Do You Know Jesus, His Only Son, Our Lord?

Joanne Braxton

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Miss Malme: An old Colored woman whose picture
I take out at three o'clock in the morning
between calculus and Brocht

No straight lines but drooping shoulders
And old hands chewed a red-brick brown
Hands that healed my beestings
With three different kinds of leaves and love
Off-set by two skinny yellow bowed legs
Knotted with brown spots
Where the brown spots
Where the veins were ripped out
When she was refusing to die
And I was afraid and crying
These are hands that prayed well
"The Lord is my life and my salvation..."
And followed well
When she ran me down with switches
In my youth.

You always seem surprised when I come home
Would you think I'd forget you?
You made me such
Gingerbread woman topped by crown of snow.

-Jodi Braxton
DO YOU KNOW JESUS, HIS ONLY SON,
OUR LORD?

you sweet black semitic angles
seemless cape-open slouch
gold chain and muddy beige beret

eyes tilt chin extended
such a smooth black skin
arms flayed in rhythm
legs gapped knees bucked

finger pop rhythm
but no sound
no song from the open mouth

my god! dr. feelgood!
son of the father the mother
the sweat! the sweat!

junk is the only life
in your bones

and even the holy ghost
trails to a thin white ash
behind the roar and the clatter

the F train rushing from
despair to despair

leaving this world
pretty fast

-Jodi Braxton