

Courtney C. Gambrell

## Self-Portrait in my Hometown

I stumbled across a bad jaw  
it was me with droplets  
of moist ego  
on my collarbone  
after taking a shower

*it is my accent too*

my pride and glory  
it is everything  
water ice & pretzels

about me

It is the way no one is surprised  
when I announce  
“I’m from West Philly”  
because that is its own blessing

It is the reason I cut my eyes  
at the patient cerulean sky  
because the afternoon sun  
tried to challenge my radiant ways

I know I be *drawlin* sometimes  
but I don’t care  
I’m the type of jaw

that will teach you  
how to be overzealous  
without feeling guilty

I know how to tantalize  
a fresh breeze with  
agitated exhales

after I catch my breath

even when I frown in public  
it is mainly for survival

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Courtney C. Gambrell was born in Philadelphia, PA, where she currently resides. She is a Watering Hole Fellow whose poems have appeared in APIARY Magazine, As/Us Journal, For Harriet and elsewhere. She continually reflects on the insight of Toni Morrison who aptly asserted, “freeing yourself was one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self was another.” Professionally, she works in the field of mental health, holding an M.S. in Counseling from Villanova University.