

couldn't stand  
sharing with a stranger  
less bright and committing  
and chubby and bald  
than he.

He couldn't stand  
sharing a bed  
with somebody  
who had Merlot  
on her breath  
smeared pink  
lipstick  
caught in the cracks

around her lips,  
and condoms  
in her purse  
where the kids'  
pictures should be—  
a soccer mom  
playing hardball,

combing tangled lies,  
alone  
in the morning.

## Rift

*by Margaret Okere*

Sound of river murmur  
memory of his voice  
music once more from the time  
when stars streamed  
from her fingertips  
in ribbons of night  
and she stepped from her skin  
as if leaving behind  
the bark of a tree.