

Black Snake Visitation · *Nathaniel Mackey*

—hendrix poem—

A black tantric  
snake I dream  
two days to the

morning I die  
slipping up  
thru my throat,

slithers out  
like the vomit I'll  
be choked by

can't, gigantic  
seven-headed  
snake, sticks out

one head at a  
time. Must  
be this hiss my

guitar's been  
rehearsing  
sits me down by

where the salt  
water crosses the  
sweet. Self-

searching twitch,  
the scrawny  
light of its

carriage, broken  
sealit stark-  
ness, furtive

sea of regrets.  
But not re-  
duced by what

I knew would not  
matter, woke  
to see no one

caress the arisen  
wonder's dreamt-of  
thigh. Death

enters a slack  
circle whispering,  
slapping hands,

beauty baited  
like a hook, hurt  
muse at whose

feet whatever  
fruit I'd give goes  
abruptly bad.

*Must be this  
hiss my  
guitar's*

*been rehearsing,  
lizardquick  
tongues like*

*they were  
licking the sky.*

*Must be this  
hiss my  
guitar's been*

*rehearsing, these  
lizardquick tongues  
like they*

*were licking  
the sky.*

*Down on my  
knees testing  
notes with*

*my teeth, always  
knew a day'd  
come I'd*

*put my wings out  
and fly.*