

## **kitchen floor**

a busy kitchen in the restaurant

steam hitting my nose

and i see mama

using the steam of rice

putting her head above in, inhaling

saying,

“it make face glow!”

as she stirs different sauces

with her free hand.

she flicks her wrist, showing me the wooden spoon,

and i swipe the sauces off,

the yummy burn of golden yellow

sinking into the flesh of pale sun on my palm,

of culture, my colorful Africa

of the home i've never known.

when money got tight,

she'd tell me,

don't be afraid,

don't be afraid,

scooping me up

bundling me in her hands

like a wrapped to-go order.

when it got so dark

the sun was stuck in her dreams,  
when she thought  
i was stuck in my dreams,  
dreams she couldn't make true  
she'd sleep next to the  
little pots and pans at the fireplace  
curl up on that cold kitchen floor  
crying, sobbing,  
banging the tiles with a curled fist.  
and in my soul i would sleep besides her  
sleep besides her on that rental kitchen floor and say  
it's alright  
it's alright.  
a busy kitchen in my restaurant,  
and now mama is not here,  
i sleep on my own kitchen floor,  
next to the small, beat up fireplace  
and i feel mama's soul sing  
it's alright,  
it's alright.