

At sunset, we meet where
the 101 & the 2 intersect.

I ask her to read
from the Book of the Living:
Tell me about God, I plead.
Tell me how we'll take root
among the stars. Tell me
about Earthseed.

We make camp on the hills,
watch for coyotes & mountain
lions. She reads me her Earth-
seed poetry. Her voice cradles me:

"All that you touch you Change.
All that you Change
Changes you.
The only lasting truth
is Change. God
is Change."*

The sun dips below the horizon,
an inky blackness settles
around our bodies. "God
is Change," she repeats.
"God exists to be shaped."*

Stars rise in the sky. If God
is change & night is change,
is God night & how do I
shape the night? I ask.

She collects brush & sticks,
creates a fire. Her dark skin
dances under flames. Shape
the light, shape the night.

I nod, heart beating hard
against my chest. How easy
to believe in Change, how
easy to believe in God
under her mesmerizing tone.

She picks the edible plants
surrounding us & says
study the plants, know
what to eat, how to grow
your own food. She doesn't
mention her hyperempathy,
her ability to share pain.
I don't bring it up, I'll
let her keep her secrets. Instead,

under the firelight, she
continues reading from the Book
of the Living: "Why is the universe?
To shape God. Why is God? To shape
the universe." * Above the stars
blink & wink, I smile, sensing
our connection. When I look
back, Lauren Olamina is gone.

It's just me & the fire, me
& God, God & me. & a shower
of shooting stars: Earthseed
communities of the future
streaking across the sky,
free, like we'll one day be.

direct quotes from Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower