

SEVENTEEN WAYS

Beyond *resistance*, beyond the locked doors
of hate, Hope—a kind of fuel for walking
seventeen ways into history, into a future
beyond those who'd been blinded
by their own bright skin.

What did it mean to enter the halls
packed with snarling faces, to live every day
under the insults, the sharpening threats?
Here, now, it's easy to forget—easy
to think “it wasn't so bad.” Close your eyes.

You can still see each of them alone
in class: bobby socks, polished shoes,
pressed slacks, good skirts, eyes lit
by this one rough chance.

The Seventeen

given no other way but through
the festering mob: their fellow students
caught in the old snare of bigotry.

Why did none of them turn back, go home
when Cruelty spat in their black faces?

Be *here* with them for a moment.

Open your eyes. Try to remember

what has been won,

what it means

after all the madness, to see

the doors everywhere finally open.

TIM SEIBLES, VIRGINIA POET LAUREATE



Congratulations to current and future Faculty Poet [Tim Seibles](#) who in July 2016 was appointed poet laureate of Virginia by Governor Terry McAuliffe. Seibles, who is the author of five collections of poetry, including 2012's *Fast Animal* which won the Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize and was a National Book Award nominee, was a Festival Faculty Poet in 2014 and will be joining us again in 2018!

Tim Seibles currently lives in Norfolk, VA and teaches at Old Dominion University. His two-year tenure as Virginia's Poet Laureate began in July 15, 2016.

Visit [Poetry Foundation](#) and the [Academy of American Poets](#) to read his work. If you visit our [YouTube channel](#), you will find his craft talk [A Seduction: Metaphor and the Come Hither](#).