

MARTHA COLLINS

[white paper #1]

Because my father said *Yes*  
*but not in our lifetimes* Because  
my mother said *I know my daughter*  
*would never want to marry...*

But mostly because they rarely spoke  
of or noticed or even whispered  
about and did not of course...

Because magazines rarely TV  
rarely textbooks rarely or not  
at all except for figures like  
George Washington Carver  
who'd lived in our state

106

Because among the crayons  
there was one called *Flesh*

Because paintings rarely or never  
*until* because books from the library  
never *until* because college literature  
not at all the American lit anthology  
had only Gwendolyn Brooks  
who was not assigned

Because a few years after *Brown*  
v. Board of Education I wrote a paper  
that took the position *Yes but not yet*

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