

Smell the leaves on my breath  
*After Terrance Hayes*

He'd swallowed something.  
He would not say what,  
but we found it about his throat—  
late streetlights  
humming and swallowing  
instead of speaking.  
I can still hear all the echo.  
Sounds like breath  
persuaded with teeth  
rooted in the middle  
of someone else's cigarette  
fit down his throat.

For Crying Out Loud  
*After Terrance Hayes*

I was trying to watch convicts dream of sounds.  
I could hear cutouts, cutups  
of knuckles on a windowsill  
that sigh instead of speak.

The trouble with what it looks like  
sounds like I am saying—  
*They take up much less space.*  
But I could not say how I think nobody sees her.

Look around  
at the back of her throat  
trying to fill the room,  
sitting at some window  
crying for her man.

How to draw out an invisible man  
*After Terrance Hayes*

I feel like this is a good time to tell you—  
*We all have to go somewhere  
and we are probably already there.*

I'm telling you— *I thought of jumping,*  
but my window was painted shut  
and if you were listening carefully enough,  
I was holding in smoke  
until the tip of my tongue  
in my hole of a mouth  
looked nothing like  
a permanent part of me.

If I could have stepped out,  
closed my eyes  
to a vanishing—  
who knows, who knows.

Ask me about hunger.

I shouldn't say I felt I had fallen  
like somebody being chased.

What it look like  
*After Terrance Hayes*

I can stand so quietly in a room that the room appears empty.  
It always ended with my tongue disappearing  
and someone telling me—

    You must have no teeth,  
    not even two eyes.

    A boxed taped shut,  
    Inside and outside.

    A man circling  
    in the mouth  
    of the future  
    like a footnote.

    Wear your wig  
    like a folded rag.

Shape of a \_\_\_\_\_

Say he had no choice  
of where to stare at her.  
Say he was forgetting.

He didn't look as if he were one of them  
to give a mouthful of that word  
met with something about her  
and there's the mark of his teeth still  
pretending to make him feel safe.

How can she appear sewn up  
when she is given no shape of her own.  
She wanted to shout all sorts of things,  
but eventually forgot most of them  
while pretending to be able to stand there.

She wanted her mouth to make a handful of his throat,  
make her bones between his teeth.

But she says:

Explain in the shape of plain words.

Tell me the way a \_\_\_ is the color of almost erased.  
And if you say: \_\_\_ is the color of \_\_\_\_. Put it on  
before you ever see the \_\_\_ is a mouth down to its colors.

She wanted to watch the shape he put himself.