

---

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Tyree Daye: Two Poems

Tyree Daye · Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020

**To: All Poets**

**From: Northeastern North Carolina**

It's just getting hot,  
dogwoods showering our shoulders with flowers.

I saw dead baby birds on a trail  
so I know new life has arrived

lost in the survival of pine and ash. I'll say it plainly—  
we need you down here.

Yesterday, my uncle put a nail through his thumb  
working for the same white man he's worked for since sixth grade.

Last night his blood fell on the bathroom floor and made a star  
he couldn't follow.

He needs to hear your poems.

\*

## Field Notes on Beginning

they each had a decision before them. In this, they were not unlike anyone who ever longed to cross the Atlantic or the Rio Grande.

*Isabel Wilkerson, from The Warmth of Other Suns*

<>

I wear my grandmother's wing-ready bones  
like a blue unbuttoned housedress  
through the city of festivals and fireworks that blow up in a one cloud sky  
Some nights the block tells me all its problems  
The city becomes one mouth its tongue pointed to the sky like a steeple



I'll meet you at the hanging tree in Rolesville in 1957  
I'll be the man in his father's hat  
you be women back from the dead we've decided  
a long time ago the question is not how  
can black people pray to Jesus? It's how can white people?  
I'll meet you on a train headed to Queens  
just tell me where I promise to gather your bones  
  
only for good I was not touched by the darkness  
between two buildings I stayed in the moonlight  
  
like you told your daughter to tell me  
I don't want to die  
  
in the south like so many of mine  
I want to be carried back



We were digging in a field you'd turned over  
When you lifted the soil in your hands you knew its name  
  
This is what you said was mercy ground  
that I was safe here and I began digging again  
  
I saw every lover who once held you  
while your children slept  
in rooms of so many blankets  
one small fire for everyone  
  
the blankets wrapped so tight  
no cold could get in



Leaving is necessary some say  
There is a whole ocean between you and a home  
you can't fix your tongue to speak



Others do not want me no farther than the length of a small yard  
*They ask Where are you going, Tyree? Your mama here*  
*you've got stars in your eyes a ship in your movement*



I said my few-note goodbyes my dead will not come  
I will not see a cardinal in the city  
  
so I drew one on my chest  
A coop inside a coop inside of me

\*\*\*

(Both poems are from his book *Cardinal*, from Copper Canyon Press, 2020.  
<http://www.tyree.work/>)



This entry was posted on Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020 at 9:30 am and is filed under [Poetry](#)  
You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can skip to the  
end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.

