

## AMERICAN SONNET FOR MY PAST AND FUTURE ASSASSIN

#8, Terrance Hayes

Why are you bugging me you stank minuscule husk  
Of musk, muster & deliberation crawling over reasons  
And possessions I have & have not touched?  
Should I fail in my insecticide, I pray for a black boy  
Who lifts you to a flame with bedeviled tweezers  
Until mercy rises & disappears. You are the size  
Of a stuttering drop of liquid—milk, machine oil  
Semen, blood. Yes, you funky stud, you are the jewel  
In the knob of an elegant butt plug, snug between  
Pleasure & disgust. You are the scent of rot at the heart  
Of love-making. The meat inside your exoskeleton  
Is as tender as Jesus. Neruda wrote of “a nipple  
Perfuming the earth.” Yes, you are an odor, an almost  
Imperceptible ode to death, a lousy, stinking stinkbug.

# AMERICAN SONNET FOR MY PAST AND FUTURE ASSASSIN

#40, Terrance Hayes

I'm full of more water than a forest  
And the adrenaline of a spooked horse.  
But I'm a Time Lord. My armor is flesh  
And spirit. I carry a flag bearing a different  
Nation on each side. I carry money bearing  
The face of my assassins. I'm good company  
And pretty fun for a little while. A whirlwind,  
I tend to repeat my mistakes. I'm a camera  
With no cameraman, my own personal  
Assistant & assassin. The truth is easy to see  
When it's before you, but it's deceptive  
Otherwise. I am selfish. I am a religion.  
You are a religion. Together we are a religion.  
My love is oppressive. I'm a Time Lord.

AMERICAN SONNET FOR MY PAST AND FUTURE ASSASSIN  
#42, Terrance Hayes

Because he cannot distinguish a blackbird  
From a crow or raven, it's all the more  
Brazen when the autocrat kisses a cat.  
Because he's a kettle of oil about to boil,  
It's all the more touching when the despot  
Pets a pet. *The skin breaks so easily*, he says,  
But he cries it softly. Because he's someone  
Who can't distinguish a horse from a zebra  
Without the stripes, he can't describe himself  
Without looking in a mirror. Baller. Bawler.  
Dentures. Makeup. He's almost too flakey  
To be the villain. Because he's someone  
Who cannot distinguish meat from malarkey.  
Anything close to his mouth gets bitten.

## AMERICAN SONNET FOR MY PAST AND FUTURE ASSASSIN

### #48, Terrance Hayes (For the President)

The umpteenth thump on the rump of a badunkadunk  
Stumps us. The lunk, the chump, the hunk of plunder.  
The umpteenth horny, honky stump speech pumps  
A funky rumble over air. The umpteenth slump  
In our humming democracy, a bumble bureaucracy  
With teeny tiny wings too small for its rumples,  
Dumpling of a body. Humpty-Dumpty. Frumpy  
Suit. The umpteenth honk of hollow thunder.  
The umpteenth *Believe me*. The umpteenth grumpy,  
Jumpy retort. Chump change, casino game, tuxedo,  
Teeth bleach, stump speech. Junk science. Junk bond.  
Junk country, stump speech. The umpteenth boast  
Stumps our toe. The umpteenth falsehood stumps  
Our elbows & eyeballs, our Nos, Whoahs, wows, woes.

## AMERICAN SONNET FOR MY PAST AND FUTURE ASSASSIN

#70, Terrance Hayes

You have a gun but to use the bullet  
You decide your wife, having snuggled it  
Under her tongue, should then smuggle it  
Into your pie hole but she swallows it.  
You have a gun but to use the poison  
You have your son dip a rose in venom  
So strong the smell alone will kill someone,  
But the first to die smelling it is your son.  
You have a gun but to use the dagger  
You decide your daughter should dangle  
It beneath her dress. She refuses to endanger  
Her self-respect. You need to find goons,  
Wranglers, wire, gin, ingenuity, cotton gins,  
You need the constitution. You have a gun.