

# Momentary

Algiers

Where we're from  
We're born out of a cloud of witnesses  
Who watched or walked through cotton-rich  
Swamp-sick streets  
Clamoring for freedom  
Who snuck along the piny margins  
Meeting under the moon and moss  
Just far enough out of sight  
Of the white columns and patrolling guns  
Laying out plans at the feet of the stars  
Looking upward for a glinting nod  
A beam of dusty light to mark the way

Put us under  
And when  
The moment is passed  
Slowly bring us back

And if it drags on  
No need for alarm  
Disconnect us

This is only momentary  
Swayed into a trance  
This is just monetary  
We are all so innocent

Take your pleasure or pain  
Whatever you lust  
It comes right to your door  
Except if the messenger  
Dare show his face  
It's yours on a platter

This is only momentary  
Flay us for our skin  
This is just monetary  
We are all so innocent and dumb

When we die  
The neighbors will bring casseroles  
Drag shows will be held in our honor  
Prayers will be shuttled upwards  
Like paper boats slipped up onto a pond by patient hands  
Fluttering in clouds of stars and interstate exhaust  
In Urdu  
In Muskogee  
In Spanish  
In Somali  
The community centers and union halls  
Will swell with songs that were old before we were born  
The marchers in the boulevard will take their knee  
Raise their fist  
Drop their face  
Silent in the midday traffic  
Like a stone in a quick river  
When we die

Our beloved  
Our kinfolk  
Fear not  
We rise