

BALM OF THE ANCESTORS

*LaTrina M. Johnson-Brown*¹

Bowed head, lowered eyes, contrite spirit
In a shade of Black that wasn't quite lauded yet
The girl who needed to know life beyond what the gospels had to offer
Submerged, subdued, subversive
Girl, it's all for you
For you
You're expanding and taking up space
Unchained, immeasurable, and unrepentant
I'm writing
I'm saying
I'm thinking of what you need to survive
The grey walls are cold and the black night is deep
The gaps of silence that you hear are your savior, so savor Savannah's
salty sea air in your nostrils
Her ocean - she beckons you. . .to baptize you. .to rebirth you. .so you
can be who you need to be
Girl, I'm writing for you. I'm rooting you. I'm rooted for you.
I need to see you exalted, whole, and mended
I need to hear your heart beat again. When I place my ear to your chest, I
want to hear the resistance pulsating through your body.
Reimagine the life of you. . .one in which the April showers of joy drench
you in salvation and you bathe in the balm of the ancestors.
Look around - you are here alone.
There are no copies
You are the original
There still exists a world that needs you and me to reunite
In my dreams, we build a tomorrow together
From the ashes of the fire that burns deep in me

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From the sacred tears that paint my face

I was worried that you'd never have a story and a home in the pages of
history

I was worried that I wouldn't be able capture your unconquerable spirit
in prose

I've exhaled and I see you in me.

I'll sing, I'll write, I'll pray - for you.

You're the masterpiece...the muse that has mastered peace

In me.

A debt I shall never repay

To a girl who never knew that to her even the cosmos kneeled

Today - I'm writing for you. . .the girl to whom I owe me.