

TAKE
THIS
STALLION

POEMS

ANAI'S
DUPLAN

Take This Stallion
© 2016 Anaïs Duplan

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FIRST EDITION

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Δ said to ■, “Did I hit an animal back there?”

■ said, “No, don’t look back.”

AN ACCOUNT OF A CHILD BORN ALIVE WITHOUT A BRAIN AND THE OBSERVABLES IN IT UPON DISSECTION

I wept for the suffering of dolphins. By that
I mean the cicadas, by that the rained-over slices
of bread on the gravel, the birds that mistake

car antennae for homes. Do you recall
the words that god said. No.
How could you. It was all in tongues

and arms and legs. It was all
in those children's hearts, the screamers.
No more solutions. Only this:

my severed arms. Someone has severed me
for stealing the merchant's peaches.
Someone has hanged me

on a public street for slander. A common
mishearing. I said, There is no
hare on the moon, and they heard,

the tribunal heard. There is no end
to your hunger and fasting, and fastening
the rope, the reaper told me.

The mechanic told me to smile.
I did. He showed me his tongue.

BLACKNESS, WHICH WAS ALWAYS MOVING

In trembling over the damp
petal-mound, palm-cupped,
I could not but cry out,
stricken as the bird
who sees finally itself
reflected in the careful
accident of a bramble-knot.

THE FOYER FOREVER

Who is dead in the ambulance.
Is it you or me or one of our friends.
Answer me this: Who is dead in the foyer.
Who is dead on the sidewalk. Who, at the stoplight,
has left us. Who has jumped from the water
tower and left a note that said, Thanks

but I did not care for the weather. Thanks
but there is no need to call an ambulance.
Do you ever look for bodies on the water
or do you prefer to have fun with friends.
I saw a man blow a man at the stoplight.
Blow him to pieces. How many die in the foyer

at the hospital. In the foyer
of my apartment, I give my thanks
to the mold growing on the windows. Stop, light.
What time does it come, the ambulance.
I want to be sure to tell my friends
to come around once in a while to water

the hydrangeas. Or are they peonies, who cares. Water
whatever agrees to stay alive. Do not dwell in the foyer
unless to asphyxiate. No need, my friends,
for thanks and praise. We kill ourselves off selflessly. Thanks
be to god who does not dial for an ambulance
when the children are sick. I made a mistake at the stoplight.

I thought they were making love and could not stop. Light punctures of intercourse. O genital fountain, spray thine water upon my grave. Who is dead up against the fence. Ambulance, you have taken far too long. I left a note in the foyer that read, Thanks but I did not care for the food. Thanks but there is no need to alert my friends—

they know. Remember, my friends,
it is near impossible to stop light
from entering you. Withhold your thanks
until the deed is done. Floating on the water,
you can sometimes spot a loved one. A foyer
full of guestbooks and black-gowned beasts. Ambulance,

do not come for me. Save my friends. Ambulance,
when will your engine stop? The light in the foyer, the light foyer—
In the night, I gave thanks to the water all around me, the water.

LA VUELTA

Hoping to start a riot,
the boy went on revealing his ankles
to the grazing stallions.
The animals bulged
in the sun and were blinded
by the sun. The boy's ankles were taut
and red. The animals grazed
in the sun and the boy
went on revealing his ankles
to the grazing stallions, hoping
to start a riot.

I once saw men riot when a woman
lifted her long black skirt.
He showed the way his ankle-bones
bulged and the men bulged
in the sun, and took to chasing
the boy, who went dashing, his skirt flapping, down
a lean alley, and evaporated.
When she was lost to them
they took to striking
each other over the head with empty fists,
striking until blood ran freely in the city
ditches. All of this sounding like horses thundering
into each other, peeling themselves
off of each other, and thundering
again. The whole city, this sound.

WHY WOULD YOU EVER GO TO A POOL PARTY ANYWAY

I.

Anaïs, you needn't cry
like a baby seal. You needn't wear
your hair long, just to divert
the passing sailors—

O what flag waves outside the windows
of all fledgling girls
when they detect
what lives
between their legs.

John Paul once said to me,
O Anaïs, o Anaïs, what lives between your legs,
and I opened up to him, put his hand inside me
and said, This is the fiery throat of God—be careful.
You may find you are no longer every-
thing you had been
before you arrived.

II.

He said, she said, we wrote of a great awakening.
Instead of death we only moaned
every time the sun did wane and how
it waned every morning. Today could be
the day that does not end
in your death-
ly embrace.

ANAÏS DUPLAN was born in Jacmel, Haiti. She is the director of a performance collective called The Spacesuits and of The Center for Afrofuturist Studies, an artist residency program in Iowa City. Her poems and essays have appeared in *Birdfeast*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Journal*, [*PANK*], and other publications. She is an MFA candidate at the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

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