

**blues for wounded laughter**

i first saw him at the two skate for one rate tuesday night skate party with cousin adele me in shimmering pastels and chocolate brown ski parka aunt frida talking bout adele you need to get your cousin jade outta this house meet some of them dread heads they nice men don't mean women nothing but respect show good times all the time i twirl with chaka khan purple beats and the funk of earth wind and fire every man the color of winter reminds me of other dances other nights that have no place on calendars a lover a blues tune stuck beneath my tongue an unholy night that conjures paul curly fro law student wet smile that pleasures my ears but hands like wood trying to tear history out of my womb trying to drink past a stretch of night that abandons him on his own shores of father mother prisoner buried alive beneath the diminishing light of his mothers eyes her sprawling death the only sound he can hear when he lies awake in my arms but his hands needed to have their say strike the hush in his fathers fist rearrange the bones beneath my chest write blood sonnets flunk bar exams cook up a ceremony of apology waiting for visitations of his mothers sprawling death his fathers airborne fist i marched to his love his fire his tears i marched to his mothers breathless gasp the stack of broken bones bruised lips shifting wombs saved by the history that flowed through him paul turned the gun away from me that night and wrapped his pain in gun powder so blue i thought his hands were breathing an echo that aroused his mother loosened her screaming her ghost thighs quivering receiving him back beyond a womb of silence tonight my lungs yearn to forget the taste of broken glass yearn to regret two years of standing holding my breath behind shower curtains locked doors my feet have a plan of their own teasing the ice tearing laughter out of my stitched throat luther vandross making my hips rise wade through around beneath couples caught up in their own dreams illusions he is skating beside me feet rooted like the trees of his south american forest smiling warrior polished hands so smooth i can hear the rivers of his childhood his hands his heart's wealth let me be your wind tonight his shoulders whisper i answer yes to the locks of hair already cruising my bones we tango past the stars rising from the ice past butterflies all the way to a path of drums candles frankincense a house of plenty tongues i make good on the prophecy of an elder lock out smells of blue gun smoke take back my own nights of honey smeared poetry and stained dawns tonight i will not be afraid to reach over close the window light a fire.