Contents

Language in Our Blood vii

Radiclani Clytus

I. Essays

Red 3
Erasure 4
An Ode to Raccoon 16
Sorrow Songs and Flying Away: Religious Influence on Black Poetry 19
A Needful Thing 29
Crossroads 32
A Supreme Signifier: Etheridge Knight 34
The Devil’s Secretary 37
The Blue Machinery of Summer 52
The Blood Work of Language 61
Son of Pop: Floyd D. Tunson’s Neo-blues 65
Conundrum 72
Clarence Major’s Cosmopolitan Vision 79
Dark Waters 83
The Method of Ai 96
II. Interviews

Collaboration and the Wishbone 107
Three Shades of Past 126
Excursions 138
Getting a Shape 148
The Wolf/Interview 157
Celebration and Confrontation: Walt Whitman 164

III. Commentaries

Notes from a Lost Notebook 179
You Made Me 190
More Than a State of Mind 193
Eros, Words 195
A Letter to Poetry 196
Small Illuminations 199
How Poetry Helps People to Live Their Lives 212
Picking a Lock to the Mind-Jail in the City of Asylum 214
A Note from The Best American Erotic Poems 219
The Mission of American Poets and Writers Visiting the 2008 Kolkata Book Fair 220
Rewriting Dante 221