

“Praise Song” by Hafizah Augustus Geter

After she died, I'd catch her
stuffing my nose with pine needles and oak,
staring off into the shadows of early morning.
Me, too jetlagged for the smells a ghost leaves behind.
The tailor of histories,
my mother sewed our Black Barbies and Kens
Nigerian clothes, her mind so tight against
the stitching, that in precision, she looked mean
as [], too. My mother's laugh was a record skipping,
so deep she left nicks in the vinyl.
See? Even in death, she wants to be fable.
I don't know what fathers teach sons,
but I am moving my mother
to a land where grief is no longer
gruesome. She loved top 40, yacht rock,
driving in daylight with the wind
wa-wa-ing through her cracked window
like Allah blowing breath
over the open bottle neck of our living.
She knew ninety-nine names for God,
and yet how do I remember her—
as what no god could make?