

1. i am four years old and Aladdin is on the big screen when i first encounter a *not-quite-my-brown* woman with *my-not-quite-name*; princess Jasmine.

i decide in spite of the not-likes that i could be Jasmine, too.

2. first day of Kindergarten and teacher asks for name. i remember Jasmine. mama remembers Sarah. i give Sarah into her open palms with closed fist.

3. Sarah is Hebrew for princess and is the name of an elderly woman in the Bible who was married to Abraham. Because of her husband's devotion to the Lord, and because they ache for child, he blesses her old bones with the ability to conceive.

3.2. i did not want to be a mother.

4. i spend the rest of fitful youth living like a phantom limb; i remove Jasmine from memory the way a hand goes missing from a slick cut of the knife. i do not have to be biblical figure for Sarah to be alright, okay, *i guess*.

5. college.

college will demand a lot of things; self-motivation, thirst for knowledge, the ability to condense academic jargon into consumable parts, and, a name.

my name is Sarah, i suppose.

( except, i don't suppose. )

among new gazes in another club i am curious to try, i am about to introduce myself when i realize that i can be whoever i want. call me Sarai, call me Sierra, call me *Something Else* -

'call me Jasmine.'

6. i go home during the summers. mama will never call me anything that was not what she gave me and you know you're not s'posed to go arguin' with mama, so 'course i remind myself to turn head towards her when the first S slips from her mouth, when the 'ah' comes and hooks me like wire coat hanger caught on wool.

'Sarah,' she says, and goes on talking. my body wraps around the silence of that 'h'.

6.2. i wonder who Sarah is.

6.3. *i am not Sarah.*

## 7. I AM NOT SARAH.

i am not silent, not like the 'h' at the end. i am Jasmine. i am fragrant flower, i am radiant in teas and the world wants to pause to admire my petals. let every letter sink to the bottom of your mouth so that when i leave, my name will not.