

Finale / Ann duCille

His face fades slowly to infinity.
You begin to grow tired of teardrop
and burning daffodil deep in the homefires
of your vacated thighs.

It's true he taught you lightning,
introduced you to your thunder,
gave you root.
Root.

But somewhere in St. Louis,
there's a stranger who smiled at you once
and you suspect that you could love him
just for his supenders.

Parish Doctor / Sterling A. Brown

They come to him for subscriptions.
They resent examination, investigation.
They tell *him* what is wrong with them. They know.
It is pus on de heart, hole in de head
The maul is open, they got stummatache,
Somebody let some night air in the battens.
They want him only to subscribe
The medcin: bitter-bitter is the best.

“Docteur, I doan b'leave you can do nothin' fuh me.
I got a snake in me. I know, me, I been spelled.
You laugh, non? I tell you son, a snake he in my inside.”
He tells them he's the best conjuh doctor, best for roots and herbs
North of New Orleans. They pop their eyes:
“You tink he know dose ting for true?”

They drink the boiled juices of a jit black hen
For diarrhea, for consumption
They kill a jit black dog, bury him three days, then cook him,
And oil the ailing person with the grease.
For rheumatism they kill a turkey buzzard,
Fry him up; rub the stiff jints with the mess.