

K. AVVIRIN GRAY

Discuss.

- A. If, in the 19th Century, young girls buried their dolls in mock funerals, did black girls too? In no more than 3-5 pages, or 2,500 words, wonder: did black girls name their dolls Christmas Come Early? Must they have made their dolls themselves from the discarded husks of corn at shucking time? With pushpin eyes, could they, too, see the sky? Was this the harvest? The blue of it? Despite the whip?
- B. If, at the start of the 20th Century, couples commissioned photographs by which to remember their deceased children, in posthumous states of play or repose, and if their children, as a result, appeared doll-like on the plate, were such photographs of black girls commissioned too? Or were black girls thought too enfleshed for the frame, forgotten? If forgotten, consider by whom. Not their God, certainly? For He was listening. Perhaps by the fields of juniper bushes which had failed to hide the girls from the bared teeth of the white woman for whom they labored, her ordinary anger. So that they'd been exposed when she called as they hurried away down that tree-lined road that day, and could only, like muted dolls, stay.
- C. And yet they were very much alive. There is today a room teeming with dolls of all shades who gather at night, consider their plight, "If, in the world of objects, each of us is merely a 'thing among things'¹ how to sing our anthem? How to bring our bodies back from their boxes or, worse still, from the places they were simply left bereft, unburied: depressions in wet ground; between the metal limbs of the cotton gin, behind the master bed after his sin."
- D. Where he didn't know I'd hid.

¹Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*.