

I'LL FLY AWAY

POEMS BY

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"One glad morning,

When this life is over

I'l

Fly away."

I'LL FLY AWAY

Mama Saba asks

“What’s the word for that
in English?”

And there I am,
trying to catch the breeze
with a butterfly net.

I fumble through
the only language I know
and find everything
but an answer.

Eventually, I give up and say,
“I don’t think there is one.”

English is the shiniest hammer
I own, but it’s also
the only thing in my toolbox.

I use it all the time,
but there is so much
it cannot do.

1

Nolexi *noun*

no · lex · i | \ nō-lek-si \

Definition of *nolexi*:

1

: a word or phrase that does not exist or has no direct translation in a particular language

2

The following words do not currently exist in the English language, but they should:

Nolexi

Amoriode

Mortaprime

Culi

Coamplify

Repensist

3

This is how I scare the dirt

away from the coffin,

puff out my chest

and intimidate the soil;

this is how

I reverse my own burial.

I ask,

“What do we tell the god of death?”

and the poem says, “Not today.”

Sometimes,

a pen

is also a shovel.

5

Amoriode *verb*

a · mor · i · o · de | \ a-mŌ-rī-ōd \

Definition of *amoriode*:

1 : the act or an instance of dying while doing an activity you love **6**

Legend has it

when J Dilla was admitted to the hospital, he took his production equipment with him

and made instrumentals out of everything

inside his body that wasn't ready to die.

The last thing he did on this earth was make music.

How beautiful it is to grind yourself into sand, offer the grain of you to anyone willing to listen, hoping they will carry your debris

into places you'll never go.

7

Mortaprime *noun* mort · a · prime | \ mŌr-tə-prīm \

Definition of *mortapriime*:

1 : one who dies too soon

2 : an individual who passes away at a young age **Culi** *noun*

cu · li | \ kü-lē \

Definition of *culi*:

1 : a gifted young person who lives in a poverty-stricken area **2** : the kid in the hood that everyone believes is special 8

And maybe we all know a “Ricky”

Someone who will emerge from nothing

like the 1st song on a good album—

A dandelion the neighborhood holds

in the air, hoping

a gust will catch the boy

long enough for him

to land somewhere better.

We grab violence by the collar,

and say,

“Anybody but him.”

We offer O-Dog for Cane,

Caesar in exchange for Ruby,

but sometimes negotiations fail.

There seems to be a language barrier.

9

Coamplify *verb*

co · am · pli · fy | \ kō-am-plə-fī \

Definition of *coamplify*:

1 : to celebrate the life of someone who has passed away **2** : a mass movement where people around the world continues the legacy of one who has died

10

What I know is this

a runner doesn't always cross

the finish line,

but a baton can look like

a microphone depending on

how you hold it.

I know that a marathon

can become a relay

as long as there is someone

willing to finish the race.

I know that a victory lap

isn't over until the music stops.