

kendra allen

EVENING SERVICE

when it's time for the invitation, I tell my mama
today is the day walk to the front of the congregation
in my pretty printed dress
socks with the ruffles at the ankle
ready to give my life over or never come back
I sit in the chair and the pastor thanks mama for her persuasion
the pastor is our uncle and our uncle tells me in two weeks I will be saved
backstage they get me ready in my come let us adore him Mama
tell me to take off my panties she forgot to bring
an extra pair when my set time comes I walk out from behind
the choir stand the curtains open the people scream There's a dead
water bug sinking
in the tub I'm in my uncle recites a scripture so it don't seem like we live here
for nothing
I watch my fans when water rushes down the tunnel my feet swims
fast but they can't touch the bottom I think about mermaids his hand
holding my nostrils my mouth open if I could sing this would be a fairy
tale
the pastor is our uncle and our uncle holds me underwater
I don't hit one note body lifted
back on land but
I'm dripping, I cough up
the ocean the people clap at how clean, how quickly I'm purged
they want an encore for me to perform better hold it all in longer
say sorry for wasting my first eight years of life