

a feeling has passed before a charted present

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Poems

Kimberly Alidio

I wanted to write a book that was like lying down.

—Barry Rapp

a feeling has passed before a charted present
a possibly expired desire
a replacement of Whitman's body with his opposite
a polite vengeance

a presumed minor literature
a simile not in force
a yoking of the concrete
a myth makes

a body subject to forces not legislated to pass over a same
a memory uncertain about a sentence
a certain observation of an indefinite object
a response barely stands

a sentence only to signal an unwritten
a demand for a law barring its passage and end
a tapeworm, a pinworm, a hookworm, a threadworm
a fluke a sentence wants never to end

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Kimberly Alidio's most recent books are *why letter ellipses (selva oscura, 2020)* and *: once teeth bones coral : (Belladonna*, 2020)*, a finalist for a Lambda Literary Award. A poet, essayist, and educator, she lives on unceded Munsee-Mohican territories, also known as upper Hudson Valley, New York.

About this Poem

"I've been thinking a lot about feminist art of the femme body, especially the body of a self-identified woman of color. Ana Mendieta and Laura Aguilar, for example. Bhanu Kapil's writing and performance art bring a speaker's body into text where the body at times lies down to mark important sites of struggle. Kapil's sentence, 'I wanted to write a book that was like lying down,' is so evocatively strange in terms of verb tense and figurative language that it sparked my poem, first in the form of a prose poem. I revised it into a lineated litany or list because I wanted to write a poem that was like slowing down a sentence. I want the present tense to listen to its possible futures, and to ask, 'What kind of power of undoing is wielded by being undone?'"

—*Kimberly Alidio*

