Cadillac Moon

By Kevin Young

Crashing
again—Basquiat
sends fenders

& letters headlong
into each other
the future. Fusion.

AAAAAAAAAAAAAA.

Big Bang. The Big
Apple, Atom’s
behind him—

no sirens
in sight. His career
of careening

since—at six—
playing stickball
a car stole

his spleen. Blind
sided. Move
along folks—nothing

to see here. Driven,
does two Caddys
colliding, biting

the dust he’s begun
to snort. Hit
& run. Red

Cross—the pill-pale
ambulance, inside
out, he hitched

to the hospital.
Joy ride. Hot
wired. O the rush

before the wreck—

each Cadillac,
a Titanic,
an iceberg that’s met
its match—cabin flooded like an engine,
drawing even dark Shine from below deck.

FLATS FIX. Chop shop. Body work while-u-wait. In situ the spleen

or lien, anterior view—removed. Given Gray’s Anatomy by his mother for recovery—

151. Reflexion of spleen turned forwards & to the right, like

pages of a book—Basquiat pulled into orbit

with tide, the moon gold as a tooth, a hubcap gleaming,
gleaned—Shine swimming for land, somewhere solid to spin his own obit.

Kevin Young, "Cadillac Moon" from To Repel Ghosts. Copyright © 2001 by Kevin Young. Reprinted with the permission of Zoland Books/Steerforth Press.

Source: To Repel Ghosts (Zoland Books, 2001)
Kevin Young was born in Lincoln, Nebraska. He studied under Seamus Heaney and Lucie Brock-Broido at Harvard University and, while a student there, became a member of the Dark Room Collective, a community of African American writers. “I feel like a poem is made up of poetic and unpoetic language, or unexpected language,” Young said in a 2006 interview with Ploughshares. “I think there are many other vernaculars, whether it’s the vernacular of the blues, or the vernacular of visual art, the sort of living language of the everyday.” For roughly a decade, Young was the Atticus Haygood Professor of Creative Writing and English and curator of Literary Collections and the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library at Emory University. Young is the poetry editor of the New Yorker and the director of New York Public Library’s Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

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