

A SAMPLE FROM

Autowar

poems by

Assiyah Jamilla Touré

Brick Books

Fall 2021

Please do not quote for publication until
verified with the corrected, finished book.

Copyright © Assiyah Jamilla Touré, 2021

We acknowledge the Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund, and the Ontario Arts Council for their support of our publishing program.



Canada



Brick Books
487 King St. W.
Kingston, ON
K7L 2X7

www.brickbooks.ca

keener

regressing into reflective apartment buildings
is a keen professional imaginer of maybes

an eager to lessen the blows echo type
i'm here but my presence is convalescing

i crave my unbeing syrup and taste less
i want my labour to lose my value

let only me spend me, puff me, pass
sew myself up less i be the steel beams

use brown liner like an illustrious shield,
carve an eight-hour smile into
the corners of my mouth

set out hunting for a temporary rest stop
any house on this block is a rest stop in a rush

aroused by the tile in all these homes
homes nervous, oscillating trembling walls

window eyes look across to sharp lined churches
next slide opens with a sharp sweep of lash

do you know that the sharp sweetness lasts
longest in a little home with a bit of heat?
and crumbs and crits of dust i've named
i'll own up when the moans escape my body

that's how you'll know it's cutting into me
marks from where these bars are cutting in me

but they'll say "she loves it" they'll say,
"look how much she loves it" they'll say

watch me try to learn that lesson
when our morals are so blurry

and so is the truth industry
and every photo of me
and every photo of me
is tagged with my ambivalence
i reach in and smudge me – i blacken me

it's that economic lie,
it's that federal ideation tax

it's that soft thump in the night
caught on flash

im a new me im a new me
im a new me
im new

bloodthirst

here in the dark,
i am insatiable for my flesh
i just can't get enough of me
all my tiny after-wounds
hard crust of goodness come up
my shell throws up scabs of pavement
they are so sweet in opening to me
that's me giving, still too soft
for the poor brittleness of my teeth

ape

of all the animals he loved
for a brief time i was his best

the very best animal
for the very best big boy

my silhouette aping
his divine brutality

living things break each other
men love monsters

love is its own monstrous
monstrous is timothy treadwell-ism

watch out for the brown furred ones
the white furred run crossing oaths

making hybrids of heathens
in any of row of degenerate peers

nicknamed animal for all their crimes,
not grisly and not polar,

you are a growler
you are lawless, you are feinting upwards

when i get too old for this
assembly line of worth

i won't get the meadow or pasture
they will catch on to my
little charms,

i'm no donation in body
and have given no veal,

I beg you when they shuttle me down
cutting me into my parts

and discarding what the earth saw

save the best for last, though we know
they will shear the sweetest meat of me

but here, take my arm with its every nerve
in permanent shock of strain

poor ends super and atrophied
sublime aftermath of toxic struggle

i will generously bequeath my ego body to the state
let them feed on my tumorous gristle

leave the rest to this dead earth
leave the best to the smallest maggots

sweet nothing

i am so attuned touch is impossible

the colossal space edging matter is too big for longing

it's not recoiling from touch it's seeking the sensation of none

i'm not afraid to be loved i just don't feel anything

everything is wrung out of violent relief any way

i want very much to hold on to this quietness

and keep on and on

and on and on