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Sweet Sadness

Lena Sarr

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Rosa Parks

R. Scott Yarbrough

You tell me my ebony skin is like kilned ivory
Shiny and honed smooth by Jim Crow who keeps me
In my place. And you tell me that my music is too
Sad for your white soul, yet you digest it like a meal
And ship it to England and disguise it in Rolling Stones
Or gyrate it into the hips of a snarling Memphis boy. You tell
Me my place is at the back of the bus where I can sit with
My own kind, even though you often leave me standing in
The cold Alabama winter after I pay, telling me you're "full-up."

I bet that bus driver thought he was just going
to have another drive under the mesmerizing
drone of his everydayness, his rearview seeing only white.

Well today I'm full-up. Today I am tired of eating Crow
and providing your music and tending your children
and stitching together the fabric of your souring souls. I think
I'll rest these two hundred years of oppression right up
Front so everyone can see my ebony skin is like kilned
Ivory: heavy and hard but willing to mold a path through
The wilderness for my children to freely follow.

Sweet Sadness

Lena Sarr

Happy they were when I received the I-20.
Happy they were when I got my visa.
Happy they were that I was going to college.
I was so excited to go discover a new world.
I was so happy about the thought to see my brothers.
But, the day packing started.
The day I realized that I would have to be by myself:
When I will wake up, back from school, before going to bed,
Nobody will be by my side.
No more cook, no driver, no maid in the house to help me out.
Joy quickly changed to fear and I had a fever that night.
Should I go or stay?
Mother, do not try to hide from me; I know that you cry.
Father, do not turn your head from me; I know that you suffer.
Happy and sad were we at the same time.
The day expected arrived too soon.
I was leaving my country, shared by different emotions.
By this cold and unforgettable night I was leaving
my house, my cozy little nest, my parents.
Mum, your little rose is uprooted and moved to a new vase.
Dad, from now on your bird will have to find her milk by herself.
Your little, delicate bird has left to a new sky.
She will open her wings and fly in the wind of life.

Yellow House by Nick Young