

On Origins

Cheryl R. Hopson

Last night I dreamed that I,
not my house but *I* was a stop
on the Underground Railroad, and I
huddled masses in the bend and tuck
of my skirt and bellowed “Shhhh,”
and the safe space of *I* held, until
I sent them flying, fleeing not knowing
but trusting in the strength of the well-oiled
collective, and *I* awoke, startled
by what was, for all intents and purposes,
a nightmare—

Reverse me, She
born 110 years before
the Emancipation Proclamation, born
unfree to a woman born
unfree to a woman born free
and speaking an old tongue, carrying
life that begot life, that begot
me, and I reverse the curse,
end it.

#hertoo

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I am coming for you
grown, and unafraid
I will make you fear me
will take a two-by-four of words
across your back, will
bring you down to your shot
knees. My intention is
to do you harm for the ways
you broke young girls, trapped
in a fantasy lived out on their
bodies.

Get ready.