

**the earth is a living thing – Lucille Clifton (1991)**

is a black shambling bear  
ruffling its wild back and tossing  
mountains into the sea

is a black hawk circling  
the burying ground circling the bones  
picked clean and discarded

is a fish black blind in the belly of water  
is a diamond blind in the black belly of coal

is a black and living thing  
is a favorite child  
of the universe  
feel her rolling her hand  
in its kinky hair  
feel her brushing it clean