

Erren Geraud Kelly

Trying to explain a turducken to a Vermonter

the only time whites here have ever seen black people
was on the cosby show and nobody
wants to be bill cosby these days
i got a plate of red beans and rice and fried chicken
for 20 bucks at a restaurant on church street in burlington
i could make the same dish at home for
less than ten
a white girl tells me of her love for the blues:
she likes b.b. king and chris thomas and is looking forward
to seeing him perform, but she doesn't believe in interracial dating
at least white kids here think wu tang and 2pac is
true hip hop music, not macklemore and justin bieber
at an open mike poetry reading, the m.c.
scoffs at me, finds it hard to believe i've read
jim carroll and the beats
the cops follow me around sometimes, at random
my writing poems in coffeehouses is
considered a terrorist act
a church on college street has
a banner that reads "black lives matter"
and a phishhead has a bumper sticker
on an audi
every other person in burlington is a trust-funder
or a celebrity trying to lay low
or a flatlander who got tired
of the big city
a woman looks at me as i read and asks
"do you really read those books, or is
it just for show?"
i listen to a woman in a club singing
an amy winehouse tune and i realize
it's an imitation of an imitation of
someone who had soul
every other person looks as though
they stepped out of an american eagle
forever 21 or l.l. bean catalog
and in the trendy whole foods supermarket
even the white girls wear their pants
on the ground