

# AUNT CHLOE

AUGUST 17, 2019

## 2 poems

*by Akilah Toney*

### **Cousin Tiffany Was Levitating**

Family members gathered in a half-painted peach house  
fish grease crackled in the air and hot crawfish wooed flies  
family members grouped around the DJ and did their number  
black Speakers blasted bumping sousaphones  
black Speakers blasted stinging trombones  
Cousin Tiffany sipped from her white cup  
bells started ringing and her head started bobbing  
everybody clapped their palms bright red  
she spun and jived with her torso, her ribs became rhythmic  
melodic *yeahs* and rhythmic *ayees* vibrated  
Cousin Tiffany smiled a big ol' smile  
Cousin Tiffany step-skipped with her heart  
syncing with the second line beat  
her body lifted into the air and her toes wiggled with sound waves



Da

Do

Da

Do

Da

Sing songs of secret, wrapping freedom in music notes,

Wade, swing low, ache no more following the path,

Oh I pray they feel the working peoples' wrath!

**Akilah Toney** is a published writer, dancer, actress, and photographer living in New Orleans, Louisiana. She uses the arts to express her experiences as a young Black Girl living in the South. Using writing as a method of activism, Toney explores African dance and meter/rhyme in poems to convey her voice, telling stories about race relations in America, marginalized communities, and internalized racism. Her poems "Cousin Tiffany Was Levitating" and "Sugarcane" showcase her unapologetic willingness to discuss untold histories and experiences as a New Orleans native. She is a high school student majoring in Creative Writing at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts.