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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Source: Dear Darkness (Alfred A. Knopf, 2008)