Brim House

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BRIM HOUSE

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University of Mississippi

BY
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ABSTRACT

_Brim House_ explores the abstract and ever changing realities of motherhood in a broken world, and in a hot, Mississippi summer.
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Section 1
milk, body, bloom
In the field of divorce, the transfigured

if in this naked pain thrush
you can see me now
as I have always been—
a transparent form pressed
to the landscape my breasts
just quivers
of cloud this head and womb
a pouring and opening
of light to light these ruptures
unraveling
bird by bird
bird by god
every god
we’ve taken into ourselves—
would you know—you’d have to know
that we are made of that which leaves and returns
the promised and the unpromising

if I could keep this sight of you now
as you have always been
your veins
holy
as creek beds your blood filled
with the particle illumination
of old sunlight
filtered through minnow rib our dust
rock skin and crayfish body spun
with the milk of dead stars
and those who made us
we name and cannot
these many disintegrations
this bloodlight singing tells me we are only a moving
coming apart only a consecrated current
we cannot cup to our mouths

we have never
belonged to each other

we have never belonged

even to ourselves
Woman with just a mouth

*After the film by Marilyn Minter, Green Pink Caviar*

What’s to be said of the bodiless woman who licks caviar off the surface of glass? We watch from the bottom, the tongue, the open throat, luscious and slimed, she slips, green slips, in and out, with spit, through lips, over glorious molars, white as the bones in the body: a rib bone, a mandible, a pelvis sliced free of its skin. Don’t say there’s nothing frightening about this mouth, eating nothing, tasting all nothings, insatiable, transgressing, sugar pink mocking your desire as ripe as strawberries left too long in the sun. Tell me there’s nothing it doesn’t make you think of. A burgeoning, sick-slanted lover, your mother’s nipple, a garbage truck filled with your dirty nights and tree trunks, a porpoise in coitus with a shark, a jar of marmalade emptied on your stomach. A pile of cherry pits left in the sheets. Taste of porn. Creamy. Cloying. The bruise you lost track of. A mouth you can feel, eyes you cannot. Tell me you never wanted to lick the wound of an amputee like they’re a kind of Jesus and you a kind of saint. Say you want to taste the bones of an animal, flesh picked clean by a mountain lion with its love heat mouth. We’ve all dreamed the marrow of the dead and the missing and the sweet living breath of a woman we can’t touch, woman who fills us of what she cannot swallow.
The Necklace Poems

necklace 1

Frida Khalo’s dark emerald—tiny bird

splayed
in crucifixion
    prostration against her breastbone

sharp point of beak pressed to throat—feathered christ
in her necklace of thorns.

    Butterfly brooches little resurrections
pinned in her hair—dragonflies

    fly into her their indecipherable reincarnate

Bird in the shape of her mother’s Christ, but its hummingbird form
the Aztec blood God.

For we are what was chosen and what the blood has made us.

We are beyond ourselves.

Tiny blood God—Huitzilopochtli

    when you rise again
on a woman’s skin
will you hunger for will you be
eucharist flesh
or the heart in the body
torn open from breastbone
to belly?
After Saint Teresa of Avila dies, at the age of 67, she is buried quickly—her grave stacked with stone to keep at bay the relic seekers. No time is taken to embalm her. Nine months later she is dug up by confidants and friends. Her body—not corrupted they say. One of her closest friends, the chaste monk Gracian, whom the saint had called “My Paternity,” cuts off her hand. The blood flows red, fresh—fragrant the say. He also lifts the sheet to look at her breasts, which he finds very young and firm. He cuts too her little finger and wears it on a chord around his neck for the rest of his life. Incorruptible, corruptible, what is given and what is taken not necessarily the same. Once, years earlier, during communion, Saint Teresa took the host on her tongue and biting down felt the host split and fill her mouth suddenly with warm, fresh blood—what is taken and what is given not necessarily the same.
Milk Body Chronicle I

1.

The girls crushing milkweed in their hands
thorn and pod, floss & plume—whitewet sweet
glazing the hands
   held out as spoons. Stroke
of tongue & song of scatter. Milk seed blown
and the husks, they fall—forgotten
bodies
   emptied of virgin meat
the husks the fall
   as the indelicate feet
   run wild away

2.

She turns her body to a swamp—takes the baby
as a garland
   to her breast, to the curve of ribs,
rise of lung, her flowing grasses— tiny tongue
   magenta raw—sepal lips
bud tight, petal flesh drinking, drifting
   to the surface
   pouring into itself
   herself and the unlatching
leaving her
   a surrendered body
   each knew filling
   a renewal
   of confection
Cabin at Painted Post, New York

... words, more words, to cure the tameness, not the wildness.

Alice Notely

1.

The way to the cabin is gravel and gardens

follow the ghost-thread glimmer crick bed tumble

through balsam sugar maple past deer path lacing the fields

wild flower tangle wildcut fingers weave the honeyed lilt

in the trill the trill of our mothermade throats

poplars lining her front yard leaves spun loose at our coming

showing their undersides

like the rippling

of tiny lakes flood brimming

the down of finches

already clinging to our lashes

we

the girlflesh trio

come to wander

2.

We uncurl like ferns here in the low-slung corner

of the room in the loft in the new sun streaming

in the thud quake
drop

of cast iron on the wood burning cook stove on the tender rind
of our hungry bones we are

without breasts
only tiny slip knots our wombs still folded
a stringless violin hangs on the log wall

artifact from the flood of 79
flood brought them here our great grandparents flood brought us here
collection of arrowheads in the hoosier drawer her apron faded
as a feedsack her one hand slim the other
puffy as bread dough lost lymph nodes

her missing breast
lovely anomaly we haven’t yet learned to fear
morning bread fills our bellies apple mash cooked down
paste of trapped sun lick of applebutter

faint heat of cinnamon on the tongue
an urge green desire predator sweet

3.
We become

as she coyotes stalking in the high grasses ridgewalkers
of Allegheny foothills We know where the wild mushrooms

hang dark gills over tiny toads and beetles
green-black shells gleam in damp soil

[Like the lost eyes of hawk and trout]

We search the thickets
to find the place the fawns
change into does
where the spots smooth back into hides
when the soft parts ripen, we
stalk & stalk until
our bellies burn hot—
little cook stove bellies burning with a heat
we cannot name. We thirst.
for cool water the grandmother voice come
calling us back
through the crick bottom tumble through the balsam
she calls us her voice water spilling
from the jar the cabin she balm to the burn
balm to the making—in our beds the balm and burn and in the moon hours
the blood
4. releasing—garden of girlflesh—garden of menses—the blossom
it reddens and reddens again, and now
the bread will not fill is—the wild hunger
marrow-strung—we are always now emptying—
always longing to for lost sweetness—
milk sweetness—we begin
to make manna
    with girlhand violence—the taking apart
of all the blossoms—to find the buried
sweetness—for now we see
    the poplars are sickly
last year’s fawn is limping away
we see now
the rumpled emptiness on Grandmother’s left side—
the boy children—
missing
something has entered the parts of us
    that empty, fill
    and empty again
Milk Body Chronicle II

1.

The girls in the apple tree
bobbing in and out
of green as finches yellow finches
twist pick blossom drift
clouds of blossom bursting
the blooms they pink then whiten
twist pick blossom tryst
coming apart coming together
lace clipped flesh caught
in the yellow wings caught
by the feathered tongues

2.

as if the spine of a pheasant feather
had been pressed there—an indentation
which yet
remains.
She traces it with a finger—
the pink scar
trenching
the white skin. The stretch of flesh
coming together. This is not
to have been sutured—this is to have been
unpetaled—
this is to feel
in sleep, under quilts, at windows, in the garden,
a faint undulation—yes
she traces the scar
to feel the warm waves
of ghost milk—endlessly
sinking
into the limbs and blood of her babies
as they hung on the curve
of her ribs
drinking, drifting
The Second Plague (Plague of Frogs)

Three dead frogs on pavement. Pastel innards
spilling
from burst bellies.
Have you come to gather these petrified yarns
and little chambered trinkets,
in this, your 33rd year,
the magical reopening
of the God cabinet—Sunday school
and pink new testaments, Israelites & Egyptians
on the felt boards
and the mothers,
slave and free, pouring out the second plague
from clay pots and cradles.

Why the frog plague haunts you
when for every firstborn passed over, a lamb’s neck
slit for supper.

Do not shudder
when the nightmares of your childhood return to you
in the place of deep heat, for you cannot
find god again, nor any god
that would come to you
without this passing through. Do not shudder
when the bloated bodies
fall and spoil
at your firstborn feet, when
each wicked hinge
of frog mouth
sings of the silence you bear—
how the death angel passed you over
and took the second born instead.
Milk Body Chronicle III

for my mother

1.

The girl walks alone to the river.
No flowers in the browning grasses,
but there are mussels in the bank muck
for prying. brook floater, green floater,
yellow lamp mussels. Those hinges listen
to those who still know
the milk song.
That pink meat, mother soft.
Tongueless creature, hungry
as heaven

2.

She carries her daughter to the crib
so she will know what a body tells, to see
his small face turned and blue.
Eyes that saw only shapes
and light, shut
and opened
elseware.
The girls sees the brother body
come to clench and silence, a breath
pulled open. But she sees palsy
rolled away like scrolls of salt—those fists
tight as shells in life, loosening
to song—an amniotic brine
floods her throat—again the hour of sweetness,
his tiny pain-thrush body pressed
to her milk rib—it was only a short time—
that taking to body,
her milk too strong
his body too small,
but that cooing mouth dying already
brought close, brought home
Red Beard

My helpmeet, my meatlick,  
my little god kitchen boss  
you man the stove,  
I’ll take the stool.  
No room for me here  
in the man hearth—this  
beard roost—I wait  
at the edges  
with wine,  
with the children.

Rub poultice of herb  
to the lamb—rib bones  
sliced clean of extraneous—  
French rack, clean rack—  
not my body—yeasty flesh  
consort—wife superfluous  
as bread.

My angry assiduous  
husbandry brandished  
with little flick, sharp knife—  
cut cabbage, slice carrot,  
cut flesh of felicity finger—  
spent blood, stop blood—  
the expendage, my expulsion—  
virility bound, kitchen twine  
tight.

I wait—no pauses,  
no beardstroke, rubbed to the rind,  
to this skin. My red beard,  
my love rust, eat  
can’t eat this meal you’ve prepared  
over and over again—  
this everlasting abortion  
of satiation. Taste  
can’t taste the herbs of my winemouth,  
the lavender, the sages—  
blooming wood, feathered purple—  
come, can’t come  
eat this flesh rising—what  
can’t fill—who can’t fit
Necklace 3

Take these tokens I’ve strung for you—my beardmouth, my millstone, my procreative flesh bind lover—take to neck
my body rendered.
Here a vial of virgin nightsweat, here a vial of breast milk.
Here the tracing of scars—one latitude across abdomen,
one longitude through perineum—map it
to the slope of my breasts, now slanted
toward our babies. Here my nipples,
my womb, my tunnels. Take them to neck as feathers—
blue of bunting, cardinal red, here
the fidelity feather, violet backed starling,
bird of distant continent. Take this tiny bird—jewel
death strung alive and willing. Take this promise
of my one day—this right now dust—this glittering
of cicada wings. Take sustenance, bread of lust
take this scent of estrous. No resurrection,
no reincarnate—only this body we created
and the body
you never touched—
only this shiver come woman
eucharist flesh—take
eat, for this is
god body host, take eat, for this is
the body torn open
strung on a chord, bird heart
pulled loose
strung on a chord—body given, then taken

and given again to another
Section 2
Blue Bird, Black Sun
Girlflesh trio

now motherfleshed and milked.
My two cousins—like sisters.
We are seven babies between us, one
not yet born.

My Stacy—blue-birded, spun, my elegant
havoc. Keeper of lace, keeper and color.

My Sarah, name sake of the Great-grandmother,
the ghostbreast, my keeper of secrets, my comfort
and manna

Our fathers both preachers. Yours
preaches still, mine gave up—

delivers milk. This is the way of it.
You both still home, and I
in the place of deep heat.

*

And what I have become here,
my sister, my Sarah
is a woman, squatting naked
in the bedroom of the husband—
cunt-hold of flood, wanting only
release. A wife peeled raw
by lover’s absence. I watch windows & listen
to field sound. I wait for a god sign
in this Mississippi smear—this crude cradle
of green and blue—I wait
in this woman posture
of expelling, of bringing into being

what is of the body
but lost to it. This is the husband house blurring
into the field’s ache, into the humming
of the yarrow, the hive & swell. Only one call rises
through it—the Indigo bunting—lover

of the field’s edge, pierce
to marrow—call
of surrender
Facts about Indigo Buntings

*If blue were not blue how could love be love*

C.D. Wright

Part of the cardinal family—sparrow sized. The bunting’s body is cerulean—only its head is indigo.

A fast glimpse of a darting bunting may conjure shade of lapis lazuli, turquoise, ultramarine, and movements between—flick of a jackknife handle, mother of pearl, juice from wild grapes, crused opal, veins in the face of the dying brother, the beloved’s eye, that trembling.

I first saw the indigo bunting on the Navy base outside of Memphis where I lived with my husband and two daughters.

> It was like water from Christ’s cup.
> It was like the song of loneliness
> cut loose from a bruise.

Once one becomes a seeker of Indigo nothing is more disappointing than other species of blue birds—the blue jay is intolerable, and the so-called definitive blue bird, the eastern bluebird, is a horrible ruse, similarly sized, with an offending orange of belly.

I would see buntings on my running route around the perimeter of the base, sometimes in saplings, sometimes on the barbed wire. Not very often. They come rarely, like prayer, like acts of tenderness in an ill-suited marriage.

It is perhaps not necessary to point out that the female bunting is mostly a drab brown.

Our first summer in Mississippi I did not see a single bunting. Dennis and I kept late hours of anger, sweat out our disappointment while the girls ran in the sprinkler. When we moved to a house by a field and swamp I begin to see buntings again. Where? I don’t see it, he says. How could you miss it? That blaze of blue in the tangle of vine. How could you miss it? But then, the bunting’s winter range goes up into Maine, and growing up in New York, I somehow missed them my whole life. That’s the way of it. Your eyes open to something when it’s time to see it. Maggie, Jane and I stalked through the swamp, searching.

Indigo buntings always seem to be darting, departing, passing through and away from. Never lingering. There may be something true concerning temperament here, but this may also be a distortion of the seeker’s desire.

It’s desire deep as the god you lost in childhood. It’s sacred folly, a brazen search. It’s a lying down in the rank hot sweetness of Mississippi dirt, smell of fungus and birth blood, it’s a lying
down and opening yourself to whatever form the reknowing could take—bird or god, wildness, a stranger.
My cut-bone hands
   trundle of wings—
you stitched me a bunting
with calico, tatting, though you
have never seen one. Never been south
of the Carolinas. Turquoise,
indigo, pearlescent scrap—throat
   wrapped tight
in lace. My cousin, my Stacy, you strung through the tail
amber beads, purple thread, this
   your penchant
for iridescence, this
   your knowing how color
is not just a moving thing, but that which speaks.
My Stacy, my stitcher, my elegant havoc
tearing like bread the apple blossom—your pain thrush voice
silver wrapped tight—lace wrapped sister who called to say
the baby Gideon would not live long
past birth. O
ur Sarah, our manna, would birth him
and lose him
   always. And in your voice of sadness I fell
   into the cabin at Painted Post
into musk of low eaves & log walls
to the first haze
   lift of eyelid,
the unadulterated trust
   of a northland morning—
pinesoak bend of light
pressing the waves of window glass the voice
of our great grandmother
rising through the floorboards—
   through our skin—
they glimmer keep a moment
   voice & water lace & silver linger then
the coming of heat this coming of death it presses—waves
of poured glass blur and thicken, jars
on the window sill, water & white—the milk glass jars you love
my Stacy, my silver, glass jars
filled with the milk that spills over—milk she will have
but will not give.
Facts About Indigo Buntings

The brownheaded cowbird is known to parasitize the bunting nest. Should one try this before the female lays her eggs, the pair will abandon the nest immediately. But if the cowbird adds an egg to a clutch already laid, the female will raise it as her own.

Some pairs of buntings raise two clutches a year. The male will feed the elder clutch while the female lays the second.

Whatever we failed to give each other, Dennis and I pour endless blue into our babies.

To call a thing a clutch which you cannot possibly clutch—the egg, the offspring, the beloved, the departing body just born—this is a kind of a rule for how the language of Indigo comes into being.

It is perhaps neither necessary or useful to point out that the only male bird sings.

Each note and phrase of the bunting’s call is repeated—the effect of this is similar to the voice of water

poured through a harmonica, the husband voice
trying to find sweetness
the stranger voice
becoming the lover voice—
the very voice of tenderness

the sound of your daughters in the other room—that sound merges
with the humming in the field—
and this mergence merges with the lost voice
of a drowned violin

and something too more fleshy more sweet
one more sound, one more filling, a suckling, yes a drifting—all these sounds—
they merge and become
voice of bird
& blue

This voice fills the impossible spaces of my body—
scoop of clavicle, crease in spleen, capillaries and curves
of all the woman tunnels—yes, Indigo comes
like the rippling of many lakes, it comes like star blindness.
In that filling, the voice of Indigo, becomes a state of Indigo.

The bunting is monogamous, but not always faithful to their partner. There is no indication this fact is male specific.
Girlflesh Trio

Sarah, can the failed wife
    mother well
the blooms of her blood, my daughters—my Sarah,
is this my own true voice
    of doubt,
or the ragged tongue
    of shame?
My Sarah, how
can I speak it, tell it
while your third boy awaits
his precarious birth, yes
the bones of Gideon
    already at wilt
    in your womb—
as I squat here
this coming flood.
Facts About Indigo Buntings

Indigo buntings prefer abandoned farmland, old pastures and fields grown to scrub, forest edges adjacent to field, the narrow, the liminal—anywhere the woodlands meet open areas—this is what the seeker knows to be the simultaneous presence of field and shadow of field.

Indigo buntings are not actually blue, but black. It is a diffraction of light through the structure of their feathers, which makes them appear to be so spectacularly what they are not.

The female bunting builds the nest alone. It takes her eight days.

When I told Dennis I loved another man, our house became a pain nest.

Some seekers might find that the bunting is drawn to pain—one finds indigo in the hour of acuteness—as though the breathing bruise seeks itself in the other, in its seeker.

Dennis and I decided to make it through the summer. This became the season of sadness.

The indigo bunting migrates by the stars. The captive bunting becomes disorientated if their enclosure offers no view of the night sky.

If a seeker finds a bunting dead, the blue that it isn’t, smeared into a black road, the seeker may experience a kind of temporary blindness—star blindness—
the kind one gets from an abrupt knock to the head—the pain that takes us back to the dark of the womb—deeper even—this black and bright—a star madness.

The state of Indigo becomes its blackness. Not simply a present sadness. But an older sadness. Primitive. Archaic. The very condition of banishment from the pith of light, from the first sprung root of the unseen wildness.
In the presence of field
& shadow of field
we are a singularity
& a singularity
collapsing.
we’ve come
to the question of where
this field drops off—the sinkhole
of ourselves
falling through ourselves.
This hole is blue darkness, blue
heat—our amniotic
armageddon—because you
are my mother abject, and I
am your black matter garden—our breath
garish blooms
of maroon, warm cherry, violence. Our desire—
the air trapped
inside of rocks—I squat,
you stand, to fill the abrasive nest—
to reconstitute the blue slick
of us—I squat
—you stand—to mark and claim
the dark-lit edges
of the field that’s sucked us through—
we flood this field
with that which is lost to our bodies—
the motherfather ghost which leaves us
fills the body of last spring’s fawn—
the fawn that limps away from us,
toward the swamp—

& from the windows
the babies, our babies
are silent.
Black Sun Essay

Let me posit The “Thing” as an imagined sun, bright and black at the same
time...inscribed in us without memory, the buried accomplice of our unspeakable anguishes.

Julia Kristeva

1.

In these hours of absence
I listen to field sound—the endless pulse
of monosyllabic resplendence—yes,
the vulgar radiant
of the humming
in the yarrow—the howl and hot
stridulations
of bug bodies bent into themselves
into the swell—
something in the field
is coming to being something in
root reach, heat tangle, herbs
spreading their leaves
to shapes of tongues something in
wing-bone churn, snapping thorn, the ruminant wander
of the sickened doe—

yes, while the doe is wasting
some other she
is coming to being

2.

the swelling which never finishes
expands into night
then shudders
to light and light than light again—bug bodies counting
the godless moments
of the lover’s absence—and the dark
swallows these shards of lightening—and the doe
cannot be seen but only heard in the rooting, the withered lung noise,
the taunt gasp as the darkness swallows her too—
yes, the darkness is a woman mouth—a woman just now beginning
to glow with the forbidden light of time deadening—
yes, a womb is glowing in the darkness.
3.

If the woman in the field is darkness
and brightness together, she is also blue.
If she is part apparition, she is part text.
If she is my Julia Kristeva, she is many tiny antique books
filled with strips of godflesh. If she is the great-grandmother
she is also uncertainly no one, and if she is unrecognizable
she is my mother. If I do not know her
she is every woman I have ever loved.
And if she is nothing but voices seen as color
she is non-symbol after non-symbol
of myself. If she is not a symbol, she is sickness.
If she is not me, she is madness. If she is not anything
she is everything, she is the Thing. (The thing which scorns me haunts me embraces me
collectivizes me annihilates me untouches me wrecks me lays me out like a cadaver, bruises all
my parts from the insides out, like a ravaging fuck, like the finger of god)
If she has one breast, where is
the ghost breast?
If she is a Black Sun
she is a cult she is a cup she is a cunt. If she is
birds & books, word & womb will she write me write me out of this—
out of obfuscation and magical
repetition, out out out
of this—forget
this

4.

Any morning
the woman in the field
drinks from the blue willow cup.
This cup is broken-handled—difficult
to hold.

Everytime she I see her
she holds a different cup
and a black sun, the unnamable brightness, hangs
a nimbus of illness
behind her head—I did not give her
my almost body, my almost face, but she has both.
.A phosphorescence burns through
our common skin—softly—slowly, like this ache,
this ache of muted transmission—so many cups—
the clay cup, the clicking cups, the cup with the porcelain claddaugh

the horrible white hands they reach out just as she vanishes…
And then the voice says
Here, Husband,

drink this cup of equivocation
Here, Daughters of color and nightmare and life

drink these cups
Here Beloved, drink

5.

If this is all you got, let the daughters
speak for themselves

6.

Conversation with Maggie and Jane, August 28th

Why do you like ponies so much
We just wanna get sparkly ponies
Why do like sparkly things
Cause of the glitter on them
But what is about things that sparkle that make you happy
It’s like Maggie’s hair
I know but there has to be a reason why
You can’t be so aggressive Maggie
Jane should tell me where the remote is
I like the color brown because it makes me think of earth, and old things and my grandmother
What about god
Sparkles make you think about god
No, blue and green makes us think about god-
Because that’s the color of the world
God is white
Yellow and the rainbow make us think about God
God?

place of wilted manna & ghost breast—
—there the baby Gideon wavers

waiting, drifting

7.

There is no giving up this apparition now,
even if I had wanted to move on to other
books. No, she and I are the book of the Black Sun.
But I’m not certain, as I stand watching her—if I can fairly call myself

a Watcher?

I am searching out the question of light that sears
without shine. I want to know if there’s any Thou—
any thing sacred—in the Thing?

There is also the woman in the painting on my wall—
perched on a red planet, the sky dark blue behind her
without any rays of trapped or escaping light. She plays a small harp.
She is blindfolded.

This painting is called Hope.

But I am in a state of half hope, half
agony—one side of the blindfold
is slipped up. And if true blindness is this failure to surrender
to a total darkness, then I fail to watch, I fail to not watch.

I am only

part Watcher, part player of a soundless harp—pressed between

these pain plucks

of planetary sound

and this apparition of the self

void of self and maker of self.

This is part steadfastness to Thou and part hallowed,
hollowedoutness, the endless filling and emptying of the searing bright.
This is the forbidden state: to hate the Thing and desire her utterly—this is the
the self-devouring melancholy, the cannibal mouth taking the thick taste of one’s
own heartblood,

one’s own banishment, yes, drinking it down
from the broken cup.

8.

The daughters said
God is

green and blue.

place of wilted manna & ghost breast—
there the baby Gideon wavers
Conversation with Maggie and Jane Sep 10th, Bad Dreams:
You won’t be seven until December. December 27th
What did you need to talk about.
I just wanted to talk. I feel sad.
Jane come up, let’s talk
Foggy foggy foggy
Ghosts. Some are ugly. Some are pretty. Some as ugly as nothing, pretty as everything
Ugly as nothing means it’s not pretty at all.
What is nothing
Nothing means you don’t have anything and that like when you have something and give it to somebody else then you don’t have anything like nothing
But that’s not very ugly, it’s kind of good when you give something to someone
A good emptiness. a good nothing.
Sometimes. Sometimes bad nothings. Sometimes you try and give someone to something and they don’t want it, but then they steal it.
Did someone steal from you
No
The gift of nothing
Are you wearing your necklace?
Yes, so I don’t have bad dreams.
A dreamcatcher? Does it work?
It doesn’t work on me.
Why do you think it works on you Jane?
Maybe cause pink works on me.
How does a color work on you?
A dreamcatcher just works on me. The one that was yellow, pink and blue, every dreamcatcher works on me except every dream catcher doesn’t work on Maggie. When I don’t have a dreamcatcher than it makes me have bad dreams.
What are your bad dreams?

Maggie’s bad dreams:

Dying
Falling
From cliffs
Big spiders
You and dad leaving me
Jane trying to die
The headless horse
Zombies

Janie bad dreams:

Killing
a gun
And there’s a new mom that’s gonna baby sit us

A new mom?

Her put a perfume on then her turn into eyes, her eyes, they were blondish or black and white
and then her was trying to get me when me and dad were running away from her, we were running

Her was going away when her was running and me and dad were running Maggie and me and
dad were running. Her was being nice to me again and then me and the zombie were friends and
her wasn’t gonna bite my skin off and her was being nice and was my friend

Where was I?

You were trying to kill her but I said stop but I was asking her was nice to me that she didn’t bite
my skin off and your skin off and her was being nice to everybody in the whole town, the people
and they weren’t running away, her had a lot of friends, me, and you and Maggie and me, and
her was being nice to kitty, the grey stone, Stone, her was petting Stone.

Wait we just got Stone, you had this dream last night. I thought you only had bad dreams when
you don’t wear a dreamcatcher, or was that a good dream, I can’t tell.

What’s your good dreams Maggie?
I don’t have any.
Maybe you just don’t remember the dreams that don’t upset you.
Everything upsets me.
Do you want to watch Wordgirl?
Why do you like Wordgirl?
I picked it when I was eating cheerios.
Zombie attacking the world.
There’s no zombies silly girl.
I’m scared
O baby cakes.

—there the baby Gideon wavers

waiting, drifting
Pg 72, Black Sun, from the chapter on Illustrations of Feminine Depression:

“Emptiness cut out into black lightening....
   An absolute, mineral, astral numbness...

Accompanied by the impression, also an almost physical one, that this “being dead,” physical and sensory as it may be, was also a thought nebula, an amorphous imagination, a muddled representation of some implacable helplessness.

   The reality and fiction of death’s being. Cadaverization and artifice. ”

And could we also say....Zombie.

   The Mother Zombie,
   the zombie the daughter must love
   because it’s better than losing her entirely?

Enough.

FUCK the woman in the field.
Let the season of sadness be what it is, not what madness makes of it.

Not the wildness of destruction,
But wildness of Being

   She said
   She said
   Ann said.

Remember the rhythm of the infinite, the goddess Tlaztoetl, the maker of new life from darkness, even from the dirtiness. Remember the appearance of Christ to the Magdalen, your Maggie named after her, remember through some kinds of death come life, remember the babies passing through your body, remember there is the Thing and there is the Beautiful Thing, there is the Thing and there is Thou

There is the woman in the field

But god
   is green and blue
and the deer is running out of the field,
but you are standing at the edge, waiting
for lake and milk to pour out of you, waiting
to flood the field and know
what you cannot now know, whether Gideon will live.
Whether the death of the apparition
will bring you a new life.
Stop waiting. Step into the whispering field, the rising hum
of coming heat—step deeply
into the skin of the Thing
and bring the bruised voice back
to the glowing body. To release
the forbidden light
you must drink the water
from the perishing well—
you must fill your blue willow cup
with the white blood
of the leaking stars—find
the ghostmilk
of the matrilineal breast—open
the sweet bread mouth
of the speculative morning—you must fill
your own belly—flood
your own womb—turn your woman fleece
to plenty field—fill your lungs
with of the tangle of bloodroot—turn your heart
to deer flesh running
and write
and speak
the red parts
the god parts
the bird becoming man part,
yes, write yourself out
of the magical vague, write
yourself deeply deeply
into the wondrous
real
write
the trapped light leaving the
body
and filling the field
with lightning
Another Field of Vision

When I told you I loved another man, you tore the wedding band from my finger and threw it into the yard. You destroyed every drawing & painting in the house, even the sketch of me and Maggie when she was a baby, the one you drew when you were floating in the Persian Gulf on an aircraft carrier, when you hadn’t seen us for six months. You wrote to tell me you watched the sun set from the flight deck, and at the last moment, before the sun slipped into the ocean, there was always a single sharp flash of green. You couldn’t sleep in your bunk at night knowing the ocean was glowing with the breathing light of the sun trapped in its belly. The week after you threw the ring you borrowed the neighbor’s metal detector to try and find it, and the day you gave up, you happened to turn toward the blooming peach tree, the tiny twisted tree I love that turns suddenly to a thousand petals the color of babies’ tongues and the under parts of fawns, and there it was, between two roots, a wedding ring. And when we decided to make it through the summer, you began to paint a flamingo, feathers slightly off color, more peach-blossom than salmon. Bird postured over a woman’s face, transferring, from beak to mouth, a tiny stream of blood-red life, just as it happens on Lake Natron in Tanzania where the flamingos feed their babies beak to beak with a spittle of their own blood, volcano mineral, ash, and the salt from the temporary island that forms in the dry season, as the water evaporates, sheets of salt converging just as the flamingos are ready to lay their eggs. Yes, a summer can be a vanishing island. And when I began to believe in apparitions, when I heard a voice named Indigo, without knowing, you sat down at my writing desk and drew an indigo bunting. And when Maggie told me God is green and blue, without knowing, you went outside and painted the field, in fine-bladed strokes of green and blue, and when I could not sleep at night you rubbed clots of brown paint on the woman’s face in the painting, as if to cover her with mud. And when the summer was over and I began to tell you how what’s left when the island evaporates is an endless shallow sea of glowing sadness, you cut the face out of the painting, and rubbed black into the birds feathers with feverish strokes of your hands. And when I went deep into the black sun, you began to take pictures of this place, began to make art with my collection of antique miniature books, as if to say, there is more than one way to see it, to tell it, remember it this place where we lived, this field of trapped light and visions, this swamp of suffering, this place where we will split apart.
Pangaea Split

And suddenly
persimmons.
Sun-stroked flesh falling down, each knot
of flame flesh, glowing above
tangle of tree limbs, above
its own rooted self—
and I had only just stopped on the dirt road, turned back
to Jane running toward me, her arms
stretched out, and there, deep set behind the fence—
the tree we were told was here

but could never find.
Yes, these are the kinds of things that happen in the end—
the sudden appearing of the missing and dazzling—
the daughter’s rushed toward desire to be lifted,
er her desire churning toward me with the fall of fruit
and the sear of time slipping—sharpened sensory fury
of the beauty collision
unthreading and setting alight
our nest of sadness. And what could I do
to bring you to this moment? Take your hand,
lead you to the tree, implore the light to slant again
majestically, metaphysically. Could we put off;
just a little longer, what we must tell our daughters. Could I tell you
the many names for this sweet tannin burning?
Could I say: Diospyros, wheat of Zeus, God’s pear, Jove’s fire.
Or could I say: putchamin, pasiminan, pessamin,
any of the Algonquain words for dry fruit.
My red beard, split continent, my going away soon husband,
could we speak of the that which grows
in the old world

and the new, how these same things are named
with such sacred verbosity, such succinct utility. Could we imagine
what sudden parts of ourselves might spin and where to find them, if we rise
through and above our own rootedness, if we loose root
or deepen, what will be torn from limb and eaten,
what will ripen, what will film the tongue with bitterness?
My husband, my friend, my unthreaded nest falling
from the tree, this blazing tree,

persimmons

suddenly, always,
found—by the daughter running to us, her sister running with her, our babies—
the fruit of our bodies, our merging and splitting, the old world

and this the sudden the new
Deer Skull

The week you left the landlord bought a monster-fanged tractor and now the field is shorn down to a stiff stubble, the saplings shredded and blown to flesh shards. At first I can only see this as the worst kind of indignity, the worst kind of mar and rubbing raw of all that is already so exposed. And I fear that the woman in the field—my hated and beloved—will surely go away now. And even if I want the forbidden, the trapped light of the black sun to leave my body, what if the lighting bugs will not return here when the weather breaks. What if sick light is my only light in the darkness. The landlord does leave a few patches of bramble. I can’t decide how to see them—a cruel temptation—a lingering huff of fieldbreath calling the deer into this new violent clearing, or are these patches like rises of pubis, unruly in spite of their trimmed shape, and I find, as the girls and I gingerly step through this lunar stretch of the clipped and severed, making our way to these leftover patches, yes we find, that the deer are tempted, that they are risking it in the cover of darkness, for come morning now, the grasses are honey-combed by the absence of their nesting bodies, and the girls stand looking in, mommy, the deer are sleeping here. And I decide it’s time to bring the deer skull inside. The skull of the young sickened doe that wandered the field all summer, wasting away, her hair falling out in clumps, and when the woman in the field came, she wandered back to the swamp where she used to play with her mother when she was a fawn, and we used to watch them every morning, yes, she went there to die in the sweet muck of swamp grasses. And I watched over her bones, and you brought me a bird’s nest you found that was lined with deer fur and whose could it have been but hers. And the girls watched as I cleaned the skull and I realized she was no young doe at all, but a young buck, yes, the two short nubs, ghost antlers that would have rubbed the trees open to lose their velvet. And we hung the skull above my bed, the girls and I, and we left the house and crossed the field once more and went deep into the woods and began to learn the trees and we crawled through the shapes the vines make in their way of clinging and falling and letting go and lifting the roots of other trees and far beyond the last tall oak we found another field, and an untrapped light fell on the soft grasses, feathery grasses, and tonight as the girls sleep something lets loose, a howl of light passes out of my body and out of the house and into the field and the woman is flickering in and out like the lightening in the bodies of bugs when they will come again and at the edge of the forest is a shadowy buck, yes, he and I at the window, and he and I are the nighwatch, but we are not watching, but sensing the many does and their young drawn in and nested in what’s left of the field. And the woman is disintegrating now into those sleeping bodies, yes she has disintegrated into the last hush of the field and the breath of the young bucks that will make it another year and many years and the birds are gathering the bark of the gone saplings and they will pluck out the seeds of persimmons, and many kinds of fruits and nuts and here the new saplings will gather and this field will return and the young bucks will one day rub the young trees open and all the many kinds of wounds healing of song with the memory of the bodies that touched them and came into being here in this field and other fields will rise up to us beyond the last great oak where your daughters will trace their markings in the bark—the marking of the buck becoming and their tender parts will ripen, yes the daughter’s most tender parts will ripen and I will be a nest for their ripening, the voice falling through the field and trees and the she-balm for their making.
Love Poem for Gideon

To him that overcometh, to him I give the hidden manna, I will give him the white stone, and upon the stone a new name written....

Rev 2: 11

Sweet baby—your birth
   an expected ending—your birth
a coming sorrow—another boy child
   gone to the ghost breast—
but you are filling all the outstretched bowls
   with water from an Adirondack lake—a clear
soothing heaviness in the mouth—cool white stone
   on the tongue—baby
you have whispered to us our secret names—
   you are the fleece soaked in sweet milk—
the manna that fills our bellies—
   baby you have broken our hearts

    with joy—

baby you have decided

    to live
Milk Body Chronicle IV

For Sarah

1.

The girls pluck the clot of purple
from the center
of the *queen anne’s lace*—the spread of bloom
knotted and known
by other names—*bishop’s lace, wild carrot, bird’s nest.*
Rolled between the tips of fingers
the tiny droplet—bit of blood flesh
stains
their fingerprints—
which they mark on each other’s cheekbones
as strands
of tiny clouds—the color
of bruise

2.

She is a body torn open—a body just given birth
and a body waiting.
The baby who was to die—Gideon—he is living
precariously—

his rise of lungs
they flutter as wings—like her sister hands
tearing the apple blossom
The milk she has pumped from her breasts
glistens through the tangle of tubes that enter his tiny body—
She remembers the night-watches when she nursed her first two boys,
their raw-mouthed latching turning her nipples
to bits of blood flesh—
like the center of queen anne’s lace—and she longs
to feel this cut to the heart, this bruising—bruise of hunger & becoming,

bruise of the living—

He lets out a cry that turns the braille of her areolas
into a constellation—
a cry like a violin
surfacing
from the lake
of darkest blue
Section 3
No Bones or Birds
No Bird or Bones

For Pleshette DeArmitt

Morningside, of grief, and a night of small rain. Yesterday Kat called to say you passed suddenly. You—philosopher, writer, our teacher and friend, mother who mothered my thought—my daughters sleep and I step into dawn, dip my hands in the ditch that catches roof drip—a small water, clover stung. Cup it and press it to these swollen eyes, to the bruise of looking, the bruise of being seen.

_to assuage one more hurt you will bare into wakeful cups_
Virginia wrote to me, after I told her of this passing, your death

My teacher. Flesh of my mind, thought mother, container in which I become. Became? What now? How to mourn? Cup and press, cup and stroke streak of small rain between my legs, the inmost body, my very body. I squat to examine the little depth of ditch, frayed green, dead leaf mud, a tiny worm weaving through it. I lie down, press my face into the water, into this ditch of leaves and mud and creature, press my face down and hold my breath against the rainwet earth.

It is time to wake my daughters.

Maggie wants a pony tail. But I’m getting it all wrong. To low, to high. She’s fraying. I ask her to be patient. Let me get it right. _You’ll never get it right_ she shouts. I walk out of the bathroom. She follows me and I turn back to her and she presses her face to my stomach crying.

You had a daughter.
One daughter. Seraphine.
Same age as Maggie.
Here, without you
Crate full of notes from your classes. Every word
I rushed to cup. A lyric
of desire
    to know the self, the other, the self
reimagined, all gender flourishing in each singularity
toward many selves together
    in revolt—
but more than anything your daughter

your daughter

your very daughter

Seraphine, everywhere, in every lecture,
your daughter. Your life. The flesh of it enmeshed
    in your thought, your very thought.

and I turn back to her
and she presses her face to my stomach crying.

I find a passage in your book
I’ve never read before this morning.
It is you in discourse
with Derrida. You are talking
about mourning. Good
mourning. You have died
and you are telling me
how to mourn you.

The imperative placed on us
by mourning: we must
and must not
get over the other

Last night the girls and I got home in twilight
a mocking bird in the tree just beside us
would not scare or scatter. He stood looking,
commanding our site, cycling through all his songs,
all his languages of other selves.
We stood in a silent girlbody row,
Listening. Looking, seen
by many colors spoken. Mama,
what is he doing? Why is he looking at us?
The day you told me your book would be published,
I was crying in the hallway. Come and sit you said. My feet
were swollen with hives because I was worried, about
my daughters, time, hurt colors, how to poet, how to mother.
You, leading Kristeva scholar, always living what you studied,
always concerned for my motherhood—never advising,
only present in the cleft of it too, only confessing, the render,
time cut, hurt color, between the work and daughter, the self
thinking of daughter, and the self daughtered by thought—
the mother.

And we think as we live. This is the mother’s genius. You taught me.
And this becomes my poetic philosophic. In my poet self, in the root of it,
is you.

You on mourning: Since, “nothing can begin to dissipate the terrifying and chilling light,” of the
other’s death, “that he is no more, that he is no longer here, that he is no longer there,” it seems
that all remains of the other are images in us

I stand beside the car,
waiting for Jane to get in. I’m
stuck on a stroke of light in air
and a flick of red breaks into it.
Two feet away, at the height
of my solar plexus, a tiny cut of red
vacillating, filling my sight, then,
the tiny body that belongs to it
shapens, this hummingbird rush
of taunt wind
striking my eyes
with its
red-throated question

The question of poets, my poets, in workshop:

What will we put in the jar?
Bird blood or pickle juice?
What will we put in our jar?
No more bones or birds! V says.
No birds, no bones

But then V goes home and finds a broken porcelain jay in her yard.
And then you were gone to me. To your only daughter. Seraphine.
And then she wrote me a poem.
What is it we do, when we gather poets together, in a town, in a room, to write poems, to read each others poems? What is it we do if we don’t, in some way, write for each other, with each other?

Kristeva: *the originality of every individual in memory relationships and in narrative relationships destined for others.* We are all, you taught me, our relation to the other, our self is our web of relations.

So send your taproot down.

Taproot: from V: *Let us both hold it gently
This hour: a bird. a man. a teacher we love. 
Let us be hopeful together....*

Now I cannot write you or study with you and I must send it down, this root, here, where I am, with others, thought and life collapsing into the poem jar.

The taproot: from you: *Thus the other, who is no longer, who remains wholly and infinitely other as he was in life and even more so in his death, distanced in his infinite alterity, is now an image, but an image that looks at us, in us*

the bruise
of looking, the bruise
of being seen.

*and I turn back to her
and she presses her face to my stomach crying*

Maggie writes me this poem:
Dear Mom,
When I see the sea you’re
My sea

I have not seen an indigo bunting since last summer.
Not since I believed that blue was a voice that spoke to me.
And then the birds were gone, a creative madness, quieted. But two bruise-dark buntings in the field grasses this morning.
A whole language of blue, I cannot hear, but see.

The dead….mother our sight (Brigit Pegeen Kelly)
V’s porcelain bird is a blue thing: *how fitting that another’s grief should bring back those things from which I have learned myself away*

And what shall we put in the jar? All blood and wingbone, ourselves, our losses—in the jar, the jar, our mortar. This thicket of poets, voices as colors, their finding fingers touching, always more bones. Their vision of animals, of birds, the self, the other, carried away, returning. Many birds, one body electric, and all the thinness of it in the jar, the mortar, cupped and pressed, their sound the pestle, cupped and pressed, their sound the making of dust, let us be done, no bones or birds, let us winnow grief down to light. But we are never done with it. It’s there where the red throat strikes our site—the question of grief still hovering, no birds, no bones, but always, always returning, all bones, all birds, the dust of ourselves sung, dust always reforming the other within us, the departing bird body returning, looking at us from within.

*You and Derrida: all mourning belongs to original mourning which does not take place at any particular moment and is not the result of any particular death, but is the inscription of the mortal other (alive or dead) in me.....I begin mourning long before departure....*

To lose the archaic mother is the grief that affords us a soul Kristeva said.

Each death declares each time the end of the world….irreplaceable and therefore infinite Derrida said.

The bird is our original mourning, always returning, each death, each bird, infinite.

I find Janie looking at a picture of herself as a baby. And she is crying. She says she wants to be a baby again. And a baby forever. We all want that, that self before the self, submerged in a mother, that self before grief.

*The human soul, which is bound up with the body and language can not only be understood but, as a locus of pain that is vulnerable to destruction and even death, can become the privileged realm of death and rebirth*

Kristeva, you, me: *This is the rhythm of the infinite: To metamorphose, to reconstruct oneself, to be born again...yes the rhythm of renewal, the red question— renewal against the liner time of completion, we must and must not get over the other. In the bird departing,*
the bird returning
all grief, all life and thought
sees us, makes us

My teacher, my mother of your daughter, Seraphine, my giver of women and flesh of my thought, my grief, the image of you looking, at me, in me, endlessly bound to all my others, my poets, my daughters, all the loved ones, the beloved, my grief, in the root of deeper, widening, my teacher, in song with all others, all birds, no birds, just you, departing, returning, in the red question, in a language of blue

and in the jar this balm,
this small rain
of leaves and mud and creature,
this jar, my poets,
my daughters, my beloved,
in which I become
and I turn back to her
and she presses her face
to my stomach crying

let us be hopeful together, place our hearts
in the secure hollow of broken blue, she said, V said.
Psalm 4:3

Like a thing pulled from a flood.
Like a blue thing bleeding.
A turning to pink. Let me be.
Pulmonary. Let me oyster.
Like an ama diver. Woman grazer.
Cave water deep. Lung pearls. Filling.
Water woman. Let me be. Cut slits.
Of violin. In my back. Little half coils.
Of treble clef madness. String me up.
Cut me chords. Bird color. All color.
Bird psalm. My sound.
Let sound. Hurt. Let color.
Hurt. Synesthesia
Speak.
Let me drown one color. Breathe another.
Go down brown spent. Come up mauven.
Go down blue slung. Come up brazen.
Let all lungs. Ripen. All flesh. Thunder.
Let all lungs. Be red lungs. God lungs.
Pomegranate. Wind warp.
Let me. Be wreck me. Keep me.
Jane Maggie Mermaids

I want to tell you my sweet girls that they are real real as the starfish
her sticky arms
polishing the brightness of coral real as the beluga her white flesh rippling
the currents the poems of her face
the canary pitch of her voice
changing the shape of water real too as the seahorse
who releases her eggs into the belly of
f the male then leaves to float
into shadow into the silent song
of seaweed I want to tell you
that she is there her hair
the cloud that colors
the dark you dream in the womb
you squint to remember

I can tell you
of the ama divers the sea-women
who dove the pacific in loincloth
with spear their free hands grazing
floor of ocean for sea cucumber for oysters
flesh, strong and brown bones, warmed
with wood fire body changing
the scent of water their lungs
folding up like night flowers hearts
slowing to the beat of distant sound
glaciers shifting in another ocean I want to tell you little pearls
that some of these woman drifted
into caverns and came out transformed—
their legs become flesh of ocean

I can tell you no one knows how long the ama divers have gathered from the sea
the generations of baby girls
left with their fathers each morning while their mother’s drifted deep
how she taught them to breathe ocean when they came of age

some say it has been since the Phoenicians
before the division of language before
myth

46
some say the song of the ama
the song that opened
lungs to the sun and breath upon surfacing
became the siren song
the story
of sailors the mermaid
I can not tell you
if this is true I can tell you
that you that you are shape of life
before myth
I can tell you of the women who still dive
like the woman who swims with the belugas
the other scientists watch her naked form slip off the sheet of ice
the curves of her
bent to the curves of the whales
desire curved to desire and her tender parts
folded safe inside her skin on skin
whale and woman their lungs
not so different.
Section 4

Hatch Year
“not meaning…but feeling” - C.D. Wright

for Virginia

fistfuls of mud for our faces, streak & smear, red
& clay. but Mississippi seep
is no native salve, so we chose
the ash instead, charred wood in the sand by Sardis,
crushed to powder in our hands—black sashes two-finger drawn
on our cheekbones

as we watched my daughters
fill their panties with lake silt, plunged in fully-dressed,
knowing I wouldn’t stop them.
What any impromptu rite of that witch summer
kept, I couldn’t say. The ash couldn’t keep us
from glut and gawk and garlic, couldn’t keep us unroasted—
all rack and twine, our bodies, dressed for the far-off mouths

But we were here
together and still I see you
standing next to me
by the lake, my tall red woman, face sun-grief hot.
That swelter lake. Lake hovering, holding
the bodies of my girls. Lake offering to be claimed
by the ash-eyed women—
its soft sucking on the sand sounding like ours, ours, ours
Snatches of a Hatch Year Summer

Every 13 years they hatch. This year: Magicicada Brood XXIII. We stand in the mouth of this deafening. This dirt alien surge of millions. This abdomen soundbox. These millions of tymbals calling for a coupling, calling out the song of their very own perishing.

*

The sound begins in late spring. The velvet of their violent hum still lines our ears by early summer. Another summer in the house by the field. Husband gone. Apparitions vanished. Maggie and Jane want to know where the sound comes from. We examine the exoskeletons stuck to the door frame—the tiny slit through which the whole new body emerges, —if only I could slip through the slit of myself. What if I already have?

Some early mornings I find a new body, soft flesh bite, before the strengthening of wings a wet thing still clung to the husk of its nymph years spent in the warm dark beneath us.

It’s a wild thing to tunnel out, a wild thing. To emerge, to find the form of the free full self is closer to death than the years of fear. This house a husk I cannot leave. This summer, the witch summer. Maggie, keeps an ear pressed beyond the deafening, but Jane and I slip into witchiness

*
Kidney-shaped bone dish
with a smudged floral transfer.
Filled with these:
bundle of sage
dead hornet Jane found on the window sill
cicada wing
brown thistle
blackberry: dried and crushed
clover cluster
round flat stone Maggie found:
honey-colored, heavy on the tongue,
worry stone for a hungry mouth
milkweed kernels
three empty cicada skins
luna moth wing
wedding band

*

I’m afraid of trying to write a poem, as usual, and Maggie and Jane are watching Katy Perry videos on the smart TV. Katy Perry performs at the victoria secret show, and all the sugar slick bodies strutting color down my candy teenage dream. They seem to be having fun, except Katy Perry, at least, once she’s done singing and they finale to “they will not control us” – all those controlled bodies, kept tight, kept 2, kept in lace and lick and little. I want to be lace, lick, and little. I want to feel contained in my own skin, I want my mess melted like a candy lick and I don’t care, don’t tell me what’s right to want. Don’t tell me I have to want my messy witch mother body, my flesh spilling, flesh slipping, sex wet for the absent body, another summer without the lover, even after the husband has gone, don’t tell me. I want to be a slim shimmy 2 2 2. Want the lace licks in this house making cupcakes and playing dolls—want all that little girlness in a woman. Want all the little girlness in myself. Want to be hungry, not empty. I want perfect control of my can’t be controlled.

*

The field is becoming again,
a place of edges, of entrance—
the strange stalks are growing
into form. Walk along its blurred line,
choose whether to press it open
or to leave it be. Decide.

In the woods beyond the field, beyond rows
of scrub pine, unnaturally tidy, is a fusty
lust-lined gully—disobedient,
disjunctive. Taller than a body on its feet, narrow enough
to worry the lungs. Neither river strung
or valley deep, but a long-laid gouge—

a cleft

The cleft is not a place
to cross over, only to fall into.
the cleft become the container
of my mother shame—the shamecleft

the shamecleft became the keeper

of my isolation—and even now, after many cycles

of renewal

I am drawn to it

like a clapper is pulled to the smooth innards

of the bell, drawn to it like the heart

of the sickened doe

and this longing is returned to me—yes
I can hear the quiver of it from inside this house.

My best friend Kat is in the Middle East this week, and she writes to say she is barefoot in a mosque, a robe covering her hair. And then later, when she squats to pee into a porcelain hole, a Palestinian woman gives her paper to wipe herself. Kat feels emptied of God, and in the Holy Land, she’s thinking it over. Me? I’ve felt emptied of God so many times. But I’ve seen many glimpses, the trapped lightening in the bug bodies, the archaic pain thrush in the night watches, the possibility of Thou in the Thing, the vision of the daughter of god in the green and the blue flooding suddenly, releasing me from a black sun, the goddess in the birthing squat offering so many renewals but the god loss always returns I have told Kat about the moment I felt the first emptying, the first terrible god loss
and here, in this house
I hardly have any desire to find the sacred again.
I’m nothing but a dirty mother clung
to the door frame of an old life, afraid
of what I made.

*  

running route

down the drive past dead
persimmons past the over-ripe
blackberries off this island of the husk house flanked
by swamp and field past the smashed armadillo
past the deep laid creek the husband and I walked into when he wanted still to stay creek bed
filled with garbage past the window-tossed wine boxes and bloated deer past
the dog that tries to bite past the blue
house where the vultures roost past the turn
into deep Mississippi past all houses and all the way down
to the yellow diamond sign that reads: road ends in water.
And it does. Slants into Sardis. Man-made lake smothering
a field of burial mounds.
One day not far off many roads will end in water.
May as well run into the water now.

It’s a wild thing to tunnel out. A wild thing to press your body through
the slit in your back then cling to the husk that made you. The trouble with
a husk, it’s not a thing you can crawl back into.

It’s not a cup you can drink from.

*  

hinge

Jane has gathered four fallen
unripe peaches, a tiny pear, each
still yellow, and she has plucked
a leaf from the blueberry bush and cluster
of stillgreen berries, leaf too
of mint, of marjoram, and one
    indecipherable, a weed,
imprecise
nomenclature, and she has filled
the terra cotta pot where the seeds
of wild flowers never grew, and she
has placed it outside the door
for whatever ghost she sees
that I cannot, for whatever protection
we need
    that I am hard to, weary of.
Let them come I say, those spirits in the field,
those half dead deer with echoing mouths, let them
enter in the half-family house, house
of no man, let them turn all this
womangirlflesh to clover
or coven, let us give ourselves
over, but she has gathered, has set
her pot for her keeping
of self, of mama, of sister,
our keeping she has gathered, she
has set her pot
in the rain ditch

*

Sometimes a mother just does what she can do. It’s not always that much. Not that much. At the husk house we gather flowers and press them, we pick berries, I teach my daughters to piss in the woods.

Kat watches Muslim women
chant at Temple Mount,
she writes, *I see her eyes
through the thin layer
of black. This woman isn’t oppressed
by her religion. She is inflamed.*

I am interested in this image of such abandon.

Kat has passed through a long year of suffering. She endured a drug trial for HEP C that cured her, but left her in chronic pain. Kat has seen much death. The things I’ve suffered feel so much less, but Kat is a pain pluralist. Kat knows all pain, however dull-bladed or dizzying in its abiding insistence, bleeds back into our existential lack, our state of banishment. My pain has always been safe with Kat. My disappointment, my failed marriage, my affair, my longing for the man I tore my life apart for. My loneliness. God’s abandonment. My daughters. My fear that I am a bad mother.

In the cleft
there is vine and fungi—
clung to the fallen trees, yes,
in the cleft is sordid treasure
and grave humming.
I slip over root
to rut, caught in the clutch
of Mississippi-hot flesh, luminescent,
feral scented.
In the cleft
black pools left over
from what water once flowed
gleam as sour ghosted eyes, glow
like many dead seas, looking.

Kat goes to the Sea of Galilee, the place where Jesus made breakfast for his disciples after he rose again. It’s my favorite Christ-story. Kat walks in the shallows, plucks a pebble to bring back to me. She says she imagines me there. She says the godloss is a white fog leaving the body that quietly drifts in the sky. She painted a picture of a white form surrounded by flame long ago. It hangs over her writing desk. It is the very image of a woman alone in the bright holiness of pain. When she was in the drug trial, in the mad grip of the pain thrush she saw the virus that might have been her death slither out the corner of her eye and climb up the room and out her house. I do not question the visions of Kat. I believe the emptiness she feels now is only the space of a great deepening—all that she is expanding into depths, into the body of the world, into a knowing beyond what I can ever know. But we both believe one another’s emptiness will be resolved. She writes a prayer for me on a piece of paper and folds it up and puts it in the crevice of the rock where Jesus made breakfast for his friends, where he had come after rising from the great death of God’s absence, where, even after transformation, after slipping out the slit of himself into his full free wounded form, he was still a vulnerable man, asking Peter, the wild Peter, to love him. Three times: Do you love me? Three times: feed my sheep. On that paper she writes a prayer, asking the Spirit to return to me.

I’m thinking
of Father Jean Vanier
talk about a discovery he’s made at 79:
if god is love
than he or she
is vulnerable to us.

Of the woman chanting on the Temple Mount, the woman enflamed, Kat writes me:

_I want to be her. This faith. This fever that runs through her body_

I want to be out of this husk house, want to be far
from the shamecleft. I want to be more than
just born. Don’t want to be clung. Want
to be living. Want to be closer to death than ever before, living
as unto all fullness, vulnerable, nearly tipping over—but

not, want to be

_brimming—_
turquoise

I mail order two small pieces of turquoise. It is Maggie’s birth stone. She keeps the small smoother of the two and I add the rough irregular chunk to the witch dish on the table—beside the window, watching the girls run in the yard, I think of my love, wonder what it would be to have a fully incorporated life, not split…even in this poem, it’s a difficult thing…to let the babies and the lover be here together…turquoise, the indefinite color, matte greenblue, press this copper strung blood magnet to wrist, let me waver as I always waver, pressure point fever, yes the matte greenblue, let me neither terrestrial, nor sky, neither wife, nor mistress, always both, never either, choose an eye to cover, turquoise eyelid, choose an eye to cover, choose an eye to lose, always both, never either, keep both, be opened—eyed and see it—a dirty woman, keep both, take this cool warp on the tongue, this rough irregular, your baby’s birthstone, the hungry waver, witchy wander, swallow it down now, swallow down, fill the body with little waves of telluric current, sink it to the belly, dirty woman, dirty mother, the one thing I am that’s all my own, that’s all theirs, these babies, my sacred, my daughters—in this, to you I will always be vulnerable—yours, and how do I tell you that devotion is given to what has chosen you, not what you chose. It’s difficult sometimes to know the difference in this—what you want and what you cannot turn from.

One day the deafening hum is there, one day it is less, one day it is gone. Mama, the hum is gone, Mama?

* 

glitter finger

Jane wants me to see her glitter finger, index up, L-shaped with the sweet-curve thumb. Three-striped finger, painted purple, lime, and pink all glittered lizard and lampshade, all let me tell you mama what to do: look! At this finger of the sugared body, little lilliana, little baby second born, little lump of cookie cutlet, little girl that squats in the front yard, flanks and ground forming a perfect piss square, little dirty sugar girl pissing in the front yard, free yard, look, girl that fusses and fuzes over bundle and milk lick, pony-tailed and toad broken-legged in her palm, I’m not good at nature she yells, and we’re all of us no good at nature

Baby toad slumping away, pulling its girl-busted leg, glitter-broke glum slick, little toad, little finger, look mama, look—She’s making smoke dream catchers with the incense stick, she’s smoke and glitter, little hoax, little shaman, little come mama look and serve the finger, the finger that turns the body to running like a glitter stream laughing, body tender
as the florid ripened raw of a spring onion, body dangerous, as the hand that holds the wee thing too tightly, busted leg, glitter finger, look mama, look, little power, little danger, pointing mannerist toward the ceiling of this ragged house, look mama smoke in the eyes, look mama finger in the mouth, in the milk, in the manna, mama look at this wild thing,

this wild glittered thing you’ve made

*

The cicadas have mostly perished. The long years beneath the earth, the short passion above it. But let us not forget the deafening. And at summer’s end, let us leave this husk, husk of ourselves, husk of this house.

*

To My Love,

You came and we walked through the field, there was no cicada humming, but the lightning bugs filled the trees, surrounded us so entirely the field nearly fell out beneath us and we found ourselves in greening fire, the very inmost of the light womb, the mouth of deafening opened. It was silent as our skin pressing through this temple and our own mouths opening to catch a single blazing breath of whatever carnality, what divinity lead us here, leads us into the woods, beyond all light, losing us than leading us back out again—this blazing breath like laurels of the sudden and long-sought, this love burning through us in the glory dark

*

To Jane

Tonight, while you are far away in another city,
Your little belly filled up with a sourness, your daddy, holding your hair while you’re sick, I went out
In the front yard and pissed under the stars,
The same way you piss, in the light of day often, and
When I see you, making a perfect girl squatI think, I’ve taught you this one thing,
How to be bare in the free air, how to release yourself—
Luna Heart

Four moth wings on pavement—
perfect and bodiless, bites of pale
faintly effervescent
like moon
on a fencepost. What has vanished
and what is left behind
is hard to decipher, but you can rub
the soft flagella of wing edge
to lip, remember the faint line of fear
in the voice of a departing lover—
You could press its powder pattern
to eyelid, overlay the shortest life
on a flick
of sight. You could needle-prick
the eyespot of each hind wing. No blood
would run. Wings ripped
to green glow shards would change
no day, no night
would fold away from you. But could you, who searches
the dawn for a place to imprint
your life in the sky, undo yourself
to learn what continues beyond flight?
If you had wings to loose
could you move into the currents
above tree line, knowing
the very air knows you will not outlive it—
the air that sings you are more pupa
than petal of moon. Could you, born again
with no mouth, live tasting the breath
of death that pulsed with you already
inside the woven days of the chrysalis.
Could you go deeper than your procreative
doom, wake in the dirt
of all dying birth and find
that what lifted you—
what became you
and then left you colorless—is not what made you
the silver of planet,
not what taught you
the prayers of the dark.
Brim House

1.

This new house small house here
on the quiet street near the hospital. What new language
is this what foundation pivot then hush what
creak & sheetrock moan how’s a new house
to speak
when the house
before this
still echoes in the skin

2.

First week in this new house, daughters at school, a writing morning, and this small clay cup that
clicks when filled with coffee, like a watch or a voice
caught in a pocket. tiny pocket of air, caught by fire, this click click
of clay against absence, clay cup given by the husband now gone and clicking here with the Book of Hours
and these two windows looking out into the quiet street. I, the single house on one side
beside a music school and a Korean community church with a swing set and small basketball
court, and on the other side, a row of small houses, we houses a set of small cups, on either side
of us two luxury sub-divisions. Half millions and balconies and never a person on a chair
watching. Never a cup in a hand outside a bounty house built tight against another. This small
house of counted hours, this small house like the clicking cup trying to speak. A siren wicks
through time like a needle. Every emergency in this town passes by us here.

The house before this
a wicked emergency
a thing spilling over, house

3.

at the edge
of the god field—house that fills
with centipedes every summer, their dried up coils
leaving a trail of ghost excrement. House of sonorous decay—
fruit tree bones and bells—pear peach plum persimmon—
and bodies bending away. The husband
bent away. House pressed by the woods
that kept the shamecleft—the deep gully that sung
into this ripe-fisted belly, song that fed the dirty hunger, feeds
the mother trouble.

4.
The couple across the street, first neighbors I met—Chad and Pablo. Photographers from New York. In their drive I told them my dog Lukin didn’t know how to be cooped up, didn’t know how to be leashed. That I could not leash him. And Pablo saying, but if a car hits him it will break my heart. Pablo. Pablo. This small clicking cup and *The Book of Hours* and this need to be known. To know. A line of power towers cuts through our front yards and passing toward the one gap in this town. Thacker Mountain. This passing out of. Power. Rilke. This clicking cup filled. Clicking. Hours. This small clay cup my husband bought for me, then threw into the field, then went to find again. Then

brought back into the house before this, house

5.

of little caulking, no seams. House where the clicking cup could not be heard at all. Each nightbruised heart a new cup to handle, each pain cup singing, tremulous & tedious, the sound of marriage spilling out of itself and rushing through it. House porous as lungs. Letting the landscape in. Breathing all swamp, sweating all muck. House that can’t contain. House where language runs lush and loose and fills the body until the body can’t listen, until a body comes to leaving and leaves.

6.

This small clay cup my husband bought for me, then threw into the field, then went to find again, here, in this new house on this quiet street clicking. Alone. Rilke. What voice? House or poem or god—speak & if I could listen, if I tried to learn to pray again by listening, would you speak, would you shudder, would you let me brim here or would you spill me out. Would you shudder into my hollow cut, this fist of space like a blood violin, like a fountain, like a mother,

my container, my house

would you speak

like this cup with a tiny pocket
of air, caught by fire, this click click
of clay against absence, this tongue flicking
against the womb, the pink gourd, little voice
funnel throated, take this furious wander, make
this new language
with me, of me, little house, press this cup
to my lips and I will not spill out, I will not unlearn
the listening, my house blood, my mourning heart flesh cup, my brim, brim brimming—
The Mouth of Saint Teresa

*After Gian Lorenzo Bernini sculpture, The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*

To see a masterpiece in its parts, to forget
it’s a masterpiece, to forget the angel
with the burning arrow pointed
at the heart—to forget even the draped wreck
of her body. I linger on the white, the parted
and open, my desire to fill it with fingers—
Bernini mouth, marble mouth,
the unbearable ripeness chiseled, lifted
out of materiality, into

the pause—
the softness of the bottom lip,
the pleasure cringe curl of the top,
showing the row of teeth, to feel
the slick ridge of them, the fever-hot spit,
the tremor of a gasp, the exhalations
of transverberation—no, she is inhalation,
the drawing inward and I have become

as a cloud

she takes in—I am a thread

of weather, of light, of sustenance.

Suspended between the baroque
and the body, the shift
through mineral to throat,
to vein, her blood. Here
is where I find her—the cleft
in the heart meat—the insatiable

wound, here

I am consumed, I am annihilation.
Here is where I have given myself
to her loss of self to her filled up body
pulled from stone

my body become

as an entry of god my desire become

the hunger that holds us

open
Garden Aubade

Let us not be overcome by the heat that melts our teeth. Let us not.
Rise now before morning glories close their star-stung mouths. Rise before day fever, before flooding of ossuaries—our bodies just bones at float in our skins.

Let us rise and gather now the eggs, scatter our sleep. Unnestle now the nameless volunteer melon from its muck belly bed as I squat here by the shriveled lilies. Smear of dew and woman piss, little decay sharp in our throats.

Trim away the bolting basil, but don’t bother the okra—its purpling veins like the spreading of sin—already your sweat, don’t wipe it away, do not be overcome, baby slit that melon open, let us see what sweet gore you’ve grown here unknowing, let us see after all we’ve risked to see the morningside, my lover, my tangle of hull beans climbing the sunflowers, garden of adulteries, let us see what we have done, so come and slit, sit down here beside me, as the heat comes pouring over the already hot moons of our faces.
Blackberry Forest

Maggie is having poem class  Maggie writes  if it was time for spring  the blackberry forest would be blooming  with joy  if it was anymore  I would take a chance to walk through the blackberry forest  but if I was filled with joy  if would be me  I am the blackberry forest

data seven-year-old quest for a word hardly spoken swerves upside down in this dirty mother and holds centrifugally in the ribcage. she says, with not a single epiphanic anxiety, that if she can have enough joy, she is, (listen) SHE IS the blackberry forest. She’s gut written herself into her own sought thing. She a brambled straight through her baby skin. She a thrice born christ with her cull blown off. And it makes me want to say fuck it. It makes me want to say, wash the vernix off your lips. It makes me want a crude wind to lick the rind from my mother bones. Make me a walking nerve. Spread that round. Little whirlwind blackberry bramble of bruise sweet and bone mother glitter and girl got it joy trick. Baby girl makes me want to say fuck off. FUCK OFF. Take this poeming work, take this salve for living in the world while it quivers out of itself. The salve is from the smear on Sylvie’s nightgown in the White Heron—smear that is in fact pine pitch and not a cum stain and baby girl she climbed the landmark tree and baby girl become the blackberry forest and baby girl saw the white bird landing by her. I’ve seen my own white bird landing and it struck me deeper than the abject body. Makes me want to praise the babies, praise the women, makes me want to go out walking. This is my walking stick with the face of Artemis carved into it, yes, it’s been dipped in the livestock shit slime of Rukeyser’s Puck Fair. This is my Artemis, this is my artifice. These are my questions: can a tree save your life? can we all just love the things that made us? Can I live in the poem between no nature and no human? And you can finger fuck the lone sardine left in the last sardine can in the last landfill before that landfill has its way with us all, but what for? Kristeva, how does the black sun unblack itself? Adrienne tell me. Lucille tell me. Smear some spit in the blackberry mush and find a seven-year-old girl to pack your eyes with it, find a boy child to wash them clean with his starving tongue. And Galway told Ann the babies were our tuning fork and then he said, go eat bear shit. And all the dirty mothers said not every pathetic fallacy is pathetic. The trees are quaking their leaves with a joy cunt brag. The dirty mothers said talk to all the wonders that made you: the daughters and sons, the husband and wife and your divorced and queered and yourself and your father and mother and the northland cut stone and gutted churches and the southland choke vine and all the fucking birds and the crick bed clutter mosses and minnows and the ruminants and the rabbit curling its body into the little death that sunk your liver and sung your heartbeat to jasper beads you string on bracelets for all the lovers, the very lover, and speak to God now for she still hears you. Speak before all things pass away. Speak like transcendence is no sin, is the best sin, and all the things we desire, they sing us toward the pain thrush of the last bit of fucking BEAUTY. Give yourself over to this flesh swell. Be my own sought thing, let the bramble push through our skin out our mouth, blackberry blood on the tongue, blackberry sweet sweet ghosting the ghost breast, the long trenching scar above her ribcage, the milk hum in our throats, and didn’t we all inherit this earth, didn’t we inherit our bodies, their wholeness, their brokenness, to love the bodies of others, doesn’t all our flesh cry out for a cherishing. Cherish this. Cherish my body in your body. I cherish your body in my body, how it is like mine, not like mine, born of mine, beyond mine, how it is unknowable to me  and I cherish what I cannot know, cherish this sweet slung earth mound, this single lump of ground where we stand,
where we fall down. Weeping, we examine the worms. Praise the pathetic sweetness of our bodies falling into this lovepit, into this goddam unbearable blackberry joy.
Could we be here, then

Rilke asked, at the cusp between two wars
in order to say: house
bridge, fountain, gate, pitcher, apple-tree, window—

and things like words become elegies
to what they signify more rapidly now
then ever before and each one becoming
an image
threatening
its own, our own extinction—

So Rilke, my poet, my lover, what small litany for this—all bridges
unhinged, all fountains death singing, and could we be here, now,
to say
daughter driftwood hydrofawn salt
could we be here now, to say,
pendant electric icebreak pulse, yes,
al the gates opening on the last image—

And what if your last image were a girl running through a school yard
and she is your girl, but the suddenness of her just as you were searching for her
makes her unrecognizable, not how you remembered her from even the day before, the full
stretch, sprint, sureness of her little leanness, and you want to read your own yearning
into her body, but she is only a single quivering, only this dash toward her sister, her own
possession, wind of hair—fawn with no predator, and again the utter render, your body standing
looking at the body you still feel as your own, but the consummate stranger, continuously taking
herself from you, as she must, and again the desire for her to be within you once more, not that
she would not exist, though her existence is a as much a terror as your body’s triumph, but that
she would exist only within you once more, as your own possibility, your own egg not yet
dropped, your own body again at the threshold of
bloom—

And having felt this with an almost a kind a shamefulness, or at least
a nakedness, you realize Rilke had felt this
as he awaited the birth of his daughter, watching the swell
of his wife, he too felt it, and his godvoice like a pitcher
pouring out I wish sometimes that you were back inside me,
In this darkness that grew you
and here, now,
are three of many ways
to think about your two bodies wanting to swallow
the image of the self in the daughter:

it could be a man can become as a woman
it could be the darkness in a woman’s body
is the darkness of God
It could be that within the darkness man and woman and God
are a single pain-thrush pulse in all fountains
overflowing into the growing mouth
of the ocean that moves to swallow
all birth down, wants to swallow all our ends back into itself; but still
the great darkness held back
by the tempest window, and here, now
the umbered, the exquisite, the terrible rattling, here, now
all images
    threaten
    finality, but you cannot
    swallow her down—
you many mothers of the apocalypse, you many shattering
windows & apple wombs, come, say

pendant electric icebreak pulse

Daughter, driftwood, hydrofawn, salt, say

consummate stranger of this world slipping away, from my body, yours, say

you cannot
swallow her down, for she becomes
as a pendant, and you hers, and you and she
are small and necklaced and gleaming against her heart bone,
pulse against pulse, little god to all her god, and she
carries you, beyond your self, you
are her last image, and she wades
into the water
    crushing cities at her ankles, yes she wades,
    forgetting, begetting, all finishing and blooming things
Sardis Song

1.
this road unwinds like a sinew.
like a mother loosened. Radio thick now
with the Judds & petal steel. Listen,
my daughters, the way to the lake
is made for the state of stray mind
& a lick of wild. And it crawls
delta slow, it narrows slower still
til it threads through the tree swarm
like a finger glides over the high end
of the guitar’s neck, yes, it rolls
baby girls, it rolls.

2.
I am no southerner. Only a lover
come late and ripened. Only a born-again fallen, not afraid
of the wander. My daughters—I will make for you
a Mississippi of my own. I will birth you over,
by my northern girth, my evangelical pubis,
this agnostic womb gathers you up again
and gives you this place to make your own—here where the field
speaks bitter and god-struck, here where the cottonfield is beautiful
as spoiled manna, here where the lakes are dirty
and dangerous, I gather you I gather you & I give you
this muck and mission.

3.
the lakes where I come from
are a colddeep clench. Glacial made
and trundled. Fingered, they say, like God
ran his hand through the earth there, searching out
the faith of his own flesh, his long keep
of Marcallus shale. It’s a cold
that cuts the lungs. It’s deep that strains
the blood. It will find you out. My Baptist family said doubt
does no good. But I say go,
when you can’t stay no longer.
Let no person
call you stranger.

4.

Sardis stretches like the draw of a single finger.
The finger of Roosevelt, his damn in the Tallahatchie.
It would be easy to reject the lakeness of this drowning.
It’s a swelter dammed-up, man-made thing, not belonging
to the land that sends the skirts of Cyprus trees up through its muck.
Yes, but that water, it hovers and holds. And it is holding
your wondrous bodies
as you swim

5.

You daddy and I loved each other hard and uneven. Your parents
of two houses now, but we made you ripe for the wander
and glisten. We made you quick for sprint
and leaving. And we made you to know,
when you find a place that wants you, you linger.
Long as you can, babies, long as you can. And the tenderness
you find there, is the blue we made you from, the lakes in us
we gave to each other. Listen, the god that matters
is in every cup of water

6.

The road to the lake unwinds like a sinew,
like a mother loosened. The sun through the window
a hand on your forehead. That glint of the water
your memory of baptism. The road to Sardis
is how you belong
to place where you are. It’s the feet of the
daughters, in the sludge and the sand, red clay
in the hands, the streak & smear—their faces, the bread
and the water, the christ and the song, my daughters,
this endless cup, my daughters
swimming here, in Sardis
Long Exposure Fireflies

For A.M.F.

Tell this bit of land we got what we’ll do on it, tell it we got the tender, the touch, the hungry lick, barefoot tumble through the sundown dim—wet grasses, basil sweat and honey rush the skin, the tongue—

the dirt worked through

by our wildbone hands. Tell it we know how to follow the yarrow, the roots, fig tree, pear tree to where they lay down deep marrow in this flesh—our flesh. Tell it to send its small things past us, past us like smoke empties from a jar, tell the tiny lightning bodies to glint mica, spread borealis.

Slow it down now, light up the thicket, slow it down light up our garden, light up the dark between the trees, between the hours, between the days slowed down by the carnal, cut-deep, never leave this born of body need rolled in green

and want of days years decades clung to rib bone, decades clung to these bodies these bodies on this come come and stay here on this land,

this spoken to land.
VITA

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Education:
M.F.A. in Poetry
Graduating Summer 2016
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B.A. in English: Summa Cum Laude
(creative writing concentration)
Spring 2012
University of Memphis

Other Training:
Defense Information Training School, Fort Meade, Maryland:
Print Journalism Certificate
Broadcast Journalism Certificate

Veteran of U.S. Navy:
2005-2009
E-5 Mass Communications Specialist (print journalist)

Awards and Publications:
Recipient of the John and Renee Grisham Fellowship in Poetry from 2013-2016
University of Mississippi, M.F.A Program
Poem published in Prairie Schooner Literary Magazine
Winter 2012, Volume 86: Number 4
Giem and Collins Award for Research Paper
2nd place, University of Memphis, 2012

Teaching Experience:
ENGL 317, Beginning Poetry Workshop, Instructor on Record
Summer 2015, University of Mississippi:
Responsibilities: Taught and lectured on poetry form and craft,
facilitated peer-review workshops, class planning, grading of all course work, submission of final grades, portfolio review and student conferencing.

**ENGL 302, Intro to Creative Writing, Instructor on Record**
Spring 2015, University of Mississippi:
Responsibilities: Taught and lectured on creative non-fiction essay, poetry, and fiction form and craft, facilitated peer-review workshops, class planning, grading of all course work, submission of final grades, portfolio review and student conferencing.

**ENGL 222, Survey of World Literature, TA and Grader**
Summer 2014, University of Mississippi:
Responsibilities: Assisted professor with online class discussion boards, conferenced with students in regards to their written work, graded all assignments throughout the term, including weekly essays, midterm and final essay exam, submitted final grades.

**List of Graduate Courses Taken at University of Mississippi:**
ENGL 617: Teaching College English
ENGL 600: Intro to Graduate Study
ENGL 682: Graduate Poetry Seminar (repeated for credit 3 times)
ENGL 682: Studies in Literature and the Environment
ENGL 679: Form, Craft, and Influence for Poets
ENGL 623: Studies in World Literature
ENGL 686: Studies in Genre, Creative Non-fiction
ENGL 707: Studies in Middle English Literature
ENGL 770: Studies in Modern American Literature
ENGL 768: Studies in Early American Literature
ENGL 698: Thesis Hours (repeated for credit 3 times)