

**JANICE N. HARRINGTON**

**The Uses of Melanin**

Amid blackberries, black juice, black pulp, and purpled canes  
spined with thorns, our fingers stabbed and pricked, rent for  
sweetness: glad injuries. At the Regent, your hand moored in  
the small of my back. Shoulders back, spine straight, a good  
frame, our bodies guided by pressure and glide, a wrist moving  
out or in: pattern, space, forgiveness. The eyes that turn to  
watch.

	Do not marry a white man, he said. But chance did not heed, nor circumstance, nor that inward mind that sets the body's compass, or maybe there always waits in affection some insurgency, always a rub. <i>I am convinced</i> <i>that these differences in vision are</i> <i>of no importance. One sees as one</i> <i>wishes to see, Degas said.</i>	miscegnationjunglefever interculturalmarryingout multiethnicLovingsb/w zebracouplebarcodemixed biracialinterracialtraitors
If I warm my skin with a gun barrel?	<i>It's false, and it is that falsity</i> <i>that constitutes art. Let's make</i> an art of it, Beloved. You be my cane,	
If I replace my skin with coal dust?	I'll be your sunglasses. You be Louie Bellson or Solomon. I'll be Pearl Bailey or Sheba. Let's drink	
If I wash my skin in the Mississippi?	pineapple juice. Let's sit in a window in a small Midwestern town and watch them secretly stare. On a fence post, a magpie peck-pecks a beetle's carapace, dark meat dangled from a closed beak, iridescent wings splintered, frayed into fans.	
If I delete my skin with a keystroke?		