

Excerpt from "Big Black," a thriller set in mid-1990s Mississippi.

Candida Constance has been a closet poet since she was a child. That closet is where she finds quiet. And room to be lost. It is a place to find solace. And to lose screams. It is where she has written volumes by candlelight. At its last word, each volume is sealed entirely in the melted stubs of the candles that lit its way.

Journal XXIII entitled "For Every Word That Is A Lie, A True Word Is Buried Here"

Entry LXVII: An Invitation to Love Me

Dare you crawl my winding maze,
Slither into my psyche tunnel
clawed out with chewed-nail chisels?

Dare you fill my darkness,
share secrets in blackened niches
dug out with fleshy daggers?

Dare you draw near my blood drum,
scabbed over with shop-worn armor
bashed in by fist-flung words.

Dare we journey on to my end cave,
Rendezvous with reeking garbage,
stifling those who get there?

I would love you to join me there.
But would understand if you do not.