

"Untitled" by Sarah Joseph

She will be rendered love
but not too much love
because she's too black
her skin is dark
dark like the soil
Dark like the inexorable darkness that we fear and in darkness there is no light
she will be told
Pretty woman
straight hair
Ugly women
nappy Afro
sorry
but you're just not pretty enough
so she will spend hours in the bathroom trying to wash off the tally marked lashes off her back in
hope that her skin will somehow wash off too and she will spend hours in school
but never in class because she feels her education is not going to make a difference
all the arithmetic of their curricular
Is not going to make a difference
add up the deaths in the ghetto
to those
inexistent amber alerts that never really search for those amber colored girls
then maybe
just maybe
you might get the approximate outcome to how much she does not give a damn
it is because if this she is shunned
it is because of this she is placed on the sidelines
labeled a dropout by 18
incarcerated by the age of 18
Where she might met her own demons
a man
a Christian man
whose only intent is how low her head can bow
how open her mouth can crucify
But they don't realize she has a mind that alone can resurrect u
She is the type to see these things
she is the type to paint skyscrapers on her fingertips
just so she can show
how much she can carry with her hands
she has written stories with those hands
can't u see
she will be
a menace to society
can't u see
that it doesn't matter if a feminist,
a liberal,
a black girl who understands that the impression of skin color is just but an allusion
but as long as she's black that's as good as a percent in the systematic incarceration rate
and on top of that she's dark skin
so even now she's lessened by a statistic

She will be rendered power
But silenced
by a chorus of fear that she will be called out by her name
Kinks
Sideline
Christian
She will feel like nothing
no one will tell her she's beautiful
she'd have to realize it herself
she will realize it in her tally marked lashes and how the kinks of her hair perfectly align to the
roots of her people
The trials it redeems
the tear fold of a black child
another crack house for a child
She will realize the tally marks
The lashes marks one by one
Or how luminescent her skin is whenever it hits the sun
Shapes the iridescence in the rareness of its complexion and it's not a black thing but it's bronze
And if u grave your ears on her thighs you will hear a burning prophecy
The crying souls of newly born
Saying that my skin
is not dark
it's light
like the sun
and my face shines brighter than the moon
my color is dark
dark like the soil
The same soil that gave comfort to those rainy nights, the march to Birmingham
But no displeasure because they knew they had to move on
Dark like the tree trunks
That arranged itself for the branching of fruits
The multiply
The lined up bodies
Where the crows springed to
But the growth was never seasonal
I am the voice of the child you succumbed by a perpetuation to oppression
The 2/5th compromise
The hands raised up that you mistook for a gang sign
I walk with the resemblance of god and just by a shade
I will not be another statistic
in your goddamn
oppressive
system.