

THRESH & HOLD

BY MARLANDA DEKINE

Flooding in now, I rest
so I can harvest new worlds,
a ready net so still.

Without rest, I cannot hear
my Grandma Lizzie and my Grandma Thelma. Without rest,
I cannot hear my Aunt Carolyn composing for her Lord.
I cannot hear my Aunt Angie cussin'
angels while guiding me across memoried waters.

I am learning what *real* power is.

A year ago, I wouldn't have
felt our bright red, black, green chords of spirit calling.
Women in my family have dropped dead one day
and the family kept right on working.

I rest like I have tomorrows
growing on a vine outside. I rest
like a horned owl.

My ancestors turned into machines
by *rice is booming in Georgetown, sale extravaganza*.
I rest beneath my Grandma Lizzie's oil-dressed magnolia
painted white and green at the trunk. I risk surrender to her dark
sashay.

West Africa caught my granddaddy Silas by the brain.

Here's a cosmos I picked
from his field of grasses. Women in my family
have dropped dead one day, purple-gowned
and waiting for us on the next. ♡

Marlanda Dekine is a poet and author obsessed with ancestry, memory, and the process of staying within one's own body. Their poems have been published or are forthcoming in the Poetry Out Loud Anthology, POETRY Magazine, Emergence Magazine, Southern Humanities Review, and Oxford American. This poem appears in their collection Thresh & Hold, forthcoming from Hub City Press on March 29, 2022.

