

2020

## Black Girl Goes on Vacation to Orange Beach

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### Recommended Citation

Forde, Diamond (2020) "Black Girl Goes on Vacation to Orange Beach," *Nelle*: Vol. 3, Article 12.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.library.uab.edu/nelle/vol3/iss2020/12>

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*Diamond Forde*

**BLACK GIRL GOES ON VACATION  
TO ORANGE BEACH**

“[our forefathers and foremothers] too believed that the sea was the beginning and end of all things, the road to freedom and the entrance to Guinin,”

—Edwidge Danticat

On the beachside, beer bottles glitter like tombstones in the sand, a man roots his thumb into coastline whiter than a waking dream—the ocean yawns. I peer into her long, jade throat. The man finds a sand flea, holds it for me to see its shell: bullet-round and ivory as teeth. He chucks it in his bucket, mausoleum for the dead he’s already caught. A surfboard spans the ocean’s thigh. She lows with joy. She has seen enough of death to barely flutter her lashes, while somewhere beneath her lacy skirts a legacy of lost bones: waving phalanges, femurs rooted as trees, sternums clasped on the beat of the ocean’s mothering heart. Sand fleas are not fleas, instead, crabs spit into the wet band of sand near the shore to return later by the mercy of a cold, silver hook. Casket and cradle, the ocean crosses her legs and waits. We come back in time. The man claps his hand around another crab. Without looking the distance has grown between us, so much, he seems a specter rubied with sun. I step into the water, the ocean kisses my calves, my knees, cradles my brown, familiar feet, then lifts the whole beach out from beneath me, as if she might carry me everywhere, anywhere I ask, even home.