

# A Poem in which I Try to Express My Glee at the Music My Friend Has Given Me

By Ross Gay

—for Patrick Rosal

Because I must not  
get up to throw down in a café in the Midwest,  
I hold something like a clownfaced herd  
of bareback and winged elephants  
stomping in my chest,  
I hold a thousand  
kites in a field loosed from their tethers  
at once, I feel  
my skeleton losing track  
somewhat of the science I've made of tamp,  
feel it rising up shriek and groove,  
rising up a river guzzling a monsoon,  
not to mention the butterflies  
of the loins, the hummingbirds  
of the loins, the thousand  
dromedaries of the loins, oh body  
of sunburst, body  
of larkspur and honeysuckle and honeysuccor  
bloom, body of treetop holler,  
oh lightspeed body  
of gasp and systole, the mandible's ramble,  
the clavicle swoon, the spine's  
trillion teeth oh, drift  
of hip oh, trill of ribs,  
oh synaptic clamor and juggernaut  
swell oh gutracket  
blastoff and sugartongue  
syntax oh throb and pulse and rivulet  
swing and glottal thing  
and kick-start heart and heel-toe heart  
ooh ooh ooh a bullfight  
where the bull might  
take flight and win!

Notes:

The epigraph of this poem was originally omitted in the changeover to the new website. Because of this, reciting the epigraph is optional for the 2019-2020 Poetry Out Loud season.

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Ross Gay was born in Youngstown, Ohio. Gay is an editor with the chapbook presses Q Avenue and Ledge Mule Press and is a founding editor, with Karissa Chen and Patrick Rosal, of the online sports magazine 'Some Call it Ballin.' He earned a BA from Lafayette College, an MFA in Poetry from Sarah Lawrence College, and a PhD in English from Temple University. He teaches at Indiana University.

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