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## AJA MCKINNEY

There is something different  
in my winters  
My year long Decembers  
Faced to remember  
I paint my toes three times a  
week  
I cover my whole body in  
peach lotion  
Sensuous motion  
I comb my hair with genital  
care  
My myself I'll have a love  
affair.

*Aja McKinney's poetry appears earlier in this volume.*

## SHIRLEY ADELMAN

### My Father

My father, whose hands I loved, square,  
strong, soft and fleshy, did not touch me,  
except to bathe me in too much hot water,  
in too high a tub. And I feeling very naked  
and fat, with breasts that were not yet  
breasts, was afraid of drowning in a big,  
down under splash.

In that room white and slippery, I stood,  
my father wiping me down like I was some  
other thing, a sink or toilet maybe.  
Hot with shame, I felt my face burning.

My father who took cast-offs from his sons,  
unwanted ties and handkerchiefs, bottles of  
too fragrant lotions, talcs, soaps, and cheap  
cuff links...

Crayons, so many blues: navy blue, violet  
blue, blue-green, turquoise blue, all in a cigar  
box that smelled of tobacco. In my room, I  
drew bright pictures, flowers, parks, houses,  
my name on the bottom right in blue, like the  
ocean and sky. He never saw.

In margins of school books, on envelopes,  
I sketched one house, alone, fenced in,  
shaded by trees, with a great door safely  
closed.

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