

brown skinned girl

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brown skinned girl,
lips flushed with color and eyes deep as the Nile,
hidden under bushels of midnight curls,
shields her eyes under rose colored frames.
head bobbing to Kendrick, foot tapping to Michael,
soul searching for Aretha, heart yearning for Tupac.

brown skinned girl, tracing patterns through torn jeans,
tying up Bantu knots and painting statues of settlers with cocoa butter,
speaking to God with every finna, gunna, holla,
fluent in ebonics, fluent in the sound of harlem, new orleans, memphis.
braiding hair to scalp and to soul,
wrapping up her work in silk headscarves and
tying ribbons around manicured fingertips.

brown skinned girl,
raised in the church, raised in the home, raised in the streets,
family matters and saturday afternoon cookouts.
watching auntie make sweet potato pie,
falling in dance lines and falling in love,
she raises the ground to the sky

and worships the sanctity of Black Girlhood.

brown skinned girl,

melanin mixed with gold, glowing,

tongue like a bullet with the words she speaks.

wide brown eyes,

fierce as everlasting fire,

swift as the raging rivers,

strong as the mother of the earth.