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black soap

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my mother sold home
in small black bars,
her daughter's time
in the garage
pounding, molding, scenting.

never mind
she tried hard
to bargain away
her oppression...

it worked for her -
selling her culture
for a few dollars
and sense of purpose.

the soap they
rubbed
on their bodies
was their best
attempt
to remember
home –
a time
they never knew.

she wore
the time-traveler's cloak
converting nostalgia
to the present.

she found her visibility again.
satiating link.

she conjured ground,
inspired purpose.
they vested
grounds,
afforded
purpose.

it shaped the ground
to know
one's purpose
lived
in blackness
that could clean
like no other.

melancholic souvenirs;
where family is;
where they all belonged.

what could wash this black skin
leaving traces of land
in its wake?

what could clean black tears?