I am Trying to Break Your Heart

By Kevin Young

I am hoping
to hang your head

on my wall
in shame—

the slightest taxidermy
thrills me. Fish

forever leaping
on the living-room wall—

paperweights made
from skulls

of small animals.
I want to wear

your smile on my sleeve
& break

your heart like a horse
or its leg. Weeks of being

bucked off, then
all at once, you’re mine—

Put me down.

I want to call you thine

to tattoo mercy
along my knuckles. I assassin

down the avenue
I hope

to have you forgotten
by noon. To know you

by your knees
palsied by prayer.

Loneliness is a science—

consider the taxidermist’s
tender hands

trying to keep from losing
skin, the bobcat grin
of the living.

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