A THOUSAND CARDINALS

Imagine my first moon wasn't a moon at all but a crescent incision in my mother Imagine my disappointment when I realized no light would ever be so full as the gore I passed through just to be born

If I am ever as successful

at leaving as I aspire to be

I suppose it would go like this

I decide to stay and then a bloom

of cardinals peel themselves

from my back I splinter into a thousand dead

relatives

just like that I'm my mother's son all over again

What was the last thing you loved enough to open something that was not a border I was born and the scar makes my mother exactly the island that her parents fled

Every sacrifice begets a question

What would you give to never have to flee again?

I mean my father asked my mother to not teach me Spanish
So I would not be *confused* my mother traded her tongue
and I sound as if I am only his son What sacrifice to say allegiance
to my small dark mouth and not be understood on purpose
wash the moon clean of crimson until I was barely born at all

In order for me to exist somebody has to have had sex one thing has to be at the gate

rattling until answer

At the end of sex a sacrifice has to be made unless a sacrifice was made during I do both just to be safe I give and give my tongue

and I am my mother's son

because the tongue keeps showing up in my mouth

I want to stop being this way I ask what it would take to be a sacrifice worthy of the sacrifices that precede me a trail of wings through which the sun appears to always be in retreat I am placed in a school that costs my parents so much The nature of sacrifice is recursive we give up home after home a child is left at the brink of what is known and we trust an illogical love that I could bring myself back I want to know when enough has been given I want to know when I'm allowed to stop

I ask my birth to forgive me when I cannot ask my mother
I leave a child at the edge of my mouth dare anyone Wash the moon clean of the child and this too is sacrifice and lineage this too an incision that made me possible

There's the kind of person who gives their life for something
There's the kind of person who gives their life to prove there was a life

Despite my best efforts I keep growing back

Suppose to wash my mother clean I freed my tongue

of my own teeth
and nearly leapt in front of a train to save my parents the shame
of knowing I am not as strong as my father Suppose my mother called
right before as I worked my knees loose from old transgressions to jump
Suppose only sacrifice staves off sacrifice What other love is there
Suppose the alternate ending the train curves a long moon
I split I bouquet I stay a thousand stains a thousand cardinals

BIRACIAL GHAZAL: WHY EVERYTHING ENDS IN BLOOD

And what language exists with no word for blood? What gets across the legend as quickly as blood?

Where I am from there are no words for my shade Only nicknames approximations for the blood

Blacktino Lanegro Halfbreed Mutt Progress confused a turmoil of skin bouquet of hunted blood

I am a burden in every mouth my name a minefield people forget what I am exactly but I end in blood

Two tone sacrament Where the soil meets the sky but never the horizon child with the invisible blood

Like a sunset I am considered most beautiful when I am disappearing stitching a gown of my blood

Child with too many tongues gone twice over aftermath a failed experiment of the blood

People ask *what are you* and I have no house I bite my tongue into copper search my blood

For a key for a name that is not a translation for Once there was a war here is what we did with the blood

THIS LAND IS WHERE WE BURIED EVERYTHING THAT CAME BEFORE YOU: AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CONCEPTS OF OWNERSHIP IN EARLY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

ABSTRACT:

Within the history of Afro-American existence much scholastic importance has been attributed to the weight of February. This is certainly understandable as Blackness in the pedagogical tradition is nothing if not a silhouette in a pelagic winter. However, understated in all of this is the significance of the "Token" as a kind of tragic hero in the tradition of sole survivors such as Odysseus. More specifically, how a boy might see his undoing and howl across the unflinching snow and never identify the echo. This Sonics of Blackness is a criminally under represented element of how one conveys to a room full of second graders the savage lick of a whip as a means of explaining an entire history. The question of this poem then is how the educator of the classroom approaches the subject of slavery when only one Black child sits in the room worrying at a shoelace, as if preparing. This poem takes as its primary subject a boy no older than 7 embraced by his white best friend as the white best friend states "I am glad slavery is over, I would have hated to own you." Followed by the boy sitting on his hands until they are blood bulbous and no longer entirely his own. How he looks beyond the window onto the playground and beneath the snow imagines an entire country; beneath that country, another.