

## **To be black, to be woman**

I'm black and I'm woman when I wake up in the morning

When I eat breakfast, brush my teeth, comb my hair, put on my clothes, unlock my door

And Suddenly I'm not black and woman anymore

Suddenly I'm too black to be woman, but not man enough to be black

I'm woman when I'm with man

But black when I'm with woman

I'm woman when I wear tight clothes and am convenient for man

But black when I'm pretty for a black girl aka ugly for a white girl

I'm black and not pretty enough for man

even though my woman is wearing tight clothes

I'm woman when I am shy

But black when I am confident and there for love myself a little too much

I'm woman when I am not a threat

But black when I speak my mind

I'm woman when old man comments on my skirt, my dress, my jeans, my ski suit

But I am not even revealing an ounce of my skin

I'm black when I say 'fuck you' to old man

and in response need to listen to every slur known to exist

And now I

Can't speak up because I'm woman and would not be taken seriously

Can't speak up because I'm black and would be angry

Can't speak up because I'm woman and nothing but object

Can't speak up because I'm black and would be animal

Can't speak up because I'm woman and would be sensitive

Can't speak up because I'm black and would be criminal

Can't speak up because I'm woman and would be murdered because man is angry

Can't speak up because I'm black and would be murdered because white is angry

Can't speak up because I'm black and I'm woman and I'm terrified

Can't speak up because I'm black and I'm woman and now dead

And my black and my woman could be found dead in a ditch

but still my black and my woman would not have the same funeral,

funerals that would never be attended be the same people,

people that would never be seen together,

people that swore they loved me—

the only ones weeping at my graves are the ones that live the same lives as me,

knowing that black and woman is a death sentence from the start,

one that ensures two ready set caskets waiting to be filled every day

in two graves dug in two different graveyards