Porsha Olayiwola
Untitled, 2021
Poem in response to *Thulile I, Delaware*, 2016
In *Being Muholi: Portraits as Resistance,* on view at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum February 1 0- May 8, 2022

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my gaze is often toward a foreign god. that is to suggest: i kneel
to heavens outside myself. i've learned: the difference
between prayer and pleading is distance. it lies within
one's proximity to heavy. the mouth is a pandora chest i will
not open answers may make a red- rich lamb of me.
whose demigod claims a limit to mine
beauty? black silky soot come forth.
feast thine eyes i too am almighty
i too am maker i sculpt
the universe into orbit
bangle cuff hoarding on to me like a promise.
i am careful as i carry across
a desert of desire. appetite monster
i want i want i want i warrant
i won't i want
i warrant i won't
i want i want
an easy hunger— a clean lust— for what is my own—
knowing—myself is a pilgrimage toward a haloed ungrounding.
our ugly is glorious and unruly; a grace
as sacred as a wedding pillow a swan of midnight.
a gaggle of girls un-gendered a sovereign daughter
moving through the chorus of some devilish god.