

Boy in a Stolen Evening Gown

Saeed Jones

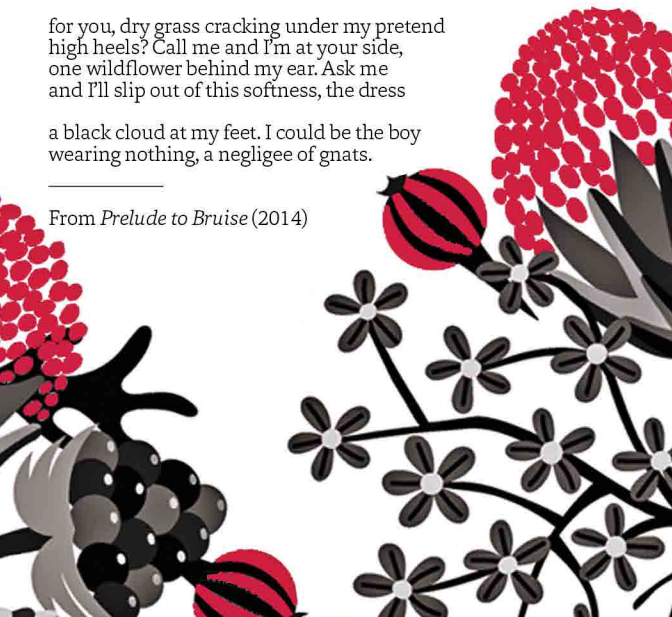
In this field of thistle, I am the improbable lady. How I wear the word: sequined weight snagging my saunter into overgrown grass, blonde split-end blades. I waltz in an acre of bad wigs.

Sir who is no one, sir who is yet to come, I need you to undo this zipped back, trace the chiffon body I've borrowed. See how I switch my hips

for you, dry grass cracking under my pretend high heels? Call me and I'm at your side, one wildflower behind my ear. Ask me and I'll slip out of this softness, the dress

a black cloud at my feet. I could be the boy wearing nothing, a negligee of gnats.

From *Prelude to Bruise* (2014)



Coal

Audre Lorde

I
Is the total black, being spoken
From the earth's inside.
There are many kinds of open.
How a diamond comes into a knot of flame
How a sound comes into a word, coloured
By who pays what for speaking.

Some words are open
Like a diamond on glass windows
Singing out within the crash of passing sun
Then there are words like stapled wagers
In a perforated book—buy and sign and tear apart—
And come whatever wills all chances
The stub remains
An ill-pulled tooth with a ragged edge.
Some words live in my throat
Breeding like adders. Others know sun
Seeking like gypsies over my tongue
To explode through my lips
Like young sparrows bursting from shell.
Some words
Bedevil me.

Love is a word another kind of open—
As a diamond comes into a knot of flame
I am black because I come from the earth's inside
Take my word for jewel in your open light.

From *Coal* (1976)

