

## **For Assata**

*New Brunswick Prison, 1977*

In this new picture your smile has been to war  
you are almost obscured by other faces  
on the pages  
those shadows are sisters  
who have not yet spoken  
your face is in shadow  
obscured by the half-dark  
by the thick bars running across your eyes  
like sentinels  
all the baby fat has been burned away  
like a luxury your body let go  
reluctantly  
the corners of your mouth turn down  
I cannot look into your eyes  
who are all those others  
behind you  
the shadows are growing lighter  
and more confusing.

I dream of your freedom  
as my victory  
and the victory of all dark women  
who forego the vanities of silence  
who war and weep  
sometimes against our selves  
in each other  
rather than our enemies  
falsehoods  
Assata my sister warrior  
Joan of Arc and Yaa Asantewa  
embrace  
at the back of your cell.

Audre Lorde, from *The Black Unicorn: Poems*.