

dear grandmommy

by Jacquese Armstrong

today i got some stuff together
for a friend
('cause i thought she needed
a lift)
i thought of you

i didn't have any money
so i gathered some books
and things i had that i liked
i thought of you

of course
one book had bible scriptures
one was my favorite
and i always have to
write a poem
i thought of you

i thought of your dark cocoa
skin as the backdrop for your whitest
teeth smile
and those long graceful elegant fingers
that loved and cared and mothered
everyone—didn't matter where/what
color/what malady they might have had
you served them all

i thought of you 'cause i
visited you for months
at my lowest
and you told me to accept my illness
as God's will for me
i thought you were crazier
than i was
32 years later i understand

i can hear your kind sweet southern voice
delivering your favorite sermon for me
“now jacquese you know God doesn't like ugly”
never knew how you forgave

those folks who used your labor
for a dime when they lived in
upper middle class
comfort
now i understand
you did it
so your soul could be at peace
and now you are at peace
i looked at your wedding
ring mom gave me/modest
i remember it's the only jewelry you
wore (besides that hat pin)

i still see it on your ring finger

i wear it every day

i thought of you
i thought of you
i thought of you...

and i can feel you
thinking of me.

-jacquese 5/11/14