

“Thank you,” I said. “I came back to this place to find something, to connect with something lost, to reunite if not with my whole self, then with a piece of it. What I’ve discovered is that this thing is not here. In fact, it is nowhere. I have learned that my name is not my name. It seems you all know me and nothing could be further from the truth and yet you know me better than I know myself, perhaps better than I can know myself. My mother is buried not far from this auditorium, and there are no words on her headstone. As I glance out now, as I feel the weight of this trophy in my hands, as I stand like a specimen before these strangely unstrange faces, I know finally what should be written on that stone. It should say what mine will say:

I AM NOT MYSELF TODAY.”

-- Percival Everett