

AUNT CHLOE

AUGUST 17, 2019

by Ariana Benson

Lady Liberty is a Black Woman

Burning amber eyes twinkle like stars

Forged in liquid gold, her heart

Pumps red through American veins.

A dozen white stripes of tears line her face,

The thirteenth shall set her free.

Listen closely and you will hear

This lady sing the blues.

Lady Liberty is a Black Woman

Prosperity built upon her scarred spine.

A well of sorrow and salvation, she awaits

The day troubled waters breach the brim.

At last her cup runneth over, quenching

A centuries-long thirst for deliverance,

Nourishing the seeds she's painstakingly sown.

'Til then, her glass remains three-fifths full.

Lady Liberty is a Black Woman

Fertile womb, the birthplace of a nation
Of men, her courage is your currency.
White Houses forged from Negro fingers
That stitched ancestral tapestries
From miles of pure cotton twine.
Generations drink the lemonade
Sweetened by her bare hands.
Lady Liberty is a Black Woman
Whose spirit knows no bitterness,
Despite the nasty sting of injustice
That festers inside inherited wounds.
History steeped in the soil of her hopes and dreams,
From only her soul can true freedom arise.
She'll claim her rightful place in this land,
Patiently, one acre at a time.

Ariana Benson, a native of Chesapeake, Virginia, graduated as Valedictorian of her class in May 2019. She was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa as a junior, and is a member of Alpha Lambda Delta and Psi Chi International Honor Society for Psychology. She was the winner of the 2019 Edith A. Hambie Poetry Prize of the Academy of American Poets University and College poetry program. She has published in *Auburn Avenue* literary magazine, where she also serves as Nonfiction Editor. Ariana is a 2019 Marshall Scholar, and will continue her studies in London, pursuing master's degrees in Creative Writing and Screenwriting.