Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Woman

I

The black woman's breasts hang.
Her over-sized areolas
paint circles in the dirt
& provide her men
with a place dance

II

The black woman does not lie
down for what she believes in.
She lies on her back
because she believes men

III

There are no spices in her kitchen
The black woman boils sweat
in pots for flavor

IV

Mind & soul are
One
thing the black woman
must bury beneath
the body

V

There is strength in numbers
But the black woman tells her son:
Trust no one
Her shadow shows too many scars

VI

Cloth locked around the wrists
Rope, tight, around the neck
Yet, the `black woman dances

VII
Toffee,
Caramel,
Peanut Butter,
Crème,
All offered for free.
The black woman sells
Pure Chocolate
on the corner

VIII
I envy the black woman's ability
to stand straight.
Her hips do not lean & her head
does not tilt, as she says:
Girl didn't nobody ever tell you,
Pussy owns the world!

IX
The black woman does not cry.
Eyeliner creates a dam for tears.
Blood-stained lipstick
stops the quiver

X
There is nothing worse
than a woman scorned.

Except, of course,
a black woman
scorned

XI
The black woman stands
naked in the snow
for him & he
tells her to sit down

XII
I know the strength of my hands
wrapped around a man's
throat. I know, too, as the black woman
taught me, how to loosen my grip

XIII
Tired, she lets the sky cry.
The black woman
has finally shut her eyes.