Think of James Brown Pleading

for Michael Datcher

As if on cue, the women
in the room start screaming.
snagged on your words
as you sing of sugar distilled.
You're reading a love poem
and have to stop for a few moments
in the middle, your voice breaking,
and I wonder if a spirit can be
reincarnated before it dies.
I think of James Brown pleading
to a closing door. So pretty
in his do-rag tied on straight
through the day and into the night
and right now, you are prettier
than James. The brothers in the room
wink and nod at your raw weeping
but what man trusts another at his
most dangerous? This is the truth
I need: your crying and holding
fast to one woman at the same time.
What else is left if I can ignore your
tears or James, shoulders
draped with female screams
and royal purple, begging with all
the sweat he was capable of?