

## AT THE CENTER OF LAMENT

no to silence          no to men dressed up in silence          no  
to the slapping hands no          to sharp things  
no to full blossoms of flies on the food &  
in their mouths          no to the roasted meat          i must eat  
with my head down          no to father's hands  
no to          the hands          that bound my father's hands  
no to why i must never          use these hands to feed myself or others  
no to who          or why i must love  
no to bulk white          weight of wedding dresses  
no to the black veil that cover          the old women's faces at the  
at the cathedral no to the sacrament          that makes me stretch out my tongue  
no to the twine&blocks that bounded my great grandmother's feet  
no to pain of cotton          no to just thread and spool          no to pain of sugarcane  
no to mud&theboots that came with it          no to the romantics  
of white bodies          their glow          of pink seduction no to my own brown body  
that grew rough &thin          no to the death of beauty that was my face  
no to pulled fingernails          no to mice&mildew of fly paper  
no to pressed eyelids          amnesia you forced on me  
no to the monstrous voices behind glass          no to the monstrous  
voices buried under banyan trees          no to the theft from those very trees  
that are few now          no to the magic you supposedly brought          no to the idea

that there was no magic before you