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Crown of Coils

Kendra Flournoy

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Crown of Coils

BIP!

BAP!

BOP!

The sounds I hear when I rake through my mane.

A mane often seen
by the captors,
by the masters,
by Mr. Charlie,
and by the Man as
a matted mass,
a kitchen of kinks,
a nappy mess.

They tried to hammer into me
my mane is ugly
and wrong looking.
They tried to make my mind—my heart
wilt to this scheme.

They'd gotten my folks in on it—
gotten them to believe.

They made my momma complain
as she watched water flow from the faucet
hit my mane
and become beads.

They made her curse me
as she sat for countless hours taming my mane,
hours filled with picking, parting, and oiling.

They made her sigh
as my mane broke bristles creating
gapped tooth combs.

They made her burn
the tops of my ears,
the nape of my neck—
made me cry
as she made my mane take heat and fall
into long flowing locks.

They made her slap
cold creamy chemicals atop my mane,
told her to let it sit
until my scalp went ablaze—

made me shut my eyes tight
breathe hard and fast
until the naps melted away
leaving my scalp tender
and scab covered.

They made me throw my fist
at them,
turn my back
to her,
caused her to gaze upon me—upon my mane
with disdain.
Because I let my mane get blown into a fluffy bush.
Because I let my mane get turned into brown rows of corn.

They made her shake her head at me
'cause I wouldn't let their words seep
into my mind—my heart
and make me think
like her.

They made her clench her teeth
when I reminded her
they sprang from the hot desert of my womb—her womb.
They ran from us to the cold mountains
tugging on their manes along the way
and popped their naps straight—stretched them long.

They made her gasp
when I told her my mane—
a tightly coiled,
thick,
coarse,
beauty—
mirrors His hair of wool.

They made her plug her ears as I sang,
My mane is mighty fine.
I love the way my scarred ears turn up to hear
the rhythmic sounds that
drift from it.
BAH BAH BAH BOO DEE!
My mane is the root of all
manes.

— Kendra Flournoy