

SAIDA AGOSTINI

The Night before HB2's Passage

Durham, North Carolina

after sex, I suck your fingers
taste the iron of my own heat and laugh
you sprawled over the floor, legs twisted
in a long wind of ochre sheets.
it is afternoon. the meat you bought long
defrosted, spoiling and sweet
in the sink, blood spooling from it, muscle
and fat down the drain. on top of you,
my breasts slide wild
your hips working against mine I can't stop smiling
foolish. we have been at this for weeks
—addicted and lustful—mouths nursing
nipples so long, wells have sprung. I want you
to have everything inside me—this whole dark
river, the people: an insurrection, the longest
hottest day where my sister and I ate nothing
but apples—cut into the flesh, each madder
then the next, red and honeyed on the tree
in our backyard, drunk with its wine, the bruised
colony of bumps raised around our lips. we thought
we owned it, carved our names in its trunk, only
to come back and find a city of termites feasting
in our wake. ants drunk on rotting winey fruit. Nothing
can be owned—we are black women
and cannot kiss on your street—but here I want to pretend
with you on my knees, my nails digging myths into your back.

say you love me. Softly

—palm my ass, tell me it's yours,
how you own it. I'll bite your neck, make a prayer of my teeth
your bruised skin a lithograph