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EMERSON SYNECDOCHE

Anthony Borruso

An earlobe climbed the lectern to tell us of our collective value.
Wake, he said, your sluggard intellect, lift those iron lids, cut
that transatlantic umbilical cord that siphons all sustenance back
to the motherland. Don't you feel it, dormant inside you, an American
consciousness? Isn't there a great man we can cobble from our piecemeal
anatomy? Eyebrows sat up in their seats, toenails shouted amen, a fist
liberated its fingers in an act of unabashed praise. So long had we suspected
there was something exceptional in this chunk of land we'd cultivated,
the eardrums heard it coming like the reverberations of a far-off steam engine.
In tophats and tailcoats, eyeballs sprouted up and down the coast, ready
to confront every refractory fact and translate the breaking sigh of each wave.
Take it all in, he said, the warblings of robins, the twisted syntax
of the Mississippi. Be the centipede, the milkweed, the bog and its
army of cattails, the tongue that laps up every last fragment.

Anthony Borruso is pursuing his Ph.D. in Creative Writing at Florida State University where he is a poetry editor for *Southeast Review*. His poems have been published or are forthcoming in *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Pleiades*, *Spillway*, *The Journal*, *THRUSH*, *Moon City Review*, *decomp*, *Frontier*, and elsewhere.

