



VERSE IN PLACE

JASON ALLEN-PAISANT

Treeness

a tapestry of earth suspended
in a forested temple
 beneath the roots
 the sheer face of a cliff
music from a rock gong
 among the snakes
 of the rhododendrons
 trembling at the blackness
of their skin a human walking
 among the birds
 past the barrier of time
 a climb away from land
where we punish ourselves
 because there are no trees
 because the woodlands
 have been cut down &
land has no time for itself
 If my thoughts can become
 ageless let them travel to a place
 called Infinite from
the words that kill time that kill
 things that kill vines let me lie
 in the infinity of a beetle in
 its meshwork in the muscles
that grow from its burrowing
 away from the noises
 of the crowd whose sounds silence
 the music of the rhododendrons
who shun the temple of the rock gong
 and the sacred hanging tapestry where
 the birds' thoughts echo
 Dear tree let me lose
my head and find it in the
 hairs of the birches
 in the air where my feet meet the
 the river that blossoms
from their exposed veins

(more) ↓



VERSE IN PLACE

JASON ALLEN-PAISANT is a Jamaican poet, scholar, and writer. The poem “Treeness” is from his collection *Thinking with Trees* (Milkwood Editions, 2025), which won the 2022 Bocas Prize for Caribbean Poetry. His poetry has also won the prestigious T.S. Eliot Prize. He received his doctorate in Medieval and Modern Languages from Oxford University, and is Professor of Critical Theory and Creative Writing at the University of Manchester. His most recent book, *The Possibility of Tenderness: A Jamaican Memoir of Plants and Dreams*, was published in 2025.

jasonallenpaisant.com



FERRANTE FERRANI