

THE TRACTOR

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In a tractor he came for her. She waited, the lone passenger; the engine broke through the air—from behind the horizon, its steady breath closed in, plowed the earth to her ear.

In an oversized blue suit he came for her: cotton dress, purse clutched to chest, hair swept up by an ox-bone clip.

Her wedding—an imagined spectacle. Slurred vows; foreheads banging against ground to fathers & uncles & grandfathers & the dead; a drunken game to steal the bride.

Here, she stole onto a train. No goodbyes, she stepped on & stepped off onto the platform of dirt and dust.

The engine, the engine—she listened, waiting for a life outside the choke of mosquito netting, the blank walls of her room. One by one, her sisters had left, where was there to hide, last daughter of the house?

With a dead mother, a daughter is a body with a price.

In a tractor he came for her. She listened, a seashell to her ear.