

TEXTURE

Bianca Spriggs

First comes the look,
the heightened eyebrow
accompanying a perplexed stare.

A change of breath.

I know what's coming.
I see it in the meandering eyes
that search for something,
some deeper access to the spiritual world.

Because if there is such a thing,
we look like we might have an inner eye.
We sometimes wear head wraps
and large hoop earrings,
and at times seem to undulate
when we walk.

The liminal and maternal side of God
must reside somewhere within
the nuances of our names, our eyes and lips;
between our thighs must be translated
through our tongues,
our melanin,
the elusive nature of our hair.

It's gotten so I can feel
the look from behind
but recognize it face to face too
as someone reaches
without words
to touch.

Then, suddenly, there are fingers
framing and tangled in my locks,
and before locks,
fingers would brush up and
get caught in my shoulder's length
of crinkly kinks or braids.

And for a moment, fleshy shackles
absorb all of the good things
and sorrow I store there,
and until I tilt away,
someone rubs gently
the texture of my hair
as if rubbing velvet
or some other precious fabric
for the first time.

They exhale softly,
delighted,
not really remembering I am there,
not noticing my version of a perplexed stare.

It doesn't feel like I thought it would.

It doesn't feel like I thought to be petted
by strangers and sometimes friends
as it occurs to me
that I don't know where
their fingers have been.