

Truths Split

lips, my lips,
pull apart like gum stretched from sidewalk to shoe.
my mouth agape. words taken from me.

skin, my skin,
kissed darker by my ancestors,
blends and blurs into the pockets of rooms
purged of furniture.

i'm sometimes prized, exoticized.
other times
neglected, rejected,
depending on the night, on the drink,
if i'm pretty for a black girl.

nonstop validating,
talked through not talked to.
stuck between choosing me
or you.

you want them
i'm not like them.
you don't like me,
you just want to try me.

a statistic, a grade,
another face for the school website.

target practice,
ego boost,
a desk chair
swapped for a jail bed.

—dry lips.
drying, dying
from low use,
too much use.