Calypso

1
My mother collects drums on her mantelpiece.
One from each place she's visited since she
began calling California, "home." Virginia,
New York, Hawaii, Texas (etc...). Each
has a space above her fireplace. Each has
been stricken by her fingertips, her palms
& each vibrates an insidious sound which
she despises. *None'a dem can play Calypso.*

2
Her favorite is a tall, wood drum from
Miami. Engraved on its side is a small
sea turtle sunbathing on the beach.
I swam widda sea turtal when I was a chil,
she says before she places it between her
knees. *Rap. Tap. Tap.* Sometimes,
if she slides her fingers against the taut
skin just right, she can seduce calypso

3
Her father was a Rastafarian. Each dread
a massive trunk. His head, a jungle,
thick with time. She climbed into his roots
& fell asleep amongst his memories
of fried plantain & Johnny Cake.
She showered in the sweat beads
that flew from his muscles as he beat
the steel drums.

4
My mother's drums collect dust on her mantelpiece.
She cannot hear her father's music
above the cackle of her coffee pot
and the bustle of rush hour traffic.
None'a'dem can play Calypso.