

One Country

I want to be released from it.
I want its impulses stunned to lead.
This body. Its breath.
Let it. Let the whole pageant
end. If my body had a river in it
I would drain it. If by the river
was a city, let a storm shock and drown it.
If in the city was a boy made sick
from his body, the freak passions of it,
let him come out—his brown skin
lifting as a shell. Let it. Let all
his limbs pop and unhinge. First
his penis, its quick flight, as if a comet.
The eight fingers next, then thumbs,
then tongue, till every star is on the floor,
dismissed, each pointing in its own
direction, each another door
to the one country where his body is
loved and made for.

Black Iris

Georgia O’Keeffe, early twentieth century, oil on canvas

Dark, imposing flesh. Darker still
its center, like the tongue of
a cow that has for a week now been
dead, spent during calf birth, and the calf
still clinging to her, and his own tongue
wild for want of milk, and the calf
with flies in his eyes—*that* color: near-to-
purple, bruised. I should call it
beautiful, or beauty itself, this dark
room, broom closet, this nigger-dot.
I should want to fit into it, stand up in it,
rest, as would any beast inside a stable.
I should want to own it, force it mine,
to know it is my nature, and of
course don’t I? Why shouldn’t I want?

Black mirror. Space delicate
and cracked. Now anything could
go in there: a fist, veined, fat.
A body. And here runs the blood
through the body, deep, watery.
And here runs the message in the blood:
This is it—fuck her fag like you’re supposed to.
And when the wind shakes

and when the iris shakes in it,
the lips of the flower shaping
to the thing that invades it, that will be
me, there, shaking, my voice shaking,
like the legs of the calf, who—out of fear?
out of duty?—is sitting by his dead
mother because what else will he do, what else has he?
Because a voice outside him makes him.