

2020 POETRY OURSELVES HONORABLE MENTION

Forget

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The morning light dances on the planes of her face.
She is gentle and soft-spoken, not yet aware of her race-
She is a black girl,
Born into a cruel world,
A world that will teach her to hide who she is,
A world that will teach her to be silent
But she is nothing but violent
Every word that breaks free of the trap that is her mouth
Every heave of air pushing, heaving, trembling as she races the clock
The timer is counting down, each second a mockery
She is running out of time.
Her words become nothing,
Pushing and pulling together
Long run-ons that make no sense
That have no meaningful essence
That blindly switch between past and present tense
Because she has forgotten herself.
She has forgotten who she used to be,
Who she wants to be,
Who she IS,
She keeps talking because she is afraid of silence
She keeps yelling because it's the only way she will be heard
She keeps gasping for breath to remind the world that she is still here.
And sometimes the world listens,
In the moment of time when she stands and walks up to the podium-
The room is silent.
She opens her mouth wide-
So wide you can see all the questions she's locked up
All the dreams she doesn't share
All the things she's too scared to admit
And she screams-
And keeps going
Keeps screaming
Keeps breathing
Keeps heaving
Making sure they hear her
Making sure they remember
Making sure this scream, is one they will never forget.