

my blood
Norma Stafford

my blood leaves me
each month to flow
into the earth becoming
once again the power of
the universe without which
no man can be.
my blood has flowed
through the streets, has been
sucked up and burned in buildings;
it has flowed from behind bushes
pulled from my black body by jungle thorns
in my flight from the slave trader
from treetops I have dripped
yet my death has never occurred.
when riddled or burned my body
is found by my sisters of Sappha's
genes and they follow me.
erasing the red of my blood
they absorb my cells to
gain strength passed on to them
from the witch hunts and massacres
of me in my innocence that still curse
the men in medical, religious and political places;
those men who try to hide from my swollen tongue
on the days that I was hanged in england;
trying to hide from the charcoaled bones
of my body the times it was burned at the stake;
trying to hide from my body brought up
in the cramped suffocation of water chairs
out of the depths of lakes and ponds
around Salem.
my blood has flowed each and every time
a child has been given life.
at the hand of the rapist
my blood has flowed without mercy
to be scorned and defiled
in the man-made courts of the land.
now, tired of my body being bled dry
I come back from places
that men cannot see
to claim this blood
that is me.