

Kaitlyn Lucille Palmer

When My Doctor Asks, Now That You're Pregnant, How Do You Feel?

I consider the price of formula in the event my milk will not come
conversations with the babysitter, I attempt to talk *teenage*, relatable yet, *mother*

the price of childcare in comparison to my salary
the sound of a delivery room texture of Doctor McNair's hands

as she, checks me
the popping of bones tearing of skin a needle and thread

I see my baby suckling from my breast, I feel my husband's jealousy, although he will not say
the words because he loves, this

I feel the feeling of not feeling like myself
imagine googling *postpartum black women, first time mother*

I close my eyes until the page loads I wonder how sex will turn me on
as it once did, like when we were dating

we walked around Logan Square late at night, sat on the rooftop
made love to Cody Chestnut, *No One Will*

contemplating delayed cord clamping
a doula, genetic testing, and postmodernism

anticipating a shea butter slimy baby
with my nose and eyebrows, ten toes

fingers to match and a hip-hop heartbeat.

Queen Bee

A little bee landed
on me today
stung me
implanted itself
and made a home
swam in my honey
its spine growing
fingers tickling
toes wiggling
made itself a home
in my honeycomb.

**All The Things I Wish My Unborn Child Although I Am Educated Enough To Know Her Life
Is Not Mine**

To activist in my womb, the school, the park, and the streets
to enjoy jazz, it is thinking woman's music
invent, innovate, and dive in headfirst into the scariest most lovely

start what has yet to be
travel your feet raw, your pockets empty until you figure it out
you will figure it out

be in love, maybe once, or so.

I Know I've Been Changed

Instead I want to cliché jump out of bed
skip to breakfast squeeze in a tiny
medium red work dress
after work is happy hour
at work I walk fast without being
exhausted never running out of breath

never feeling round ligament pains
hula hoop my body
during happy hour a friend and I order
french fries we order *Sidecars* we ask for
two \$5.00 martinis, I am buzzed
I consider my playlist and the windows

rolled down as I drive to the south side
it is winter and I am warm I feel black and
free I am a black woman right now and all days
I intend to tongue kiss my husband after closing
the garage walking through the sunroom and into
our home. He's surprised he's excited

I ooze *Happy Hour* and a 9-5
in our room we celebrate all we've accomplished
my body bends, it is elastic he smiles at what this
black woman body can do against his
he's proud of this. We finish, wash ourselves present
lie as close as possible tossing peanut M&M's in each other's mouth.

I know I've been changed. I know Thursday night Happy Hours are no more.

I tell him about my day the fluttering I felt, it's like a fish
or something, the movement. I tell him *the size of my uterus*
is growing he says, *I think it's a girl* he wonders if sex will
ever be the same I too, wonder. Pregnant sex is different
it's a gushy once a week apple pie. He tickles my breast and
although my areolas are dark and swollen, he says, *you're*
the most beautiful girl in the world. He waits for me to use the
bathroom before turning off the lamp.

I consider my body newly renovated
a south side architectural design
modern ranch style with contemporary fixtures

a door frame
something in the oven
honey in the cupboard
my body, split
body, double.



Kaitlyn Lucille Palmer is a Memphis, Tennessee native with an MFA in poetry from Columbia College Chicago. Through her writing, Kaitlyn aims to tell the stories she imagined throughout girlhood and growing up in the colorful south. Kaitlyn's work intertwines intellect and visceral experiences. Kaitlyn's poetry is a celebration of black femininity that is unapologetic, vulnerable, and conscious of space and time. Kaitlyn's art challenges, encouraging her audience to dream in color.