

I dream in a tongue other than my own

one minute I'm tweedy smack / and the next I'm banjo-twang / yes one minute I'm angle-whip / and the next I'm eliding endings / with beginnings / mouthing vowels so flat my mongrel self / sounds almost real / but I dream in a different dialect / sift my mother's stout syllables / plump honorifics / from the language of my colonizers / what is left? / glossy contractions / shiny / subjunctive / grammar that belongs / to the anthropology of the pale / people who look nothing like me / my lips / inflamed / form these words / my throat forced to swallow syntax / cheeks lined / with the hook and barb / of prepositions for proper / we / creatures broken / domesticated / blistered maw muzzled / my brown body a vessel / torched / suffused with the idioms of my invaders / white bodies with their alien speech who are alarmed / by the rolling / smacking / slapping of tongues on crooked teeth / my croon a fire / my throat a chimney / my tongue as white / as a flag burning / burning / my tongue / is burning is / burning my tongue / is burning / is burning / is burning