

Jacqueline McCrae

X

The strong black hands that strangled weeds and pulled
them from their roots
and disrupted the soil from its winter sleep to plant seeds;
had never caressed a book or turned pages.
He was not made privy to the magic of letters
or the words that danced upon cream white paper.
The array of letters that formed his name
was as foreign to him, as the promised North.
My father, Columbus Horace McCrae
with Georgia dust coiled round his ankles,
stepped out from the relentless cotton rows
and headed North following the X that denoted his name.
The X
his North star,
his beacon into his cathedral of hopes.
The X
that reduced him to the least
common denominator,
a man