

Femme Noire

Black woman,

Woman tall like the mango tree

That fills the yard of my heart's longing,

So tall and strong.

Take me about your body as you would

A boy in search of the ripest fruit among your leaves,

Or lizards that scamper from the black-bird's rage

To your toes for safety, take me.

Black woman,

Woman of gazelle-grace, smoothe like breadfruit trees,

Your breasts full like November fruit, preserve

Your sap for the heat of my blade, I'll bring

You a thousand kis-kee-dees for your hair.

Black woman,

Woman stout like the saman tree

Lift your lofty arms and I am at peace

In the ocean of your shade,

Sprawled in the black beauty of your sleep, forever.

Black woman,

Woman with lips sweet like sweetest cherries

Turned clay red,

Make me the only taster of your vineyard,

A parasite to your kiss, you fill me with strength.

Black woman,

My bride in a ceremony of blossoming poui trees

Caress me where your valley is ablaze with colour,

Quench the hell with which my lusting soul screams,

Cradle me like anxious fish in your rapids, till

At last I am the black spirit in a sheltered pond.

LeRoy Clarke

Feb. 25, 1969