

# My Body, Your Body (Where you from?)

by Antu Yacob

the Tenderloin grew my eyebrows  
Djibouti taught me all the languages I'd forget  
The Mission had the best food, burritos & big macs  
Bayview, Hunter's Point on Progress Street.  
A house in Dire  
My akkoo used to sell injera in the market.  
Birthed 7 hearts. One survived.  
My uma worked in a coffee factory. No inglizii, just  
pure grit.  
Moving on up to the hillside

My shoulders were always tense.

I write.  
Our hands have always been our superpower.  
Them make things.

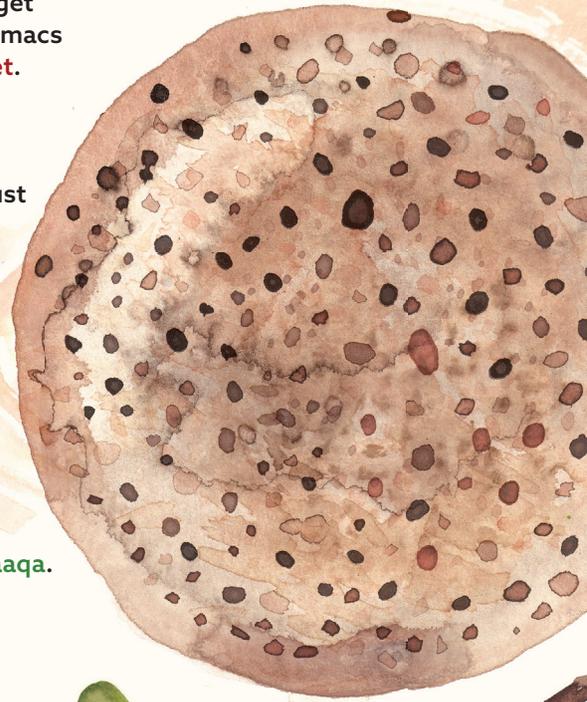
I met Jehovah in the Bay. Allah in Duluth.  
My great great great grands know him as Waaqa.  
Indigenous spirituality  
Pagan when it meant civilian, dweller  
Not what it means now.  
In Waaqeffannaa, blackness is purity. God is most pure.  
And then the goddess Atete. I know nothing but her name.  
Could we be kin?  
We've both lost our skin.

Healing comes with doro wat, marakka luukku.  
Our stomachs and pulse intertwine.  
The scent of fresh shaayii lingers in the air  
My nostrils woken to home  
I wonder how far back we've been drinking this blend of black tea & spices.

Lorraine Hansberry gifted me dried fruit at 15,  
Thanks to Raoul Wallenberg High.  
I drank her words like bishaan didn't exist  
My throat overcome with liberation

Ali Birra was a quiet soundtrack  
Tupac much louder  
Kwame McDonald, Whitney, Debbie Gibson, NKOTB,  
Michael  
Janet and Prince  
The Marleys

and Nina  
Poured into my larynx too.





My **uma** respects the writer in me.

Doesn't understand the **actor**.

How can she not?

She's the most **dramatic person** I know.

Greetings **dance** from her lips like a heightened **benediction**

The call and **response** of our **people** is **eternal**

**Hararghe** songs cracked open in a moment

Of gathering like no time no **country** has **passed**

Using just their **muscles**, bones, stomps and claps.

**Proverbs** from Oromo **antiquity**

Roll off her tongue like **symphony**

**dhadhaa, kibbeh**

**clarified**

Spicy and smooth

Fat with life lessons

I used to make fun of her **accent**

Now it's all I listen for.

My feet **carry** the elders in heaven

Their unfinished **desire**

**Baba Ola** says my **journey** is **sacred** because it is theirs too. So much **pressure...**

With every step.

Like Meklit **Hadero**: *I wanna sing for them all!*

My legs are heavy with fear, they've always been bigger than the rest of me

My **spine** **distorted** from fitting in

**Haacaaluu's** **memory** **causes** me on

My hips pop with the **realization** that jumping is **required**

Can't **rest** too long

I'm their *living dream*

My mind can't see it

But my **vessel** **maneuvers** in deed

A body passed down for the ages

There's not one **place** we **reside**

But in **periods** and **spirit**

In flesh

And in breaths

The **map** is where we from

Where we going?

We **decide**.