

Stained Glass Speaks

For/After Robert Hayden

[BREED]

Deliver me and my mouth—
deliver
me and my shadow's poise

my fearful quiet
yawning holy structure—failure

dismember
me and my commodity-identity-history:
another busted hull tilted toward the sky—

flotsam of belonging scudding
this way and that in the warm tide

this tethered riot this
anthem this hazardous
life full of whys in its waves

so that the brittle and backlit curse
lifted up [is that what we be?] might be

shattered into tongues
might become collision unmeasured
in shards that teem

like water – so bright that broken glass
falling might be the chorus finding

its scarlet rhythm – the confluence
of each voiced lie and love [ain't we
always in between?] as they gush

then mist into the air, misremembered—over
the edge of how, the throat of no

[HARD TEAR]

Tremor in the diamond memory

a needle dipped in music

more than muscle more than blood:
helpless, contagious. Sing:
sink where we believe.

Each mind inside mine a wide-eyed scale
on the sleek dark flank of history:

the exotic beast turns, rises
on its haunches, bleets, spews
ecstasy and anxiety in order

to drown the empires in their continents
as they thrash and spread—who's

surprised by the sharpness of mouths
how they cut through
belief?

[TAR]

What can I do but enter
naked now and lie down
in this raw lair
of nectar and threat,
sicksweet amalgam
of shifting
heaving

borders, once again my black-
patterned 200 plus pounds 6-foot self conjuring
swollen roots that roam forever
beneath us beneath sky
cored through
the deep work of what I am—

what you are— in spite of
ourselves
we swallow something
other than air—
[don't forget

to breathe]
whose harsh blued angle
of each america in us

[TORN CORE]

Naked we stood and watched
The honeybee

Fling itself against the dirty glass
Window in the shower

For what felt like hours, but it had to
Be less than even one

Before it drowned in the steam
Or just got tired, spilling

Down, swiped tiny paws not paws,
Soft, in our eyes, and slippery

Against the chipped wooden border. Our
Sex at rest a different kind

Of body open. You tried, I tried,
To gently touch and bend

Our body over, to keep going but I
Kept listening for its buzzing

Until one of us got out. Then both.

[TREACHERY]

There is
a[n open] door.

[DARE]

Awake and made in air, I leave
the branches, the seashore, the other spirits living

