

JERICHO BROWN

*Romans 12:1*

I will begin with the body:  
Porous and wet, love-wracked  
And willing, body on the cross,  
Body in the fire, black  
Body hanging like the dead  
Limbs from a tree in the year  
Of our Lord. In my 23rd year,  
A certain obsession overtook  
My body, or I should say,  
I let a man touch me until I bled,  
Until my blood met his hunger  
And so was changed, was given  
A new name  
As is the practice among my people  
Who are several and whole, holy  
And acceptable. On the whole,  
Hurt by me, they will not call me  
Brother. Hear me coming, and  
They cross their legs. As men  
Are wont to hate women,  
As women are taught to hate  
Themselves, they hate a woman  
They smell in me, every muscle  
Of her body clenched in fits  
Of orgasm beneath men  
Heavy as heaven itself, my  
Body, my dying sacrifice, desirous  
As I will be, black as I am.