

Toi Derricotte

NAMED

“My father puts the
hairbrush up my butt.”

Words, words the

hated inseparable
words immerse me in

the sewer hole
of hate. I *am*

sick. I am nothing but
some flying nameless

sack that
catches & fills

with words, words like
“the hairbrush up my

butt.” They hurt. I don’t
remember. It just *was*. It

was *nothing*. Words are the
context of a feeling, a

city made of
words that I un-

do by words’ brutality, or
do *I* do it, putting

myself on top of the
hairbrush? Is it a

dirty feeling? Is it a
torn feeling? Is it

electric? I can't see my

father's face. Could this be
the grain of his terror

before I felt
my own? Perhaps

we were all raped. Initiation
into humanity—the

hairbrush up your butt.

SHOE REPAIR BUSINESS

“This shoe is shiny
as a nigger's heel,” his
customer burst out
approvingly; then, remembering
the owner is black, he
tactfully appends, “I mean
shiny as a *Negro's* heel!”