American Sonnet for My Past and Future Assassin
[“I lock you in an American sonnet that is part prison”]
by Terrance Hayes

I lock you in an American sonnet that is part prison,
Part panic closet, a little room in a house set aflame.
I lock you in a form that is part music box, part meat
Grinder to separate the song of the bird from the bone.
I lock your persona in a dream-inducing sleeper hold
While your better selves watch from the bleachers.
I make you both gym & crow here. As the crow
You undergo a beautiful catharsis trapped one night
In the shadows of the gym. As the gym, the feel of crow-
Shit dropping to your floors is not unlike the stars
Falling from the pep rally posters on your walls.
I make you a box of darkness with a bird in its heart.
Voltas of acoustics, instinct & metaphor. It is not enough
To love you. It is not enough to want you destroyed.

Poetry Out Loud is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation.
It is a partnership with the Alabama State Council on the Arts and the Alabama Arts Alliance.
Original Poetry State Awards are provided by the Alabama Writer’s Forum.
The Possessive
by Sharon Olds

My daughter – as if I
owned her – that girl with the
hair wispy as a frayed bellpull

has been to the barber, that knife grinder,
and had the edge of her hair sharpened.

Each strand now cuts
both ways. The blade of new bangs
hangs over her re-brown eyes
like carbon steel.

All the little
spliced ropes are sliced. The curtain of
dark paper-cuts veils the face that
started from next to nothing in my body –

My body. My daughter. I'll have to find
another word. In her bright helmet
she looks at me as if across a
great distance. Distant fires can be
glimpsed in the resin light of her eyes:

the watch fires of an enemy, a while before
the war starts.

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