

The BOI's Failed Crown

what do I make with this mess of flowers
tansy & verbena make my mouth declare war
and prayer in one breath make my body a maze
of thorns intimacy spoiled by a lover's casual
kiss softness a memory ground into dust
my skin cold soaked with longing Black and then
what night holds is a false promise, hardened spine
& if not for the I then what else keeps the BOI whole?
the I licks Their lips and says I'm a good thing
feels for the roof of Their mouth and thinks rigid
wanting teeth, how space can be both void and
full is a trick only the BOI knows well, the I is a
hymnal unworthy of Their mother's tongue
What is the BOI if not sometimes an apology?

The BOI sometimes an apology is a wingless
bird stretching before the sun blinks a new day
into existence, BOI incapable of flight is pulled
closely into the body of a stranger, the I knows
the chicanery of night – how it cradles the moon
knowing it will always slip away, to be desired
(even temporarily) is enough to feed the I's ego
to open the BOI's mouth wide and cram Their
jaws with everything they will one day lose
sense of self, what it feels like to be touched –
how to soften, the liberty to pop and twist and
shake and move underneath flashing lights, what
it's like to be called home or called by name
a jolt causing the I to return to Their body

The I returns to Their body, see the BOI
cradling an indigo child – small fingers
wrapped around the I, a tiny squeeze –
BOI searches the infants face for memory
asks the I, *who this body belongs to, what
is a name?* The indigo child yawns, becomes
ghost like – a dream sequence, the I was once
a parade of daffodils swaying in the sun's
crooked mouth, I, once a glimmer in Their
mother's wheat eyes – the son she always
wanted swaddled in pink garments adorned
in glitter, accidental girl dressed in ruffles.
The I wilts in the grip of Their mother's
religion. call the I unholy or call the BOI whole.

Call the BOI whole, the I holy
God said, *let there be light* & then
there was light cascading down the
I, BOI drenched in rain – a good
watering fit for a peculiar bloom
the Black BOI is not an anomaly
is instead a whisper exchanged
among bodies sitting on a wooden
pew, sweet saints sweet stain ruining
the choir robes. The I sings and no –
one applauds. Pastor says BOI take flight
so the I searches for the heaven all BOIs
belong to, where a cacophony of organ
chords praise the I praise the BOI – Their body.