

Tongue

Small flame
under the roof
of a mouth.
You devour
You cleanse
You tell honey
from vinegar.
You speak truth.
You speak slander.
You soothe
with a kiss.
You bruise
with a word.

To the possessed
you are the gift
of enlightenment.
To the dispossessed
you are the scale
of judgement.

Small flame
under the roof
of a mouth.

Tyranny knows
your hiding place.

John Agard, *half caste*, 2005