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## Nakesha, Naked

Molly Boyce

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## HEAVY IN MY JESUS YEAR

R. Flowers Rivera

I am a nation of disbelievers. One of many  
Who only comes to geography by traveling.  
Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, so they told me  
The mothering instinct would come.

The stick turned a hesitant blue.

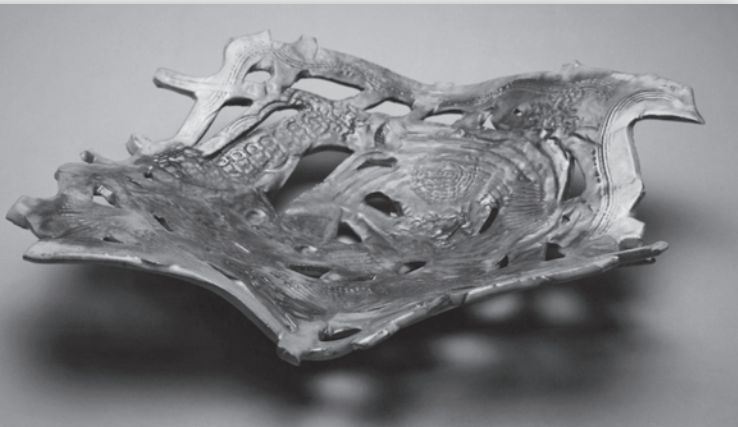
Cabbages, sweet onions, garlic, cayenne, and  
Beans. In some Third World nightmare,  
Women calling themselves friend admonished me to  
Straight-arm all comfort foods.

Brown women everywhere howled their sympathies.

You are born. The telling is easier when I forget  
The gibbous bloom of your crown cut free of living rock:  
Broken water, fever, infection. Even flawed logic can be valid.  
Pain has no reason, but to give it voice.

A gasp. Months, no sleep. I dreamt of leaving your father.

Stretch marks mar my breasts like much in a dry river-  
Bed – forsaken places made sane by a red August  
Heat. This summer, a woman with my face did  
The unspeakable, she crucified the last fairytale.



NEPTUNE'S NET Eunice Bridges

## NAKESHA, NAKED (oh, how I knew her shame)

Molly Boyce

there was this need in her  
wrapped inside and outside  
her core inordinate desire,

enrapt within his happiness,  
engorged by love's intense  
pain and morbid false regret

his agent of wants, wishes,  
needs yet only mutely satisfied  
by how he made her feel,

wanton though she appeared  
there remained a naiveté  
about her lust to take him

longingly, greedily, and often  
upon their fine feather bed,  
ripe passion that dissuaded her

from looking into his heart,  
even when repressed repeatedly  
by his callous hands in the dark