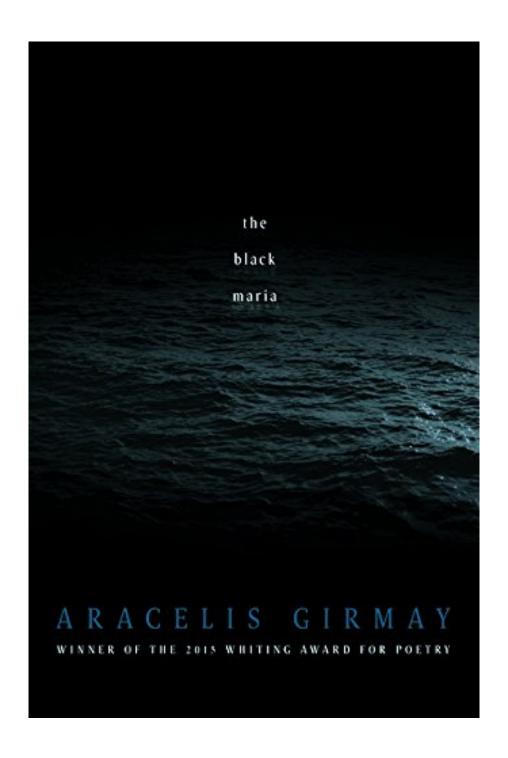


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Taking its name from the moon's dark plains, misidentified as seas by early astronomers, the black maria investigates African diasporic histories, the consequences of racism within American culture, and the question of human identity. Central to this project is a desire to recognize the lives of Eritrean refugees who have been made invisible by years of immigration crisis, refugee status, exile, and resulting statelessness. The recipient of a 2015 Whiting Award for Poetry, Girmay's newest collection elegizes and celebrates life, while wrestling with the humanistic notion of seeing beyond: seeing violence, seeing grace, and seeing each other better.

"to the sea"

great storage house, history
on which we rode, we touched
the brief pulse of your fluttering
pages, spelled with salt & life,
your rage, your indifference
your gentleness washing our feet,
all of you going on
whether or not we live,
to you we bring our carnations
yellow & pink, how they float
like bright sentences atop
your memory's dark hair

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