The Fat Black Woman’s Poems (Grace Nichols)

• Bodies
  o “Her poems constitute an overt attempt to challenge conventional (white) male definitions of black women, as well as to redefine black female identities in new and unexpected ways” – Maite Escudero, ‘Race, Gender and Performance in Grace Nichols’ The Fat Black Woman’s Poems’, Journal of International Women’s Studies (2000) 1.2, 12-26, p.12
  o ‘Beauty’
    ▪ “Redefines beauty and exposes it as a social construct” – Melissa Johnson
  o “The fat black woman responds lustily, assertively, and unashamedly to British (and Western) concepts of feminine beauty and behaviour” – C.L. Innes
  o Audre Lorde, ‘Uses of the Erotic’
  o ‘Invitation’
    ▪ “She proudly exhibits her fatness and praises the magnificence and sensuality of her body through erotic images that subvert the stereotype of fat women as lacking sexual appeal” – Ana Bringas Lopez

• History
  o Saartjie Baartman – ‘Hottentot Venus’
  o Born 1789 in South Africa
  o Sold into slavery around 1808, brought to the UK and exhibited around the country
  o Subsequently moved to France and exhibited there too
  o Died 1815
  o Her body dissected and her skeleton, brain and genitals were preserved and placed on display in Musee de L’Homme until 1974
  o Her remains finally repatriated in 2002

• Language
  o “I like working in both standard English and Creole. I tend to want to fuse the two tongues” – Nichols