

American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin [“Inside me is a black-eyed animal”]

BY TERRANCE HAYES

Inside me is a black-eyed animal
Bracing in a small stall. As if a bird
Could grow without breaking its shell.
As if the clatter of a thousand black
Birds whipping in a storm could be held
In a shell. Inside me is a huge black
Bull balled small enough to fit inside
The bead of a nipple ring. I mean to leave
A record of my raptures. I was raised
By a beautiful man. I loved his grasp of time.
My mother shaped my grasp of space.
Would you rather spend the rest of eternity
With your wild wings bewildering a cage or
With your four good feet stuck in a plot of dirt?

Source: *Poetry* (September 2017)