

I Am Trying to Break Your Heart

by Kevin Young

I am hoping  
to hang your head

on my wall  
in shame—

the slightest taxidermy  
thrills me. Fish

forever leaping  
on the living-room wall—

paperweights made  
from skulls

of small animals.  
I want to wear

your smile on my sleeve  
& break

your heart like a horse  
or its leg. Weeks of being

bucked off, then  
all at once, you're mine—

Put me down.

I want to call you thine

to tattoo mercy  
along my knuckles. I assassin  
down the avenue  
I hope

to have you forgotten  
by noon. To know you

by your knees  
palsied by prayer.

Loneliness is a science—

consider the taxidermist's  
tender hands

trying to keep from losing  
skin, the bobcat grin  
of the living.