in their own zones, reading, listening to music, snoozing  
in their seats, waiting for their stop to approach, no one notices me,  
everyone notices me, I am a body in motion, within motion, trying  
to reach a destination I'm not sure I want to get to, a train is a container or a coffin,  
depending on how you view it or be viewed within it, this movement turns  
the body into a blur, whisking molecules, bits of skin, germs that sicken,  
we all want to get where we are going without stopping to deal  
with the daily obstacles of life, to be unseen by judging eyes  
or the nosiness of others, to live in anonymity, an unknown,  
an X factor, to be Black is to be seen & unseen  
like a shadow constantly moving between light & dark

## **Belonging**

My people had a solitary history  
living with every good intention.  
I remember when we were birds  
unlimited we were each & every day.

But then we fell from the sky  
into the chifon trenches  
into the bitter earth, our scars  
revealed the weight of our limitations.

We feel the abolition of stones  
against our flesh, we, the inheritors of trees,  
praying for our broken wings, twisting  
in the soil, limiting our fates.

We are not dying here tonight  
or any night with the ticking seconds  
turning into minutes chiming into hours,  
as night falls on us gilded ones. Our souls release.