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Abraham Smith

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3 POEMS

Abraham Smith

The Insomniac Sentinel

that's my buddy brother-in-law eddy
on nights at the paper mill
last night fell he says

asleep standing up je-
sus the machine
could've eaten you

nah he says honest worst
would have happened
the paper would have broke

right square where i fell
or it was the facer we
were making

and that's a pretty
easy mess it's a leap in
the hay see

whether facer or no
all to a man jump
in and down and

shoulder that
snake of steaming slop shit
back up out over to

another it's a vat where
it's time to cut the broke up
and cook back to usable

cook it back to usable
there are guys there guys there
can tell it just looking at it

when it's ready to be facer again
changed is what any body says
given time and activities

smeddy's face ilk ug
icked round y
inters f rinks

say we no man left behind ever
and puff a chest and suck a
gut in but of course we do

lose ourselves
and others connections
concessions rusting

carts of sparks
pistolwhipped
arc to ground

in the popeyed veterans'
bitter flags popping loyal
laurel royal alloy say

to a fault shined knights
in peaty books through the so much
rain blasts their underclothes

to rusts hues for good
call it mettle's happy heart attack
let by sunset atmosphere

digging at his arm eddy is
where fiberglass little
glass mouth biter cotton

candy flea facer
rashed him up good
into battle now goodly noble

knights came to expect to endure
how a herald's heft burned the shoulder
blade to flame cranes grey graven there

stands one among many there
she alone the steady eddy one up
on one 'rina foot while silent round shining

in the other weathervane birdpaw basically
it's a manna snowcone minimoon held up
crystal ball style and

the legend goes should she drop that
upraised stone of light into her shadow's shallow into
water's lax glass lap then sleep felled she so

waked better be by some footstone spats with waters
dimpler cymbaler wrinkler surprise her
flat out needs be brought around

to home fires vigilant ligament villagant stay
tuned to any twig's neck hex say because not in this
alone because next bird up just won't do

because spoiled milk twice boiled
slips down the storm gutter pant of the son
of the father hey eddy

hey maybe
that's a wad of paper
facer i mean

steaming and staring and stirring up
through upraised heraldic crane
say she footballed the broke

balled your face maybe even
so yr lips race your eyes to yr nose so
yr brows like fire starter sticks say

rubbed together patch the parachute say
with little snails of smoke say
little ferns unfolding say

on cicada's swale-you-whole-womb-tomb say
on cricket's bandy-knee-shriek say
in every 3rd bird's skipping 7inch say say

say sleep truth escapes no
one she does drift
does drop you

coinwise falling
then into the slipping
stream glass yr second name released into above's below

ah tell how time's a river impulsive to the sea then
or what's time's scuttle when yr under with no
real bellow gill to plum yr blossomless bosom straining

say seconds? days say? before grapes
before melons fireseyes bigging
she sudden sight sees you

as maybe no one
ever has quite
see-seed you

bottomed backed trembled you
solo sexing it you
getting born or first trying to

sign your name while the current's scrawl
does nothing much with you and you're watching
her peace sign peace sign foot falling for you

pedigree hers drawling in inevitability of a machine
closing and clasping and raising you up out
you gasping you sputtering you coughing drool dew you

bap tisk lee east new you new
saved the day she did and you
you saved yr life's chandelier bandito sound for

her sing after won't you it's yr throat so
memorable to those hundred thousands gathered
as around a brown tomb upset

every eye fish
fat with gold
made to measure you

man that wriggler
can't span when yr huger
than a shouting gun chorus

when every mouth swells
to glitz yr simple name
precious metal

fork to spade to tnt to plodding
dozer how much then
after under might remain

gonna dig into the sidehill's
subsidence gonna cove an ear to
badger heart or bear thump thump

not the rain's choice
no the roof's arrhythmia after
o doe o doling drops

like god does
god does
teeth to babies

your birth breath caught a little
catches sound's breast this
rolling out of you in green headwaters

if the river whiskey and i one rat dove
well i'd skitch to the bottom be
that wooden spoon forgotten in

stew stews down darling
the dimple lick tensile
ladle delicacy call it

dearer than marrow in a doll
that's ether's zero only
in the well met helmet of the ortolan bunting

that's the pike the drool town raven is
rowing when above this
river's varicose roll

that's the river keeping everything going
that's the paper the facer rolls deafening on
that's the equator heat belting off the driers

takes the edges
off the porno
mags up in to a sneary little curl

o worthy o consider your glowing
stone on nights like these at the mill
your weight in gold now what would that be

would it your weight or
you and your children
or you your children and your wife

or you your children your wife
and your truck needs a new alternator
or would it you your children

your wife your truck needs a new bearing
and yr bent cussing the pigweed the johnson
grass wound so tight around the tines

the batters of the rototiller as to be
tumor woodstone workerback
o broken clock of weeds

or do you do you wait weigh
goldwise what the minnows in
the mountain streams weigh

tipped and slipped and
running wounds
dogs of debt dogs

may grow cleaner
the keener the closeness
to the sources

may that's after
april before june and all
3 render we rectangular

better call 'em what they are
slippy timothy onion lard
union internal flame dirts

bucketed down upon
our negligible heads
time has a way now

of singing
the high end at the end
like a bottle-

rocket aimed more or less away o
lizard in a blue jay tonight
o boom baboomboom tonight

surprise now come to find now
has a price pray eagle river of coffee
keep me in seeing eye stones tonight

in the other shoe dropsy stall
in sandstorms of sound stones tonight
in lichens shot out shotguns

until they get up
run greeny mouths
into the stars' why white

never once not eggshell
tremble paper-knuckle
into the bonechill blues

into the red
ran vermilion
halfway down

bug on a crown
soresooth flag
who next who now

schoolyard pole
and will you risk it
yr tongue to touch it

awakenin then
sand and facer face
snapped crayon teeth

Double Vision

ah when new baby rises
rises up all black out drunk
from a curbstone seafoamed

in false crests of

newspaper and trashed
xmas wrapping paper

rises up in a coast
or crust of bread
coat trench

something so all leg
so old and new rises
rocks along

this land here
times ago
that ocean

this new thing
proves it
that muddle throttle

murk at sound
of yr own voice
applaud when

they applaud
to plod upon
applause's plaudits

for lauded yourself
saliva string
a rope tow between

the moth from the mouth
of the nameless goner
and day's first rooster

shovin a frozen flame catkin
up under
the saggin tent

of dawn what is it

to throw yr blood
up into the cask air ask rooster

why baby decides
megadeath for the song
plunks the button

with one oafish thumb
or plain random rain down hums along
the bird the windseam

capable culpable or
cups of fate
spluttering are we

when the train
wags east old hitchyard
whited with styrofoam

lends the chainlink some teeth
wide man stooped to squatting there
blows a coffee in near

car wreck tires
talking and writing
shriek and black

from his ass
sailing out now
in vague parade

baby the second towers
nearer second first
needle for a nerve

behind deadline seamstress mowing
stitches like airplane smoke
in something kin to kitsch sackcloth

and with the mercilessness mind

of one acid's say
baby 2 rainin blowholes

in face scapes of baby 1 til
like an ages old dipper whose
dip spit wears a hole in chin lip

ah habit's holes
try and muddy over
with egg crates

snake bite hammer time oil well
snake bite hammer time oil well
snake bite hammer time oil well

from dear dear beak
from almost a drink
the spine so liqui-new

babe breath got prized
mincin and particular real anger
chipdust pinched by a fatso leerer

unborn again number 1 is
ancillary rooms darkening
clicked it and the life

cord sags again against
shilled earth
dill plant no match

for the ceo
done with his
cigar sun and

i have heard the mighty
misty professors
to pull at their salt beards

at their usual sugar bangs

crazy bard

hard over

this fam kill astonishment but with

no real reasonable or

okay words to peal

their beards their bangs silent

earth under stacked wood

and i have read plenteous loud

psych books piled unto the kingdom

about how you are

how you are because

the pissed and percussed upon

middle child your

firstborn wavin a flamin

signature's vowels

bulging distended

corrals the younger's'

kitten blood

in a bedbug

tadpoles

in a cistern

turn the waters

clearer only

child tether fizzing

down the dynamite

tricked up plenty

by the last born

all surveillance gone

i slip to the podium

in this tide tweed shined by

rain and time rot am i not
before yr very first memory

every hill every river
every drumlin every shale
every edge to vanish every stone over

every talus slipper
every plains whose windsong
mitts to copping fire

river run beat teeth deep
acclivity sharp crushed glass
escarpment's echo descrying

rib rill rises flats fats ridges
there where the sib plot thicked thicker
than mule saliva after a day

stuff was glue you could hand it down to a kid
take the pleasure of a hollow hour filled
chase it out cross the yard

mule drool throw it up uhoh stuck it in a tree
nobody tall enough home
all the ladders down the road

as all were pitching in at painting
the barn so this poem leaves you kid
jump jumping but there is no way

that's a war between
that's a battle of
just us kids

of epochs of cities
of natures of nations
for every one there is one

must give shove to

my grace walk
try and heaven my face

heavens my clubfoot
cranesang lordly byron wreaths
of quick and painless spiders

spreading like sex rash
along the toyish
kayaks of his clavicles

our best hair beat
in the dust chaw
our eyeballs jostled

like bedsprings
on the first nights
we must bite if we have to

loose a tooth too
money moon going
ga ga in the ska sky

hummer
thumb in the
blood eye

shiner one
dysplasia loaf
worthy grass

pissing contest
course the creek
serious about river

shoulder dislocate about
who the hell
older is this

little hill arisen then

go grow lonely
behind after

lonely and thoughtful
am i to be no father
my solitary shadow

just the penciled in crime
my tomb
upset by lover

or twobit thief
only the half eaten
acorns under the dramatic oaks

cracked little deeper
into smear know
knowledge sole

o love
whisper a fig
finger in

twin kin in thin down
to a line on a ledger
screw yr poor over

screws or nails
the two kinds of people
will you bang be

earth slurped up or
twist in the clay yard
play thing of wind's

square hands
tantalus stooping
tantalus reaching

am i blasted this black hearth or

the rosy engineblock heartpine
burp burn til queendom

or am come to the king jack
water from shit moat drawn
best bird made i can

my shaking hand
koi carp claim shark
dusk and after

in there not knowin it
or shall i steer
or sleptwalked be

into the cut ground one fine
day my name pulled over
me xray apron heavy

and then
the worked to worth-
less dirt

Brake 4 Cranes

for their size
is ours
or close

anything you love
blow it all
your size or close

i love maudlin turquoise
buttons okay one
your size or close

i love cape cod beech leaves
in early oct toothache bright

okay one your size or close

i love tea on my teeth in the cool pm
and to be near a dim lit bathroom okay
one your size or close

i love wearing a hat in a house
and running hot water over ever redder hands
for winter's sacre sake okay one your size or close

i love it when i check email
and there are none no not one
okay one your size or close

i love sticking my neck out
for unjust people with green eyes
okay one your size or close

calls theirs cull sack
debt natal stay-cation
culdesacfor a trachea call their

unison dandy leek call their
pond jump when kid jump call their
wastey corn teeth laughed free lichen icon their

unicycle bard call their
union pant sauce call their
fascia skeet trashcan lick call their

acne cream squeegee dream call their
blown knee brace ace rage call their
hand pump the well honk geek call their

dirtin curtain dinosaur call their
heartpine stage planks repurposed as
dolls for wet herdsman call their

only way to get that wet
is don't wait on the river call

culdesac neck unspill

one good place is
to raise a family my good friend's kids
bored wd rubwheels to

curbs upon giving skateboard's
unmistakable trenchant
construction patter the cranes

so lovelylovely in their til death ardor
in the land of tammy
wynette well met why not red hurt yr

hands a little for their ardor arbor
already a stout copse just and standing
thick lush beside the sparer coppice

gaptooth haha eye-crept
thru spindles over air
apple green shoulders

into the pissin internet where
rapt injectable plastics enhance mints
in the fleshy mouths of scorchin deportees

die for you die for you
die for you die for you
die for you die for you

died in willy
shakespeare
times ago

tho these midwestern thespians strut
and rail this rehearsal hall still
sound about if

enunciation
were a runrail judge's

florid bile

and pedantics
a kit you try and trace force
with drunk thumbs

after midnight on
what once was
christmas eve sir

about like if an oxfordian's oar's
suspended richmond drip got pinched by
some soil cap scholar layin by

erased blunder for eyes
hangover incurable matter
salted or egging

so rubs old ink river
into his gored tomato gums
sees didn't i tell you heracliteanly

pees pees a fail to
arrive at sea
sit me down this forest dim

as tho low
in hull the water
my mouth tightening

between the pine
and the woodpecker
crosshatched in flight

that i might listen to
heart's time is its own
horse swallowing

is a man moanin
through the leaves

doubletime and there

s/he is

lean against a tree

the tree too big

for its britches for that's

a sycamore one of those

what they call born nudists

and the sick leaves

in their taperings

sort of like ready

to fuck you up

but bout the size of

an ancient shame

give him away sheepish

pelt in a creek eyes

take that taint away

sweat to a future smear

child ups to reachable window

passing man with both eyes seen

wretched in lampshades

powered by his dog whose coloring

conjures a country yam calm

where the bombs

sweaters slipped over the shiverers

where the thoughts steady

in heads rung

rung and bestowed

a not uncertain warmth

where the human

humaning again

pliable domino turns

purblind pures
this where patience is
and angry ain't and

if coins colors
of breath breathed
by cloth buried

no more sweet lingerer
flower freely climbs herself
so there

ABRAHAM SMITH is the author of five poetry collections—most recently, *Destruction of Man* (Third Man Books, 2018). In 2015, he released *Hick Poetics* (Lost Roads Press), a co-edited anthology of contemporary rural American poetry and related essays. He lives in Ogden, Utah, where he is Assistant Professor of English at Weber State University.