



CHRISTOPHER FELVER

London, 2012
Photographic Collage, 27 x 14 in.

CORNELIUS EADY

Piano solo: T. Monk on “The Man I Love”

On the first take Miles Davis tells Monk,
Strange-fingered Thelonious,
to shut up, to “lay out.”

It’s a *ballad*: No tinkling brown pixie dust
against the groove, no waddling through the measures
the way an albatross slops up to the skies.

Miles is a man who is used to having his own way,
and if Monk were a woman,
who knows where this might end?

But then Milt Jackson replays/rethinks the intro,
the hushed tones of a man clearing his throat before
his chords vibrate in prayer,

And these five men who seem to have nothing better to do
on Christmas Eve, 1954, get back to the lyric:
love is food, water, air; lonely sucks.

Then from out of the negotiation plinks Monk,
toy-piano Monk, that stumble-bum bird,
the boy who’ll always grab the wrong crayon.

Cornelius Eady holds the Miller Family chair at the University of Missouri–Columbia. He is cofounder of the Cave Canem workshop. His book *Brutal Imagination* was a finalist for the National Book Award. Eady’s latest book is a double chapbook/CD of songs, *Book of Hooks* (Kattywompus Press, 2013).