

When Cosmetology and Music Collide

ROSEMARY FORD

My first love had a head-full of cornrows
Intertwined naps which some girl
(who wasn't me)
Wove neatly against his skull
While he sat on a stoop
Between her thighs

Pointer finger down
Middle finger up
Pointer finger down
Middle finger up

I spent fifty minutes a day
Five days a week
At his left side
Where if mine weren't the fingers
Which planted the rows in his hair
Nor the thighs he rested between
My breath was that which vibrated
Bamboo vocal cords
Coaxing sound and language
From a brass diaphragm
Speaking Latin jazz & grown folks' blues

Crescendo up
Diminished fourth down
Glissando up
Lip slur down

He cut his hair
Leaving behind evenings with
That girl
And her stoop
And her thighs
He said he misses it
Sometimes
But hair grows back
Crops can be replanted

I imagine he misses me at his left side
All the time
Under his arm
Near his heart
Like Adam, had God excised a rib
And not given him Eve in return.