

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!

Ross Gay, "A Poem in which I Try to Express My Glee at the Music My Friend Has Given Me"
from *Bringing the Shovel Down*. Copyright © 2011 by Ross Gay. All rights are controlled by
the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of University of
Pittsburgh Press.

Source: *Bringing the Shovel Down* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011)