

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## Poem in which I thank my anger—

By Miriam O'Neal

“It is not taboo to learn from the past.” (Akan people of Ghana)

—as I fly like the Sankofa,  
feet forward, eyes looking back, my anger

riding on my shoulder, home from the party  
where the drunk patted my hand saying *You'd be nice to fuck.*

For agreeing it was time to blow that pop-stand,  
pre-empting my girl-learned vacant smile with useful rancour.

For blessing my face with early winter rain,  
reminding me that *No* is a complete sentence.

For showing up beside me on the dark road home,  
placing my foot on the brake so gently I didn't know

it was you calling my name,  
saying *Let's not die tonight.*

For leaning with me across my mother's dead face whispering,  
*Kiss her. Ask her to teach you to forgive.*

For standing at the bowsprit of my twenties, absorbing all that tumult—  
as we practiced for later storms I'd weather through.

For giving me time, staying close but not on top of,  
a kind of striding-down-the-street good friend,

one arm locked in mine, promising a clean sweep each time  
we jumped the crack that might have been what broke

my mother's back that night in November.  
For teaching me to fly forward while looking back—

like the Sankofa, carrying the egg of the past along for the ride—  
for the lesson that remembering is better than repeating all of that.