

Quintin Collins

Dying Laughing

After Ross Gay

My whole body heaved
curved keeled over air expelled stuttered
withheld from lungs
The funniest shit
I've ever seen
heard
remembered
a decade later
knees gripped slumped
haha turned *HAW-HAW*
ribs stiffen against guffaws
I swear to God
I'm dying I'm dead
Dead ass I raise a finger
to pause contain collect
from the undertow
of a damn good joke
that nexus where we live
as bodies without composure
and *ooooh I haven't laughed like that*
in a good min the heaving
the bellow call and response
resounding from daddy and mama
and TT for *Original Kings of Comedy*
or *Delirious* or *Live on the Sunset Strip*
Richard Pryor my inheritance
these teeth how chortles funnel
through the gap my daddy's
gap my sisters' gap
all beacons as we cuttin' up
and *hold up lemme breathe*
and *aight aight play it again*
You'd think a mosh
how I elbow stumble
to catch the cackle
before I choke cough
tear up so hard it burns
doubled over laughing
whoopin' & hollerin'
breathless the closet distance
I'll bend toward the grave