CONTENTS

i.

repetition & repetition & pronounce 3
Fame Food & Liquor 4
god made the hundreds, man made it wild 5
Harold’s Chicken Shack #1 6
Granddaddy was the neighborhood 8
buying new shoes 10
Chicago high school love letters 11
out south 12
palindrome 13
Foot Locker 14
1st love song to the black girl at smart camp 15
niggaicouldhavebeen #1 16
candy store 17
Chicago high school love letters 19
the break 20
Harold’s Chicken Shack #35 22
learning gang handshakes 23
hood woods 24

ii.

Mama says 27
Ragtown prayer 30
in the land where whitefolk jog 32
Chicago high school love letters 34
landing 35
Alzheimer’s 36
on being called a nigger in Ann Arbor, MI, on
South University Street by a drunk ticket scalper 37
Chicago high school love letters 38
prelude 39
Indian summer 40
when it comes back 41
pallbearers 43
Chicago high school love letters 45
praise song 46

iii.

the last graduation 51
the first graduation 52
Harold’s Chicken Shack #86 53
directions 54
off white 55
juke 57
church in the wild 58
Chicago high school love letter 59
picking flowers 60
undress 61
cut 62
recycling 63
repetition & repetition & 65

Acknowledgments 67