

AUNT CHLOE

AUGUST 17, 2019

Haiku for Toni Morrison

Missing Toni Morrison

by Al-Yasha Ilhaam Williams

All her genius goes

Where? Into the sky? The earth?

The souls of black girls?

Bird in the Hand

by Sharan Strange

(Of course...)

The bird is alive—

Warm, pulsing, its energy

Ancient, feral, true.

* * *

Chloe's/Toni's bird—

Language—full-throated, jeweled

Swoop of bracing love.

* * *

Cupped now in your hands

Will you cherish its bold heart,

Release it to flight?

Al-Yasha Ilhaam Williams is associate professor in the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Spelman College. As a musician, she performs with the experimental group, Atlanta Improvisers Orchestra. Recently, she was a Fellow at Harvard University's W. E. B. Du Bois Research Institute at Hutchins Center.

Sharan Strange's poems and essays have been published in numerous journals and anthologies in the U.S. and abroad; she has also created sonic and visual art-based works for museum and gallery exhibitions in New York, Boston, Oakland, Seattle, and Atlanta, and her collaborations with composers have been performed by the International Contemporary Ensemble, the American Modern Ensemble, and The Dream Unfinished Orchestra, among others. Her honors include the Barnard Women Poets' Prize, the Rona Jaffe Foundation Writer's Award, and Georgia Author of the Year Award from the Georgia Writers' Association. She teaches writing at Spelman College.

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