

# POETRY OUT LOUD



## **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.  
Volts of acoustics, instinct & metaphor. It is not enough  
To love you. It is not enough to want you destroyed.

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## 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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