Jericho Brown

Romans 12:1

I will begin with the body:
Porous and wet, love-wracked
And willing, body on the cross,
Body in the fire, black
Body hanging like the dead
Limbs from a tree in the year
Of our Lord. In my 23rd year,
A certain obsession overtook
My body, or I should say,
I let a man touch me until I bled,
Until my blood met his hunger
And so was changed, was given
A new name
As is the practice among my people
Who are several and whole, holy
And acceptable. On the whole,
Hurt by me, they will not call me
Brother. Hear me coming, and
They cross their legs. As men
Are wont to hate women,
As women are taught to hate
Themselves, they hate a woman
They smell in me, every muscle
Of her body clenched in fits
Of orgasm beneath men
Heavy as heaven itself, my
Body, my dying sacrifice, desirous
As I will be, black as I am.