

# PERFUME-FREE SCENTS

we tend to meet in  
the most commoners' places;

places like harlem, chicago,  
houston, atlanta, new orleans

cities lost within the black man---  
which only you can conceive

as the woman who bears him;  
as the bearer who comforts him;  
as the comforter who strengthens him

as he defies the curse &  
curses the defenders of injustice

but all is superlative.

we meet at contacts of eyes

in grocery stores, subways trains,  
botanical gardens, coffee shops,

exchanging energies through your smiles,  
affectionate hugs

& perfume-free scents

which I inhale and feel strong,  
feel desired, feel received

by the black woman we fail to exalt;  
by the un-exalted we fail to queen;  
by the nubian queen we fail to tribute

as you draw courage through  
perseverance &  
persevere to raise & elevate us to full  
manhood  
( single-handedly sometimes )

but all is superlative.

we celebrate your beauty

shown through your stance, your laughter,  
your wool-like hair & the curves that shape  
you

all which I adore and come here to  
acclaim, reverence, and bring vindication.

I find you in high corporate towers,  
education bases,  
on concert stages, even as home-based  
blessings

in the most common & uncommon places

places like pensacola, boise,  
muskegon, baton rouge, chapel hill

cities lost within the black man---  
which only you can conceive

there to provide the love,  
support, & strength I need

to make all superlative.

including this moment, including these  
words.

**BY MARK ANTHONY THOMAS**

From The Poetic Repercussion

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