

DANEZ SMITH

**For the Fifth Grade Black Boys
of Benjamin E. Mays Elementary School**

I am sorry I have no happy poems
about the ashy hallelujah of knees.
Whenever I open my mouth, ghosts raid

my poor tongue demanding names. I say
Devonte & my mouth drips stray braids.
I say *Keshawn* & vomit gold teeth.

It's always like this, my one good song
still unclaimed at the morgue, my hands
try to clap & end up cupping a skull.