

RADIATE

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Morehead State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in English

by

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Accepted by the faculty of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences,
Morehead State University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of
Arts in English degree.

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RADIATE

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Morehead State University, 2014

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At the heart of *Radiate* lies the answer to a question that has plagued me for years, informing previous writing projects (including an undergraduate thesis) and a multitude of conversations with teachers, peers, and students alike. The question is this: What's the big deal about genre distinctions?

In earlier years, as is often the case with maturing artists (and maturing human beings for that matter), I took an aggrieved, angry, almost “revolutionary” tone when discussing the aforementioned question. Why, I would say, genre distinctions are completely arbitrary, a wholesale manufacturing of divisions by the “literary elite” simply to have more arguments, and they must be rejected to realize pure art. There is poetry in the best of prose – Faulkner, Joyce, Pynchon – and prose and narrative qualities in the best of poetry – Eliot, Ginsberg, Blake. There is no difference, I thought, and so I reacted accordingly, writing prose poems and flash fictions exclusively.

It took a strange mix of reading and artistic experiences to make me calm down and decide upon my own divisions. Through the work of Gertrude Stein, I discovered the

potential language has to create its own rules, its own worlds. In reading the later works of Theodore Roethke, I experienced the power that sound combined with surrealism has in storytelling and psychological explorations. The comic book work of Grant Morrison opened my eyes to theories on existence and radical, experimental, metafictional techniques in even the “lowest” forms of literature. And in reading and viewing the work of filmmaker David Lynch, I was introduced to the role meditation can play in the creative process.

Through all of these influences, I came to recognize what I had refused to see in my youth: genre distinctions are important, or at least important to the individual reader and writer. As a lover of a wide array narrative and poetic styles, I appreciate themes and tones as opposing as darkness and positivity, humor and solemnity, the profound and the irreverent. In trying to mix those, and other, techniques and ideas, however, I found roadblocks in my own writing at increasing frequencies. It was only when I made a place for each (or for several) that the work began to flow again.

Thus, my distinction of poetry from prose is seen in the following poems: to me, poetry is a purely spiritual experience, an attempt to put down in writing the process of meditation and the search for a connection with the greater universe (or multiverse). Poetry, then, takes the form of meditations, with narratives and even themes becoming secondary to the sounds in the poem and how those sounds form a specific tone in the minds of writer and reader alike. Theme becomes subservient to inspiration and tone, and the ultimate goal is to ascend above the common, to find the surreally cosmic in the sublime natural, to – in effect – radiate the self into the infinite.

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RADIATE

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[T]here exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals.

-Carl Jung

Quod est Inferius est sicut quod est Superius, et quod est Superius est sicut quod est Inferius, ad perpetranda Miracula Rei Unius.

[That which is Below is like that which is Above, and that which is Above is like that which is Below, to accomplish the Miracle of One Thing.]

-The Emerald Tablets of Thoth

Mission

The pastor says,
Fill the pews with maple syrup.
Today, we save the sweet things.

THE CHURCH OF SILENCE

Sit

Rappel down the rigidity
of a restituted spine
reclining splendid south
of superimposed rolls
of sheetrock.

Batten down the knees beneath
the narcoleptic wrists that bend
just up enough to barricade
the ring of knuckles.

Depth charge the shards
of shaved devotions
to the Church of Silence.

Salivate the closed incisors.
Separate the weight of skin.

Raise the rack of corrugated ribs
along the creases of a collared
rope of recitations.

Share the meat with the valley
of the veiled singular mass.

Radiate

Make a point to make the buttons sensitive
to many makes of fabric but only
a singularity of tongue. An ideal Tongue.

A total Tongue that speaks all tongues
and tunes the stations for the frequencies of thought.

Let the dials demonstrate how fluid flows the circle.

When licking, lacerate the leeward curves
of licked and licking constellations.

When humming, hover over the carpet fibers
homing in on harmonies.

Earn the earth's eruption.

Spread across the stratosphere in songs
from multitudes of mouths.

Unity in universal underlying undertones.

Everything extended into every worded wave.

Rise

Default the fault lines back to basics.
Reset the restings.
Reseed the rows of furrowed earth.

Start.

Start again against the rain
burrowing along the smooth horizons.
Press the fingers into the soil
and search for worms divided by the fall.

Squeeze the knuckles. Turn them into clay.
Shape them into roots with spit
and spared amounts of original breath.

Let the sky burn.
Let the born shine.

Lift.

Lift again from bent knees
and boiling lungs.
Lift the origami.

Build the forest of swans.
Harvest the ridges made of skin.
Fold the new natural.

THE HOUSE OF BURIED NAMES

After a shower

This is a story.

Nicotine laces shoestrings hung
across the windowsill. The wind is a harp.
The beard is a soured chicken breast.
Steam fogs the glass of a cigarette filter.
The eyes are sacks of tobacco eggplants.
There is something behind a palm print
in the mirror.

This is a rockslide.

The teeth sag. Everywhere a smile
is a button on the falling curtain. The grill
yearns in the music. The towel skips
the earthquake. The scar swells the chest
of old clothes and moths.
Ash is in the arm hair.

This is a soda pop.

Caffeine is the neck line. Empty carbon
footprints dot the scalp. Where are the bubbles?
In the hot ink. Where is the sugar?
In the wet paper. Where is the bottle?
In the stumbling creek.

This is a miniature ship.

Sophistication

Hold the heartbeat heavy
in the palms of penny dreadfuls
drying stiffly on the center of a holly branch.

Wrap the rhythm of returns
around the knuckle of November.

Read the pages. Mark the corners.
Note the errancy of fingerprints.

Yellow the fibers of a broken glass
above a stitched gray signature
that belays the path of pulmonaries
lined with candy corn.

What matters is the escargot
and elbows patched with paperbacks
that point against the backside of a bull.

So full of ink pens. So fool the hog pens.

Slit the throats of ripeness. Learn the origins
of sausage. Take notes for gloating
glaring at the vegetarian hordes
below the boards of chalk that shed the bitter drifts.

Let the fat soak through the fingers
too swollen by the silver wares
to turn the pages.

*The hole in forever**[One]*

The virtues of the vultures
have no value to the very dead.

The beak inside the head
is the one that squawks.
Only nibbling has a purpose for the eggs.

Flight, we famish you.

Where is the fuel for the feathers
if not the marrow of a fallen fantasy?

To live forever like a hole in the earth.

To pull the goitered pullets
into pieces and live forever.

What is called forever is a fang.
Let the poison slip around
the tongue to feed the birds.
Let their shadows shroud
our solemn vows of misdirection.
Let us bite ourselves into dust.

The wind has a taste for dust and licks it
into vapors that fume into the baby's bottle
boiling in the center of the earth.

What the hole takes in,
the breath releases.
What the wings carry,
the fingers grasp.

Let the babies breathe.

[Two]

Warn everyone, and be severe –
The pulse has fallen silent here.
The heart has rushed into a pose
that beckons for the sun to close,
but in the streams above there flies

a beacon for the bleeding eyes
 and if the crimson face can raise,
 what's seen is not an end of days
 but a pause, for grief, however brief,
 and then a sudden rush of need
 for hands and what our hands can hold
 far from the hole and for the hole.

[Three]

And imagine if the hole is not
 within the earth but swollen out
 into the sky above the trees and up,
 up into the flakes of light.

There are no capes for the covering.

What if forever ruptures
 and we ascend into the hole?

The earth erupts in the rays
 and the birds are roasted before they spit?
 The bones fall into the broth?

Where is the crest that caps the container
 and lets the ingredients settle?

Where is the hand that stirs and simmers?

In the ascension.
 In the wings that grow from our feet.
 In the egg cradled gently in our fingers.

The hole poaches the meat
 but cannot crack the shell,
 and Hell becomes a dinner plate
 for chicks that carry on the carrion.

[Four]

And what exactly is that hole that tears
 into the cheeks of the night sky?

A supernova
 superimposed
 across a bed of sand?

A flashlight
from a forest campout
fostered from children
frightened by
the feral mushrooms?

A curtain rippling
beside an air conditioner?

A flower drooping down
into a casket?

Yes.

That hole is a drop of ink
on an insurance policy
that trickles across the line
meant for witnesses
because the night sky sees and shows,
securing the twinkles.

That hole in the night sky is the night sky
because the hole hides from our eyes
and what we see is the sky
and what we don't see is why the sky,
so high above our eyes and blatant,
is so bright and bleak,

although in our hearts we think
what we're really seeing
is infinity, but our hearts
are merely bleeding meat,

and what the hole is really showing
is how bright these dead things shine.

Analepsis

Here, in the heated ice, the echoes will bubble.
What to make of drowning? What to make of waves?

Anything can sink. What rises
is the constellation of oxygen.
What stays submerged is tectonics.

Movement without motion.
Like a floating bottle
chewing a roll of newsprint.
Like a flame below a breath.
Like a tongue.

It will never rain, because it always rains.

The trees will go diving.
The acorns will swim in schools.
Nothing will learn.
Nothing will recall the sand dunes.

When the tides twist,
only oceans will spin.

The soil will be forgotten
until the roots rise at auction.
Then, the leaves will bud again.
The birds will close their gills.
And the eggs will hatch
at the surface and attempt
to draw a snowflake.

When it is sketched, perhaps then
the texture will regain its tongue.

Progress

Oblivion dances the moonlight cotillion
with a million sparks of opossum teeth

in wreaths around a bookshelf
built with berries from the trees

and stocked with novels writ in stone
and stilted chisels while the wolves whistle

for a single word from stars too far away
to ever sway beneath the notes

from canine vocal chords that hoard
the good and plenty candied bounties

of the forest clay forgotten in the rush
to reach the open sky on solid ground.

Cyclical

The scent of sensibility seems ceremonial
when the skull can smell of cinnamon.

Severed from the stomach of cetology
swims a certain societal smile.

The sinews serpentine a soul around
a silver sound. Separation is
a senseless celebration
of the symbiotic skeletons.

At sea, we will serve
as sustenance for the spermaceti.

Hearth

What the flames say is a mystery.
The frying centipedes wave their fingers
back and forth, shaming the oil.

A skillet's face burns.

Every log sets the sun
along the streets of termite teeth.

Every dinner steams the bricks
without enunciating menus.
Every mallow marshes.

The tongue becomes the sugar
for the caramelizing gums.

When smoke rises, the throat forgets the dishes,
and the chimney bakes the sparrows
so their song becomes a drone.

Language of a bullet

The river is a vein of viral red.
What sparks is the skin. What curls is the barrel.

The alphabet is a block
of bricks painted in dark oils.

Spell out the wind sheer.
Roll it around your teeth.
Floss the arterial pen strokes.

Build the house of buried names. Scrub the tiles.

Look out across the bay and think
of syllables drowning in rusted waters.

Pull the petals from a flower
made of cursive faces. Try to find
the words to break the dam.
Never let the weather bend
the braces at the grade.

Cast for floating fish with tendons.
Keep in mind the rigor mortis
of proteins gasping for fluid to breathe.

Endurance

Everywhere the torrid air
swings rust into the yawns.

Thighs are cracking bamboo shafts
that mold into a red.

Fissuring the bubbles fester
through the cheesecloth skin, again,

as all the toes can do is bend
and wait out the ancient molars.

An old Chinese remedy
is to never cease the winds.

A new Kentucky melody
affords the drums for harvest.

When the jet stream boils,
brace the trapped fingers.

Convenience

Make clouds of cocoa sherbet
drip ice caps into cream seas
so that sugar sings the rebirth
of a planetary placenta.

Make it sweet. Make the screams
flakes of Splenda to fight the bite
of bi-polar opposites spinning
around the oceanic bile.

Make the severed seedling
kiss its solicitous kin
with strawberry lip gloss
as it dies of disloyal labia.

Robert's Rules

Give the gavel pause to puncture
holly boards adored by chains.

Deviate the deviant hoards
abhorred by rains of rusted nails.

When did the rails bend?
When did the pails upend
and spill the slurry down
the chamber throats
of curtained weary windows?

Are the breathing holes enough?

Will the box burst?

The robes are rocking along the waves
of heat disguised as tales. The flags
are looping in on themselves in the riptide.

Will the washrags suffice for scrubbing
the perfect squares under the feet?

Will the flooding cease beneath
the echoes of a hammer?

Fear

There is a fear of dust mites on lustful nights when sawdust draped on nipples grinds the monuments to say that areola dinner plates call for two forks – one for crouton teeth and one for cretin thieving thoughts to bleed Braille blood through the perforations of an orange peel instead of lamb skin. *Baa baa black sheep* whispered through a tin can telephone strung between doorways while vacuuming with an empty grapevine leaving leaves in the carpet fibers, filtering out the apple seeds for consummation. *One bag, two bag, three bags full* of vacant victuals dipped from the small of a back.

Budgetary

Consider hindering the splinter cell of ostriches,
their ears filled with the searing sand
and winter waves, their chill, their heating bill
spikes because a grave is once,
is savings compared to the growl
of a hot grill on a floorboard;
the profits speak for themselves and sometimes God –
a sunny God, a bring the UV ice cone killer God,
a Freon taste the raping throats God,
a God whose favorite birds can't fly
but only flow across the floor of the free earth
spitting feathers across the beaches
while seagulls cast for scales to hail
the crumbling acid walls above
the flourished scrambling flightless.

Experience

As we tattle on the cattle,
we mustn't forget the beads
within the rattle that paddle
the insides of an intestine
so that indigestion is the lesson.

Beef, we tell them,
will tattoo the bones,
will batten the joints,
will ejaculate the tourniquets.

Only when the soft stool moos
will the sandpaper spread across the sternum.

Only when the skull sprouts spines
will the shared secrets turn to spearmint.

As we sacrifice the stomachs
for the sunflowers,
we mustn't forget
the bloody braces
buried below the barn.

Pest control

Tattoo every tooth mark
into the elbows
of the tentative termites
tasting table legs
and talking shit.

Make the hubris painful.
Let the sawdust choke.
Anger the banisters above the bed.

When the buzzing starts, lick the needle.
If there is going to be presumption,
make it stain. The wings
will wither on their own.
Then the tunnels will terminate
the thoraxes, the walls wilting
with the hieroglyphics of a tomb.

When all that's left is sand,
start the ovens for the glass.
Drink the ink of pesticides.

Churchill Downs

Must the smell of rust the musk
of iron of bleeding metal drift
like petals from a rose

and across the room across the nostrils
the gloom of an empty basement for one.

In case mint juleps were ever considered
remember how community they are,
how delicious they would rapture beneath
the immunity of multiples whose vicious
is tempered by how safe your veins are,

how straight on the rocks
now free of latex it would be,

how the yellow fellow
could mellow down calm down
bone down like the majority
waiting at the apex of experience,

which is to say the transfer of sweat
and hailing the dry eventual.

Burial

A breeze through a window is a breeze
 through a widow is a knee through a glass
 is a tap at a sill is a pill at a lip is a nip
 from a tin is a rip in a sack is a back
 being lowered is a glowing testimony
 is at best a slip of money is a notary on a page

is a page of dusted signatures
 is a page of bleeding newsprint
 is a page of stanza paper

is a weeping veil of spit is a washcloth
 dipped in ink is a rose petal of sawdust
 is a shovelful of chicken wings is a clucking
 cloud of snowflakes is an angel wiped
 with empty trousers is a picture frame of towers

is a wreath of wreaths of wreaths
 of dirty casseroles and wreaths

is a thigh afraid of elbows is a breathing
 mound of clay is a pressed suit faded gray
 is a swaying line of teeth in mild decay.

THE TEMPLE OF THOTH

*Desert**[One]*

Sand the salamanders across the grit.
 The fire is inflammable.
 Where is the spirit of the brick?

Skeletal is the eye that embers toward
 the flowing sun. The tongue cannot drink the sweat.
 All the salt is asking for is forgiveness.
 Nutrient the stones.

What's with all the questions from the air?

Whistle through the saltines. Chew the cherry arm hairs.
 There is nothing there. Beware the evidence against.

Wish away the whimpers.
 Where were they when the world forgot?
 Drinking the oceans.

When the cavalry comes down the carriage tracks,
 there will be no need for reptiles. When they come,
 their hands will bear witness to the kindling.
 When they come, they will never come.

Let the air dance. Follow on the backs of boars.

[Two]

A friend of droughts is a fiend
 who doubts the land's recuperation
 and is very likely right.

How the sun, amplified by fingers curling
 into rings, can smoke the bones into fossils.

The piling on of pumice for the carrying
 and the singing of a harbor ballad.

Pale hail fell
 four nights ago
 and then the bells began to ring.
 The bells forgot the name.

Call it anything you care to, dear,
 just don't call it late to dinner.
 It is thinner at the ringing of the bells.

[Three]

The smell of tins falls easy on the wolf's beak.
 The chance to speak is lost along the storms.

Among the throng of lightning
 shocks the longing in the feet.

Dear jerky,
 You taste good.
 Love, the wet toes.

Leave the baking to the birds
 for there are words
 to tap into the dunes.
 Hunger causes pulling for the center.

Have mercy, mirage of broken calendars.

[Four]

Father, there is need of you.

Teach it how to walk alone
 and dodge the war of cables.
 Teach it how to kiss its hand and touch the mirror.
 Teach it what it was to drown.

Show it what it is to still drown.

Father, please, cook the fish.

[Five]

Winds, says fear, have traded the tracks
 for the chance of trees. Air declares
 the end of waiting. Who spits pebbles
 in the mouths of hawks? Their feathers float the sands apart.

Memories are for the crows.

A budding leaf in a pit of sand?

A woman's arm across the hand.
The dunes have dared the branch to stand.
A strand of strawberry sweetens the sores.

A bird cries out the tragedy of eggs. It stands.
It bends. It declares the end of waiting.

[Six]

Beyond the glistening, an ocean steams the footprints.

Buoy*[One]*

Praying to the benevolence of leviathans,
 the water snakes the shins.
 Meet the sins of salt.

Here upon the shores of burning glass,
 the apple passes up the clay in browning spirals,
 its core a bed of thorns.

The saliva costs the jellyfish a spark.
 The saliva. The the th ma My saliva.

Alive, a single spark of something.

What is there? The chamber of frames.
 Where oh where can the body float?
 A boat. A boiling moat around the castle
 that is earth and piles
 of camcorders made of branches.

What I-I-I want to watch is who I-I watched
 when all the watching was for naught,
 or not, the tides will never say.

Covered by the sand, the rib cage breathes.

[Two]

Capitalize on the short wind.
 Do not tarry.
 Please don't lead the mantas to the corn.

What passes for fertility in the depths
 refuses to filter through the fins.
 The stalks will never waver.

Where is the sun if not in the pot,
 marinating in the broth?
 Falling off the bones.

The scales teeter in the kicks and bubbles.
 How to equalize the pit in the head. M-My head.
 And the turmoil of the schools.

What fools! What cracks the tools
that hope to twist a screw.

Tighten the bolts! Taking water!
Sinking to the ships of tinnitus!

[Three]

There can be no cowboy boots in a shaker of salt.
What about the snakes? The eyes are burning
without flames. Escaping the sun,
I feel underdressed and swinging bitter.

Without the lessons,
the drowning happens sooner
even if the schooner steaming
wishes forth a string of candy.

Drop down the bolo ties.
If there is death here, let it be formal.

[Four]

Send this letter to the parents. M-My parents.
If they still remember because the storms
have blown their faces from m-my eyes.

Home, I-I feel, can only be a forest.
The riptide is a wall of ice.

A device that filters tunas from the can.

Cut my ears apart and drain the candles,
caked in wax and scratched with numbers
only making math for bloated corpses.

A son's grave in a goldfish bowl
can be picked from the rainbows,
if only the surface ever breaks
the faces of the war machines.

*Shore**[One]*

Mother! Father!
 Feather the floating.
 Sister! Brother!
 Weather the bloating.
 Sing to me the song I have forgotten.

Bevel the hand grenades. This will be a quick embrace.
 A foot race on the ocean floor.
 My knees, they lick the reefs.
 Scratching initials in the lava flows,
 I liquefy the meaning
 and let it cool across the dinner plates.

Having no options, the angler fish persists
 in lighting up the down.

The fish have teeth.
 The fish swim wild and clasp the teeth.
 The fish look forward to the gun.

[Two]

Wipe your feet. The seaweed stains.
 The saltwater taffy chews the bandages.
 Burns blister long into the bursa.

Where is here, but why?
 What has the government planned for the landing?
 Who spittles the wounds of heat stroke?
 How will the bends unbend?

[Three]

A guest is best
 when resting for
 the festival of ghosts.

This is where the photographs hide, behind a key.

A hand to guide my hand
 is your hand or ours.
 A kaleidoscope of map lines. Greetings!

says your mouth or mine,
 although the kind of welcome
 savored by the lonely.

Where was I? we ask,
 and answer just the same.

Drowning beneath the names
 of ancient fish. And now?
 The nets have jettisoned the prawn.

The copper bellows on the lawn
 and on throughout the absent square.

We're looking for a train, I say
 while fingering our hair.
 I fear the strain of swimming
 through the seas has led,
 you say, to storms.

The fish are never biting in the storms.

[Four]

You there! says the mayor.
 Who, us? I declare
 the reasoning is lost
 in the waves, he says.

The tides have come
 and washed away
 the fireworks display
 we planned today.

And so I must,
 before the rust
 sets in, ask you
 to carry on the bones.

[Five]

And in the distant clouds we see
 a platform for the matches. There the torches
 beckon to the plates. A trail of smoke
 is hissing through its scales.

I walk the path and bring you,
too, and send a wink ahead.

Above our head the crows and sparrows
argue over skin. Flutter the gills.
Urinate the seawater behind
and taste the hills.

Sugar through the roots. There, the marrow remembers.
There, the train smothers the technology.
There, the earth burns
and humbles banjos in the smoking ladders.
There, the dinners mix.

*Trail**[One]*

Carry out the calcium depository. What for?
 The creation of fish. Says who?
 The bony mayor of chamber pots.
 No one asks the answers.

A necklace of freshwater bones.
 Everything drips the decadent dirt.
 Your passions? My passions.

Grow the gristle. Tibia tongues are a mother's
 bedsheet. We walk the dunes along the patio.

How to beckon the eels. How to spark.

Make the buttons bruise. Make them soft
 on the gums. Make them close against the gills.
 Cover our private thoughts.
 Fin the coals. Pucker up the railroad tracks.

Fill the stein with shaving foam and lick
 the shaving foam around the rim
 until the shaving foam rots. Persuade the razors.
 Shave the scaling cliffs. Spit away the slaving foam.

Set the splints.
 Here's a hint:
 direct the flint
 into the pine cone dents.

Blow. Blow.
 Bellow below.
 Be low the glow.
 Let the catfish claw the rats away.

[Two]

Mother, make the dripping stop.
 My slipping tongue can make no cartwheels.
 Speaking seems the only sense
 that can make sense and yet
 the sense of drowning takes its toll.
 Barley boils within the bowl.

Where is the smoke if the cans are empty?

Mother, start the fire.

[Three]

Hark! the clouds of homestead comfort
cushioning the trays. Bring in the silverware.

Wary is the cricket clicking mandibles
upon the clipping. What makes the candles run?

Hark! the lost tongues,
O! tongues that click on stone.

The bones are in danger of choking.

Speak. Open the dirt path to the river
and speak the bones into the basket.

We must suckle the ribs.
We must marinate the sockets.

Tap the wine glasses until the pebbles cease.

[Four]

Open our eyes.
See the sparrow buds in the tips.
Breathe warm life into the roots.
Wipe the cords away.
Cut the spiders from the leaves.
Let her mouth fall open and taste her mouth.
See her shapely mandibles. See her outstretched silence.

[Five]

Blow.
Blow the whistle home again. Pull the brakes
until the mice splinter. Paramount
the catacombs we once drove home
under the cloudless curl of moons.

Let the memory in for soup.
Clean the bowls.

Blow the steam into the pipes and punch the ticket.

Bow and taste the earth.

Sing that song you know.

[Six]

The dancing
of the flaking shutters
scattered against
a window of skeletons.

[Seven]

When the stones grew, not everyone can say,
although some can hazard a guess
when telling fables to their knives.

The time frames never hang straight.

What seemed like solid footing has aged
into a muddy bank. Where did the inscriptions begin?
Folded up into a fire, burning tips of bones
from trout and cutting into limestone.

When did the dam break? When the train rolled on.

The vines drew dentures and bit into the lattice.
The water never welcomed eyes.

And all the fish
who made a wish
bit through the worm
and soiled the dish.

[Eight]

Breathless in the sky,
the fly is ruthless.

It brings me home to the burning lake.

On the bridge, the beetles scatter
through the batter for a fish fry.

On shore, we feast,
the fly and I,
on memories of lily pads
and gills of spotted gar.

We keep our fingers free
of the masticating mouths.
Soon, we will be full and sick
and ready to take flight,
boneless above the flood,
looking for new roots in the silt.

THE NUMBER OF GOD

Workshop

Coffee down the windpipe
coughs a cloud of caffeine carbon
on the copy paper and creates a kinship.

Petroleum palpitations
press the paper
into possible places
for political pugilism
as well as plutonium perspirations
pouring into a pen and out again.

A woman wets the white welding.
A man makes mollusks mean matrimony.

A child chides the charter chapters
with chin-length chopping
champing caricatures.

A writer writes the wrongs
and rights the rungs for rebel reaching
around the righteous restitutions.

Coffee creams the cardio chambers.
Java jumps the jettisoned jubilations.
Heat holds hard the harried heartbreak.

Creek

Creep higher.

Crawl across the cold earth.

Call the carrion into the claws.

Chew.

Cough back a clasp of crawfish.

Cake the cliff with copper cones of cane.

Chill the chattering catfish.

Calm yourself.

Condense back into the cultured caverns

cut along the coal-lined crevices.

Hollow one

Fallen trees trip the trails
but hold the heavy handprints.

The creek runs in place.

Tonight, the owls will ovulate beneath Orion,
hooting high below the bulging hills
until the mice all call the evening closed.

Branches will break
under the footsteps of the wind.

Snow will summon itself then swerve
along the blushing blooms.

For now, all that floats
is the fogging of a weighted palm.

Hollow two

The toes, however they may whisper,
will welcome the cold bones of mice

lying beneath the wilting leaves
browned by wet and clouded sunlight

leaking from the feathers fresh
and phallic from the heights of skinny trees

ensconced in breezes that do lick
across the lovers's skins and curve around

the bones of stumps long cut
by blades of keratin and happy lustful secrets.

Sense the ligaments

Tasting is the only way to feast
on bits of vocal testaments.

In the ear the evening cools
the rising chords of declaration.

The shadows drape the buds
and drown the drums and dangling tentacles.

Listening lubricates the pistons
but the tongue initiates the drive.

Seeing severs disbelief
but only through the airy glaze.

Grazing fires the film of knowing
but the teeth typify the label.

Remember the sounds of the earth.
Savor the shape of atoms.

Gripping tight the shaking wheel

Where would the worm be without the spider?
Sifting through the roots of clouds,
drowning in the sun, its skin treacle, taut,
like a fetus made of petals.

Who will ask the flowers for paternity?
Ask the bumblebees instead. They stick,
they sting, knowing the ripping
makes the pushing bloom.

Oh, how much a drift of powder can be.

A car is a leaf burrowed below
to shade the soft organs from the mandibles.
Exhaust the fighting axle in the tunnels of clay.
Crack the heads and tails of Let Me Be.
There is no letting in the gasoline.

Undercarriages laced in webs will stick
to the pavement as they melt,
trickling from the wounded squares
in circles underneath the sun.

The perfume of a tire iron
is the memory of motion.
The miles, what once were treads,
the silence of the running,
and where that running's gone.

How could the earth hide
the curves from the soil's mouth?

What there is to a bullet is simply the shape,
smooth and small, and the sound,
shouting and immense, and the struggle
between the two, how it flies and buzzes,
how it tears and quiets, how it builds and digs.

Harried, the gun shots fly into the caverns,
aiming for the teeth, screaming
so that the stones scream back and the river,
too, screams, and then all that remains
is the screaming and the broken blood.

A drive along a mining road
blurs the nests against the cracking hammers.

A fly will climb the mineshaft as
a beetle slashes flames. The burning sees
no difference in the fall.

Turn the keys into pollen and let the winds
perforate the map. Let there be no extra legs.
Make the taste of dirt enough.

Drape

A rooster boosts coasters
along the wood grain stained
in bowl obstructions painted pink,
crowing, pawing at water rings
and singing corn into the mourning.

Let the bird grow into wet feathers.

Let it line black light posters
in a blacked out basement
with blocked off doors
cutting tethers from the solid
and how a pallid cheek feels
against a screaming beak.

Let it grind beneath a fading mind
and burn on a skillet draped around
a lump of breast and soured cream.

Let it eat Itself.

Let it choke on charred Itself
and dwell on scarred tear ducts
that cluck when glass
has nothing more to spit.

Alchemy

Anything is anything that makes a thing another thing and all it takes is wanting.

All the hopes are hopes of effects hoped into the causes of plausibility when it comes to purpose.

Destinations end the lines of map lines lined in finger marks and favorite shades of ink.

Intimations of intimacy intimidate the paper into paper powered by papered thoughts addressed to anything the paper holds.

Everything is everything depending on the vowels excised from everything that shift the letters into some things and then something that swells into topography.

A map of anything is a map to wrap around the things that map a path to a single thing of anything that can be all things as long as one thing equals everything.

Shellshock

Shake the shivered sweat from marble rye
that eyes the rising soured dough with dark intentions.

Slather butter in the Fibonacci swirls
beveled in the crumbling crusts.

Take a taste of fresh baked numbers imprinted
in the indentation of a snail shell mold.

If the bread takes fire, spit the flames.

Let the hands determine how hot the knife slices.

Let illumination spiral
from the seizure of an opened end.

The squid are in the sundries

As if there could never be enough ink.
Try making bread with ink – it's impossible!

No, it's not, it just happened –
bread was written and it rose
like sea urchins on a shield volcano
and soaked up all the fingernail marks
in palms and tooth-wrenched tongues
with a taste the donkeys compliment

and who said the farmer's dying?

The farmer's dead and gone
and back again as Thoth,
to call the waves down
build the ships
mourn the loss of doves
heat the ovens
kick the jukebox
tap the greenhouses!

Laundry

The coils twitch and lose the orange.
The ice forgets the melting.

Fabrics sing a freedom song
revolving around the lyrics of a closet.

Fold us, they say. Bend us into parrots
so that we may hum.

Plug the breath of bears, the hangers say.
Only then, when the air sheds coconuts,
can the wrinkles recede the collars
and we can kiss the mouths of moths
and breed the sweating shadows.

Spoon

The knee of the heart is the spoon
that bends in the presence of linguini arteries

wrapped around the fork that digs the parasite
into the silver and tarnishes the monogram,

the raised Braille button at the end
of the handle which you cannot possibly do,

what with all that grease, all that gravity
of a chest starched with rust and the dust

of withered ligaments pulled taut
by too many fingers in the boiling broth

so that the heart bends to walk forward
but cannot and instead falls apart

in rains of carbohydrates and clotted bone spurs –
oh the surgeries, oh the starving stomach,

oh the stiffened impossible walks along
the market square buying salt shakers for two.

Collage

Absolute is what ambulances rage to the airlifts.

All is complementary colors.
All is a line between landfills.

Definite drips in spots
from drains to ditches scratched along
the dairy fields and diamond mines.

Certainty certainly simmers
as the lips leave lacerations
on the tray of trembling trepidations.

Shoulder shrugs lift the chips.

The sky shades the scissor marks
glued down against the shelves.

Anticipation

Catcall the coveralls, the pistons say.
Stroke us with canola oil boiling
in the ghosts of pavement.
Make us tremble.

The mechanic says, I will do
the dance of Q-Tips and we will see
how the candles flicker
closer to the chiming of the whistles.

We cannot wait to ache, the doorknobs say.

Forget the spreading, the mechanic says.
What we need you for is the afterbirth.

Beard

Curling the curtains around the doorway,
there will always be a memory of dinners
posing around the velvet ropes
for the flashbulbs of a damp tongue.

Square the root of loneliness
[for Asheville]

Amongst the goodnight there trebles the frequencies and lampoons the ostrich oleander that abides the mustard sandwiches, the west amphitheater and kittens Greco-roaming the butcher streets, the apples waxing the moon in a jar in a bar, the cinnamon ice cream skyscraper of a cock accusing the clouds over Pack Square the root of loneliness of tangerines. Fried egg beef patty water spigots and the wedding cake, the box, the pastry trolley, the tasty folly of tourism as a means to smile at abdominal tulips both ready to lick clean the poppy seeds while the hippy creeds can't describe the mountain's thoughts when seeing them in Indian cheese fries dripping from a bird's beard. The bard a wolf, the more built the more come, which is to say the honeymoons, the fructose lunar halo orgasms of light beneath sand, the stars, the Pabst Blue Ribbon, the maddest true gibbon screeches *Hello!* and the number of God.

June

What can fill a hole if not
a word from muted tongues?

What can tell a caterpillar
to crash into the open sky?

What can make a stone grow?

What describes the wind?
Only wind. Only four knots
of branch that bloom into a tree
and then four trees and spread
into eight and twelve and thirty dozen trees
rising clean through the dirt
that once was bare and flat
but now holds the earth above its head.

What can make a river twist?

What can drop a feather faster than a bone?

What can snap a padlock made
of bedrock into drops of water
from a deadened dock?

What drowns the tide beneath a seed?
Only seed. Only a single whisper of a shell
that sprouts a root and then four thousand roots
that hold the current past the bush
of tongues that grow to say a single word
that pollinates the stream.

What can fill a hole? The absence of a hole.