

Two Poems

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How to Write About Zombies

how to write about what you carry
but don't know? strange
inheritance one carries in

everyday code

understandable if borne of Haitian soil

 submerged in salt sea
bracing rivers

falls

the sea here salty not turquoise warm
the soil i am complicatedly
settled on

just bone on bone
weary grating questions

i ask mother
zombies *the back-home kind*

she won't speak except to start. and stop.
words caught in her throat.

i ask father
I am a man of God I don't pay attention to these things

silence.

so i ask books from the library

keep them from touching other books
or caressed by the same night wind caressing my back

how to write about zombies:

when you're a generation removed from the soil

and

several generations removed from

lan Guinée

and

colonial words
still your tongue

crowd your mouth

and

sever the connections between land
self

language

whitewash at best

how to write about these things that terrify

and

night

resolve into odd shapes at

and

lurk

in shadows

of the smooth heart muscle

joints of bones marrows tip

of fingers and

tongue

forgive the back and forth
i start with origins
i was not there i am
not there

rather

the line from here today

tethers collective trauma umbilical
centuries old over oceans
triangulated passages

those bones a bridge
abridge

[\ə-'brij \

1 : to shorten by omission of words without sacrifice of sense : condense]

i can't

write about zombies you'll need iron will

brace your heart

she will be *pronounced* dead
(that's very important)
the guardian of the cemetery
summons

she zombie-like

livewire warmth
dead giveaway give way give away

emptiness walk alongside me
unseen tread heavy

weight of ancient history press
follow out of breath weight struggle

heart is a muscle untrained to
lift carry attend to these wounds

in the company of the undead not "ghostly matters"
we deal with the ghastly

[4]

the thing/about/conversing/with/your/undead/self:

it'll never be convivial —listen

twin/heart/beats/counter/points failures/ inter ruptures/look

see i don't listen

—also/be/silent

neither/will/these/present/ancestors/five hundred/plus/years/

is/to live

many lives/

many lines

through

many lies/

veil

—truth is/to live is to/

hurt

[5]

i've asked the wrong questions or brought the wrong gifts maybe not enough

likely i can't hear those undead spirits —*those ghosts* owl-wise form a parliament

wisdom submerged under the cacophonous sound of nasal whine

speech halts. still —i write this black body live