

# Hair

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*Adapted by Fishtank Staff*

- 1 My mother tells me to fix my hair.  
And by "fix," she means straighten. She means whiten.  
But how do you fix this ship-wrecked history of hair?  
The true meaning of stranded, when trusses held tight like African cousins in ship bellies, did they imagine that their great-grand-children would look like us, and would hate them how we do? Trying to find ways to erase them out of our skin, iron them out of our hair, this wild tangle of hair that strangles air.
- 2 You call them wild curls. I call them breathing. Ancestors spiraling.  
Can't you see them in this wet hair that waves like hello?
- 3 They say Dominicans can do the best hair.  
I mean they wash, set, flatten the spring in any loc—but what they mean is we're the best at swallowing amnesia, in a cup of morisoñando, die dreaming because we'd rather do that than live in this reality, caught between orange juice and milk, between reflections of the sun and whiteness.  
What they mean is, "Why would you date a black man?" What they mean is, "a prieto cocolo"  
What they mean is, "Why would two oppressed people come together? It's two times the trouble."  
What they really mean is, "Have you thought of your daughter's hair?"
- 4 And I don't tell them that we love like sugar cane, brown skin, pale flesh, meshed in pure sweetness. The children of children of fields. Our bodies curve into one another like an echo, and I let my curtain of curls blanket us from the world, how our children will be beautiful. Of dust skin, and diamond eyes. Hair, a reclamation.  
How I will break pride down their back so from the moment they leave the womb they will be born in love with themselves.
- 5 Momma that tells me to fix my hair, and so many words remain unspoken. Because all I can reply is, "You can't fix what was never broken."