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## Yes, it is dangerous to be two women

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## taylor: Yes, it is dangerous to be two women

YES, IT IS DANGEROUS TO BE TWO WOMEN

capuchina taylor

*after Clare Kendry, a negro woman passing for white, to her husband,  
John Bellews, who didn't know she was a negro*

I keep both hands in my pocket,  
evading the heat, so when I reach out  
my fingers to greet the men, there will be  
no questions asked, just black eyes opened.

You never have understood  
why I could sit so long  
in the sun, flesh waiting to turn,  
urgently wanting to be right.

Because I grew tired of wearing hats, hiding  
my face and keeping my hair straight.  
So I decided my fate needed to change.

I'd sit out on the roof, shameless and naked.  
Sun licked my front and back like a cat  
and I kept turning and turning over.

I know I should've told you sooner  
but I didn't know how.

So I'd sneak up to town, walk with my lips  
pouted out, like I was used to sucking on  
watermelons, shouting loud. No one had  
to know            I was from Chicago.

How I loved those parties,  
the men, each blue-eyed bobby  
blinded by the scent of creamed, negro skin.

The who's who, never knew who you'd meet  
at these Shangri-Las uptown, never thought  
I'd see you there.

And my tongue froze, shocked into submission  
then I was not a woman, but a negro woman,  
your nig.

My skin had carmeled like the wheat  
we made for breakfast, baking  
one-half hour too long. We threw it away.