

Inheritance

By Tyree Daye

My mother will leave me her mother's deep-black
cast-iron skillet someday,

I will fry okra in it,
weigh my whole life on its black handle,
lift it up to feel a people in my hand.

I will cook dinner
for my mother on her rusting, bleached stove
with this oiled star.

My mother made her body crooked
all her life to afford this little wooden blue house.

I want her green thumbs

wound around a squash's neck

to be wound around my wrist

telling me to stay longer. O what she grew with the dust

dancing in blue hours. What will happen to her body

left in the ground, to the bodies in the street,

the uncles turned to ash on the fireplace mantles

the cousins we've misplaced?

How many people make up this wound?

No one taught my mother how to bring us back to life,

so no one taught me.

O what we gather and O Lord

bless what we pass on.

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