

Anthony Lawrence

The Inner Life

They were in bed, talking about this and that, mostly this, which was focussed,

like the title of a Leonard Cohen record, on various positions. They were trying to make a baby. They'd fallen asleep

and had woken to a squall of rain and miles of unrelenting wind. *I dreamt of being thrown around inside the Hadron*

Collider, with dark matter blowing through my skin, he said. She kissed his eyes. *You were talking excitedly in your sleep*

about extremes of weather. He returned the kiss and said: *I'm drawn to focus on the nature of my blood as it goes from one*

end of my body to the other. Rain fell, paused and fell. He followed his thought: *I've been thinking about the number*

of beats our hearts are given, how they run low, lower, then out. Once, my head on your chest, I heard your blood surge,

your pulse skip a beat. He asked if she had ever considered her blood's circumnavigation of her body that the arteries

and chambers of her heart had to instigate,
the setting on non-archival repeat. She replied, smiling
– he was grateful

for that smile – that she would rather discuss
the etymology of semen than some extended cardio-
thoracic metaphor

for dying: *Consider the paper trail for stamen,*
she said. “Warp inside an upright loom, a thread.”

If a medieval puzzle

for desire, followed by ejaculation fails to convince,
how’s this for proof: ‘The stamen is a filament, a stalk
with anthers and cups

for the production of pollen.’ *‘The evidence*
is mounting,’ he said. They laughed. She waited until
the roar from heavy

rain had passed over the roof before saying:
Bees will brush finials at the summit of a red hibiscus,
fill their saddlebags

with gold, then leave the atrium of the angiosperm.
The scent of arousal was rising in waves between them
where they were

kneeling now, face to face. He pressed his palm
between her breasts. *My heart,* she said, holding his hand
in place.