

MOLLY

Marian Younge

I prayed for you to come: asked for you every July when my mother would visit
I described you to her, knowing that somehow the fates would bring you two together
And so when the day arrived for you to be mine, I cherished you.

I peered into your pink and purple box and saw all that I had imagined you to be,
I saw your semblance in that picture above the living room mantle and in that moment I
knew that if the God that made me looked like you then you must have been closer to his
heart than I ever was

That somehow he had made a mistake in the molding of my sculpture: added a bit more
of that dark, rich African clay than he would have liked
But in His perfection decided to send me out anyway, working to create others like you
who were more like him

I called you Molly

I held you-my new I-DOLL

I cradled you, loved you like a mother loves a child

I basked in your glossy painted nails, your delicate porcelain exterior, your beautifully
long lashes and your prim and polished outfit.

I looked into the large white ceramic spheres welded into your face and saw my
reflection in the sea of your bright blue eyes.

I adorned you with colorful ankara fabrics, cowry shells and kente strips left behind from
my mother's favorite cloth trying to make you look more like me.

I attempted to cornrow your hair-loving you tenderly even as your silky strands
stubbornly escaped from my thick brown fingers.

I thought of bleaching my skin to look more like you: it would only be befitting of my
princess to have a mother that was as beautiful as she

And so you can imagine my despair when I saw you woefully take your last breath of air.
It was the afternoon of Easter Sunday and you were perched on your pedestal on my bed.
I had just dressed you for the Lord's glorious day and you were ready to be taken away.

My brother ran across the room and in an effort to play a prank knocked you to the
ground.

In an instant you were shattered into a thousand pieces

And somehow the resurrection of my Lord could not mask the unnerving reality that you
would never again see this world

You see, the problem with making idols out of paste and white clay is that they are
merely made to disintegrate
They are like flakes of snow: crystalline exteriors fading into liquid remnants at the whiff
of a passing wind or the glare of the shining sun
Like falling rose petals they begin as pretty portraits of perfection only to wilt in time
Sharp thorns piercing flesh, soul and spirit
They strip of that essence...that sustaining core running through the veins of bodies made
of exquisite design in shapes of brown, tan, yellow, red and white.

And so I began to put your pieces together
Bit by bit, I picked up your remnants
Gingerly packing you into your package-now-turned coffin
Slowly beginning the painstaking process of loving myself, my skin
Black and all