

Blackish by Reason of the Ice

by Bill Yarrow

I was in the basement. I was in the basement
with Sara who was reading Job to the baby.
I was standing in the basement thinking about
Uncle Conrad's terrible black tie, 100% polyester
which he wore to the funeral last Tuesday.
I was in the basement with Sara, whose
eyes were eyes of flesh, whose eyes were
like the eyelids of morning, who had made
a covenant with mine eyes, and I said to her,
"Sara, do you taketh it with your eyes?"
and she said, "What?" and I said "Do you
taketh it with your eyes?" and she said,
"Stop being stupid, can you hold the baby?"
and I said, "I had not been as infants which
never saw light," and she said, sharpening
her eyes upon me, "Take the fucking baby."
And I took the baby, and I rocked the baby,
and the baby rocked me. And as I comforted
my son, and as my son comforted me,
I remembered they called Edward Dahlberg
the Job of American letters because he suffered
in his art. Many there are who labor like slaves
and suffer neglect. Does that make them Jobs?
"Sara," I called, "do you taketh it with your
eyes?" but she was lost, lost in the text,
and heard me not, and then, for just
a moment, I too felt lost, like a child,
like someone who meets with darkness
in the daytime and gropes in the midday

as in the night. Of course, I knew we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness alone any more than Uncle Conrad could've worn a different tie to the wake, for life is wind and death is astonishment. "Sara," I implored, "take the baby for he hath made me weary." And Sara took the baby with her eyes.

