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### Color Like This

Pop never wore brown pants.  
But I knew black men who did.

Growing up, I spied them  
in brown slacks and shirts

at barbershops, lounges, chicken  
and rib joints, pool halls.

Why'd they wear that color?  
Didn't they know brown sours?

I knew brown as the furrows  
above Pop's brows.

The rust-colored water to drink,  
pop's stomp, sob, or howl.

Ring of coffee stain  
on his breakfast napkin.

Brown, his eyes tinged  
with smoke and gin.

The slap of his hand  
against my ginger-brown skin.

The way I dragged my feet  
to school.  
The frown that encircled me  
as I stared at his

brown casket. These days  
I grind brown like figs.