

# American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin [“Inside me is a black-eyed animal”]

By Terrance Hayes

Inside me is a black-eyed animal  
Bracing in a small stall. As if a bird  
Could grow without breaking its shell.  
As if the clatter of a thousand black  
Birds whipping in a storm could be held  
In a shell. Inside me is a huge black  
Bull balled small enough to fit inside  
The bead of a nipple ring. I mean to leave  
A record of my raptures. I was raised  
By a beautiful man. I loved his grasp of time.  
My mother shaped my grasp of space.  
Would you rather spend the rest of eternity  
With your wild wings bewildering a cage or  
With your four good feet stuck in a plot of dirt?

Source: *Poetry* (September 2017)