

DARREL ALEJANDRO HOLNES

ba•by

\ \ **n.** 1. Auburn, gold, and blossom cherry: our fingers, two rings and my tongue along your ear. / Electric lighter, gas stove good time/ Praying for lightning. **2.** Man made, made man, fire. **3.** This woman's need for family taken away by the Hutu tribe/ This man's efforts to be her lost village/ Inferno. **4.** A bump barring in the words *I don't love you anymore* as he kisses her belly for the Christmas card photo. **5.** The end of an argument in the emergency room/ What we lost in the flames.

\ \ **v.** **1.** To nurse, cure with promises, a cocktail of words, each word mixed in to strengthen the other. / *Marry me anyway.* **2.** To link by umbilical cord./ To cut the cord and hit the thing's bottom so we hear it breathe. **3.** To hear silence instead.

ANGEL SWAN

The last time I gave up my body,
a three-word secret lay on my lap.

Your swan's beak tore it open
and you lent me your neck.

I proposed.

And we made my dorm room a chapel,
you glowed with our child.

But love taints the angel,
immaculate birds cannot bear flesh and feathers,

and God steals back a dirtied swan.

Darrel Alejandro Holnes is from Panama City, Panama and Houston, Texas. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from University of Michigan where he was a Cornwell Fellow. His play, [*The Burning Room*](#), winner of the National Playwriting Award from WSU, was a participating entry in the Kennedy Center for the Arts Annual College Theater Festival. His poetry has appeared in [*The Caribbean Writer*](#), [*the minnesota review*](#), and [*NANO Fiction*](#) among other journals. He continues to work as a writer and emerging performance artist in Ann Arbor, Michigan as a Zell Post-Graduate Fellow.