

# Ode to the Midwest

By Kevin Young

*The country I come from  
Is called the Midwest  
—Bob Dylan*

I want to be doused  
in cheese

& fried. I want  
to wander

the aisles, my heart's  
supermarket stocked high

as cholesterol. I want to die  
wearing a sweatsuit—

I want to live  
forever in a Christmas sweater,

a teddy bear nursing  
off the front. I want to write

a check in the express lane.  
I want to scrape

my driveway clean

myself, early, before  
anyone's awake—

that'll put em to shame—  
I want to see what the sun

sees before it tells  
the snow to go. I want to be

the only black person I know.

I want to throw  
out my back & not

complain about it.  
I wanta drive

two blocks. Why walk—

I want love, n stuff—

I want to cut  
my sutures myself.

I want to jog  
down to the river

& make it my bed—

I want to walk  
its muddy banks

& make me a withdrawal.

I tried jumping in,  
found it frozen—

I'll go home, I guess,  
to my rooms where the moon

changes & shines  
like television.

Source: *Poetry* (June 2007)