



Louisa Adjoa-Parker

**it ends like this**

he wonders why he hadn't known  
but perhaps he did  
perhaps the heart of him has always known  
it ends like this  
him splayed out on the sidewalk like a giant fish  
beached on grey sand as a ring of people  
watch it flap its tail watch it drowning in the air  
it ends like this him face-down on a bed of concrete  
his tomb his only view of shoes and legs  
listening to the voices of white men hungry for his blood  
as they poke their fingers into the soft folds of his flesh  
the grandsons of the men who strung  
trees with his forebears as though they were lanterns  
it ends like this with men pressing the breath from him  
an arm wrapped around his throat  
like a lover's final embrace  
it ends like this him choking out the words  
*I can't breathe I can't breathe I can't breathe*



*From How to Wear a Skin by Louisa Adjoa Parker*

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