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They Burn You They Bury You They Pull You from the Water

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THEY BURN YOU,
THEY BURY YOU,
THEY PULL YOU FROM THE WATER

A thesis

by Travis Eugene Morris
Master of Fine Arts, Creative Writing
May 2011

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Abstract: Ditch Row Ballot of Characters

In Daviess County, Kentucky, the Ohio River's ancient bank separates the people living in Owensboro. Those drowning in the plasmatic shallows, in the flood plains of the city, are a vigilant, tribal array of religions and mysticism. The closer a community comes to the actual banks of the river, the more enflamed characters of families become. As most places in Kentucky associate themselves with distinct counties—never being from a city—the people inside Daviess County align on streets. *They Burn You*

They Bury You

They Pull You from the Water, is the phoenix of one family from Grecian Street categorized as a ditch row clan, crucifying its matriarch to find a newer, promising story. Here, you will find them full of momentum toward a life unfettered to the stories, numerous, and stalking them all.

[CLAN SHOCK] n, the effect of being born into [this].

BLOODGOODBABE: who you must understand is the Jesus turning over tables and sleeping with the hooker—matriarch, mother of the *WorldSplitter*, leader of holy rollers, general diamond of this rough.

=

WORLDSPLITTER: mother of the *ShallowGraveDigger*, wife of the *BurstingMan*. Full of regret and shame and hatred for the *BloodGoodBabe*.

+

DEEPGRAVEDIGGER: carnie that knocked up the *WorldSplitter* and robbed a liquor store and went to jail.

=

SHALLOWGRAVEDIGGER: son of the *WorldSplitter*, witness to several murders, knocked up his cousin and accepted his orphan fate.

then there is...

BURSTINGMAN: motherfucker who saves his own day and gives the *WorldSplitter* a new life minus her son.

HUFFnTUFF: best friend of the *ShallowGraveDigger*.

N'TASSY: hangs around the Grecian Street clan, will be pregnant herself one day.

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I. THEY BURN YOU

A Story of Many Last Suppers and the Betrayal Remitting

Not embarrassed but like a bull horn

ringing down her throat
and the light grit of metal,
the taste every Sunday— for these years, that daughter
who gave birth to a black man's baby—

the BloodGoodBabe's loam loaded hands of prayer
forcing their way into the WorldSplitter's mouth,
as though it were the secret ingredient of a tonic
to scrub her insides of the sin.

Knee indentions&coupés of scraped dirt
thinned the yard's of Grecian street like a scalp of empty follicles.

There was no spectacle to any of it—
a mother weaning her daughter
with a communion of the earth.

Regret of the Guilt-Crested Mother

A late night infomercial waits for you in Heaven, WorldSplitter.

A reward for your service birthing the ShallowGraveDigger w/ God's light upon him:
bastard

birds dropping from nests till nothing
but angels streamline into jet turbines.

This world so holy thou art again
&again&again in offspring's savior,

nor could you ever leave her like that:

bigbig mama burden of herself w/
your ShallowGraveDiggingBaby anchor of her own
dreamboat:
she raised him for you.

No, the ditch is not skid row

is no stoplight in Harlem—genocide. Worst, center.

You don't know WorldSplitter why you fear everything wet&rat is the same.

Stop looking for the BloodGoodBabe to save you from the BloodGoodBabe.

Punishment became an obsession,
turned your lottery into a game of odds,
plucked it from hope's revolver like a roulette
bullet you waited to death for.

Return, shatters of globe&android there.

Atlas' heavens fell to pieces, Patsy Cline for your sadness—how alone even

3 letters inside that
heart on the I Can't See You Anymore Page: I O U—

[stanza break]

eggandtheboysayheypinandinksay

no burden is that heavy. Conception,

the moment of you say

[...] and the world

became two: before&now forever.

Accept you could not let the carnival go,
you couldn't live w/o the glitz just yet:

1985 and then there was a toddler listening to Morrissey w/ you
and the Soviets were winning the cold war,

but you'd welcome the instant chemical change of their bomb

or being center of the sun—ash would be.

O, if you could take the planet like one big nucleus
and fissure everything—

even you—

to never meet that DeepGraveDigger and
lie down w/ him in an empty rivulet,
quiet and dark.

Sometimes Girls Stay Girls, And What Keeps Them that Way Is the Only Thing that Keeps Them

HuffNtuff at the dart toss, N'Tassy guessing weights, and the BloodGoodBabe
a Gravitron ticket taker: the mobile of Grecian Street all worked
frying batter, revving throttles, or scamming dollars in the summer.

Everyone who joins a carnival has carnie family
at one time or another—
that kind of thing cannot be helped.

A destitute tribe, careless and
in charge of more lives than they knew—

but what the clankety troops leave behind requires,

eventually, a sacrifice or two. And absence will conquer their clan
and shock

for days&days&days&days¬hing more after
the first silence that takes you from them,

the second wave more vicious, spawn

extraordinarily calm ghosting:
an individual invisible as a ginseng paycheck ratholed for a rainy day that could drown any family:
the BloodGoodBabe's daughter and her daughter's teenage son:

One day she said ringing her eyes in mascara,
Morrissey would cosmically miss her or someone,

famous enough to take us, she said,

[stanza break]

would walk his way into their
lives like a family of muses for
hire.

*Post Explosion the Deep Grave Digger Insures Himself w/ the Liquor Store Cash Register,
and You Die*

Nothing's worse than eye contact a burned man works into conversation:

mumbles draw your attention to his face
jump from flinch to flinch of the very nerves that give skin feeling,

when he pushes the boiled smooth palm—the money could

sponge from air then methane

dropped from the ceiling from the floor
the center of the earth: burst pipe.

He dug and wound into the soil until the cavity filtered
what was left to hold the man together,

and you jump yes

you jump

a little when

he points to the center of his left thigh
and says no,

not there, it didn't burn him there

when the shovel opened the pipe,
and the flash opened from the dirt

like a cataract broiling blood from the casing a body is
over systems
it must cauterize to protect—

his organs had never been so secure—

and it's always hot

he says, it's always hot,

and hasn't cooled

since that last lick of sun swept from the wall
and heat flashed the naked degrees
of its worst self.

It's a miracle he doesn't see you
and you wish he couldn't
and so does he

so does he
wish he couldn't
see you reach for the button.

Nothing he scribbles on the stick'em up note
looks threatening—
his crazy is confusing—it says

[the gun] you don't see it coming

you don't, you can't

quit looking at the keloids mounding the side of his neck
like sand dunes
beaching comfort;
how free he has become
and what is left in your life.

The Joy of Choking Yourself Out

HuffnTuff would topple to the right like a sailboat

taking on water

as his held breath

made it harder and harder to stand,

head tucked between knees,

nape pressed against the textured-plaster wall of his
bedroom.

HuffNtuff flapped his hands,

the color of pickled meat, just before his body

dropped unconscious to the floor,

a lightning-struck catfish flopping on a muddy bank;

parted lips evoked the sympathy of breathing:

a mute&leisurely stroll in tongues—

no one to eat him.

He'd wake, amazed, and HuffNtuff would use his first gasp

to say it was better than masturbating,
his face a lightening bleach-splashed red shirt:

Try it, you gotta try it, he'd say
at the mirror, exhale,

enthused no capillaries in
his face had burst.

Rehearsing.

Casey Rides: Lure&Return, Their Matriarch, Their Flagpole

Of course it wasn't heritage gleaning us from the ditch row shotguns,
from three frontlines:

The carnival&what they don't tell
The carnival&what they don't tell
The carnival&what they don't tell—sound safe

not to spread far from yours or anyone's lips.

Pay was enough&glitzy those first funnel cake dinners
after learning the bait&gimmick of a day

populating the crowds w/ tiny,
tiny stuffed unicorns
and knife combs.

Night night night then enough&rotten became the bright shifts,
the bearded cocks of carnie
the rinse, recycle, re-use fryer oil—
everything repetitious

as reddening tilt-a-whirl faces weaved into the thick, colored-
glass light bulbs

strafing into hot summer stench,

humid dome like a fern dead ablaze in
brush fire.

So many things swept them town to town but the BloodGoodBabe
brought us back.

Nomad life isn't what you'd think:
W/ your own RV and a clean person to shack up w/, life's easy.

We missed our place: Motivation didn't keep the road as buzzed as Grecian Street
could shake you

could remind you
could deflate your big world ego till eye to eye

effortless, you could tread the flooded ditch water w/ Royalty.

Yes, be proud of home, but who was there to say
put down that bulb pipe.

You are always someone's child.
A band of your kind

so open in the night,
audience to a private lullaby, however brief that song is.

And Her Devotion Shall Be Known by the Poisoned Scent of Her Tongues

Perhaps the second of possession was many: watching the field age
in wrinkle thick furrows like wind-stole ribbons
trailing RVs, the carnie crew fleeing the witness
or the moment could have been right when

you pushed the ride to open throttle

when Van Halen over the loud speakers brought cilia of teens
to tooth the spinning disc like a rotating blade of devil horns
cutting out the night's pick—

what moment made you holy—
you have so little to anticipate:

BloodGoodBabe how were you to know
the Scrambler's clutch would break and launch someone: undershot the moon by a lap bar

parachute of big, blonde hair catching bloom
until the flung girl rolled like oil on water
refusing to give friction the floor.

A dandelion head loping its seeds
to the wind.

The razor's angle across your tongue
BloodGoodBabe born then and there—your mouth
never quits atoning—while they searched out the indented body.

This is why you have kept the blade tucked inside your lip
punishing yourself, red-trimmed teeth
all these years, but:and,
blood&jarble&holyghost—you gave them quite a show:
of course, you had to steal
the ticket money: no one pays the girl killing customers:

[stanza break]

Kids still spinning, screaming

the night made that way.

The Slaughterhouse Over the Carnival, Season Out, Blade In, and Her Shiny Little Secret

Unbecoming became the throws of carnies into town each summer
and into the Fall—faces the same, faces new, but never again

did that DeepGraveDigger return, his myth a sky w/a tortoise shell, a convertible

in the rain; it was easier to forget
what the WorldSplitter did 15 years ago

down there, in the terra pines, asleep w/ bubbling in her uterus,
a ShallowGraveDigger:

with dapples of pig bodies
draining before the BloodGoodBabe

when the WorldSplitter told her of the dull heat,
and the BloodGoodBabe took a job phlebotomizing pigs like hydraulics

too full of grease, pulling in air
relief to some downing.

How To Listen to Heavy Metal

AC/DC:

N'Tassy would go w/ whoever brought her back a Mercedes hood ornament
from the junkyard. She said go,

and you and HuffNtuff dashed.

The race changed; you peeked into the jalopy morgue.

The radio.

Them in the close corner: three older boys
tweaking the open-mouth engine of a '71 Impala.

What race? The boom box on the roof of the car
screamed *shaking at the knees*, asked *could I come again please*
and said *the ladies were too kind*.

When HuffNtuff jumped over the fence, one of the lead-foot
junkies emerged from the hood and
on his shirt you could see the school boy
holding a guitar, as if the lightning beneath his feet would
leap from the cotton and strike you dead.

Def Leopard:

Rather than kiss you,
N'Tassy hawked Easter dinner between her thin lips
and delivered a fetish instead.
The two of you then,
ignorant of relation, desperate and dirty,
N'Tassy slammed you
against the chicken coop and asked to kiss you.

You responded hair-metal trained, *Pour some sugar on me.*
I'm hot,
stinky with sweat. So N'Tassy
pinned a fist of brown lips onto your fish pucker

as white feathers fell from the hen house roof
like a glam rock music video.

Quiet Riot:

The back bench of the church bus
became a listening party after you got that Walkman.

It was easy.

You'd stretch the headphones to N'Tassy's studded ear
when the lyrics urged you to *cum on*,

feel the noise.

Girls rock the boys.

In headlights&devil music, open mouths pressed,
a sanctuary of Mt. Dew breath—if you knew how to listen,
you'd listen for the guitar riff's thrust
to resonate from her tonsils

like busted tweeters, to move your muscles
in the right way,
for the perfect time

to touch your tongue to hers,

before you lost the moment to a surprising dome light.

Mötley Crüe:

When you saw your first nipple,
it was N'Tassy in scene.

Station Wagon gleaming down the street
like a polished arrowhead.

After-market speakers from two blocks away. *Girls, girls, girls*
they said over the clunker's acceleration.

The car passed you and your Dyno dirt bike on the side walk.

Black t-shirt lifted above her left breast, pressed against the rear
window. What you saw

could have easily been a boy, it was so flat against the glass.

Or what you saw

could have easily been a primed canvas,

it was so unreal.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Does Not Bring Anyone Back

Respiration, burst balloon animal ruptured alveoli: what

HuffnTuff regrets:

thickening helium hits&everything:

nozzle ice and the spectacular Newtons in lungs, the
expansion, organs tearing,

tissues dividing,
cells bon voyaging—

he leaves me every day.

Carnival: lane of nothing&more

¬hing&more&

nothing.

Get the story straight.

The telling; it's in the telling.

Narrative is not this:

The medical examiner can prove anything.

Did he,
o did he,
o did he

rise to the gated-community, explain his stupidity to St. Peter?

Who was supposed to know how dangerous an alien voice
could be for you—

[stanza break]

simple science was fun; we didn't know

it could take us apart.

Even the Army in White, River-Wet Baptismal Garments Will Come for Her in Hell

Recruitment was so rooky

how the BloodGoodBabe first watered down the strychnine

for newcomers, so

their tolerance would be demi-god like

by the time they'd begin professing on their own,

but the power of prayer

is like yearning to strike your first match—

so terrified of something ,

somehow going terribly wrong:

Those confused children would

tip the glass to their lips

and that burn at the basin

of adrenaline liquefying

the body like wind-blown Piggly Wiggly bags

so alive&empty

she could fill them

w/ anything she wanted.

Communion&Cremation, Taking What We Don't Know We Are Taking

About the hearth, the mausoleum mantel: to be on fire
is simply not enough anymore, HuffnTuff

when the bouquet blooms full you wilt.
A room of ashes and fragments: cremated boy,

nameless urn kin stroke and sigh—

hospital aroma so fresh no one smells the funeral flowers.

Vitriol canteened: approach the dead empty, fill-handed wake.

We all know the line—

who will who can who isn't

going to make it.

The deceased are never really scattered—

so many ignited remains in a house

you'd choke on knee cap too, eating dead skin

when you breathed—

your body latched
to hemoglobin: iron,

the extent of keeping your family w/ you. Pennants of the dead,

flagging the taste in their mouth:

these are your people passing you through their body.

[stanza break x2]

Served: the aggravated particles, air-born, swell force-fed
innocence of cannibalism.

No one knows they are eating aunts&uncles;
they are taking in ends,

dispelling chasms in the great predictions
for modern man: that bible

its revelation a pamphlet of congealing souls like hot air balloons
over the ocean, emerging, breaking surfaces at the trumpet's call,

how Rapture means Jesus will come collect the carbon that is his.

And when the march commences, how your family will be torn apart
to follow—the bodies

inhaled,

worming through skin, leaching
like acid drips:

portraits animated

toward a greater album.

II. THEY BURN YOU

The End of Augurs

The ShallowGraveDigger snagged a piece of chicken skin from HuffNtuff's plate,
said it was human flesh

and slurped it as Hannibal Lector would,
but the skin collared uvula.

He beat a frantic S.O.S on the red-stained table planks
and threw his head back, eupnoea occluded, skyward

as if to envision Heaven, as if he'd been possessed by the Holy Ghost,
as if divine presence committed to clear his throat for uninhibited worship.

But he can tell you
those moments

of assumed life&death
don't really change your life.

b/c after the BloodGoodBabe wrapped her arms around him
and pulled
her clasped, gold-ringed hands into his diaphragm
and pumped the divine inspiration from him;
you can be assured, however,

your first clear word after being so close, voices
that have never spoken in tongues, will

starve you for the rest of your life

Though It Mangled the Monte Carlo, The Man's Body Went Undiscovered&Remains So

IntersectionChrist stepped between a Willow Trace&Serenity Heights yard sale,
and the WorldSplitter kept going.

Witness: ShallowGraveDigger, jury of silos, those starved horsemen.

The man vanished, the body vanished;
where did it sail on the car's wind?

That boy, deaf to the trumpet's call, braced dashboard: how Jesus left
them there and the rapture,
a secret forming:

She said across the Monte Carlo's console:
There is no loss in Heaven's desire for us.

Brume&escalade, rise up the something inside you
you need to find:

That child so full of secrets,
that boy holding it all in,

that man a capsized b/c the WorldSplitter kept going,

dragging how the body may have looked w/ her,
&how the ShallowGraveDigger then waited&waited
for everyone he loved to return from
the most common places: Wyndall's Food Store
First National Bank
Casino Aztar

[stanza break]

&each midnight she pulled him from bed to patrol
the dominoes of soybean fields, as she

tossed empty Old Charter pints
into the wells of dark crop.

O, what he may one day spill.

Each search of visions, ghosts, lights in the sky,
anything she could pluck from the night's sudden dog-day mist

as if it were another messiah, a
message,

an apparition come to lift the doubt in her atheist-turning progeny

like a magician holding the severed assistant
he's been hiding from the routine.

Oh God! Come On, Poem Less&Less Like a Dream

What do you know about that hum, drowning in the drugged river, family grave
carbon of your genus, ShallowGraveDigger

current like a cellist's endless legato rises&rises&rises&infinite peak—so your family
built a family-sized vault of one big family secret you're missing:
how much they shared.

So you built a sized vault of one big secret: family.

Yes, in fact lightning is a drip: leaky faucet,
keep our legend in your mouth—

that noise is the electricity defribulating your brain in silence, spark/
spark complex machine.

Of course no one could put you back together.

You've burned out the piston, little-boy mind leading the pack of your personalities
so often taking the Godzilla-sized revenge a man your age doesn't deserve.

Your ears will never stop ringing:

DeepGraveDigger's absence kinetic, HuffnTuff
gonged like cleared paddles against the bare chest of your ear canal—
let it resonate—

drum then epicortex (of your eternal being?)
until you recognize the faces characteristic of you.

Beating the Conceit Against Your Head Until These Poems Are a Story Less Necessary

This is the circus tent gullet: red&white&toothed explosion
then spire leaping audience:

child, present progressives gripped in palms of fireworks
charring the stadium roof w/ small black hints of

sheer fucking wonder,

popping across spectator faces

like guidon tattering—
what a center of attention really is: Odd&Beautiful

species, those and
drained country pieces:

The circus!

The rural know so little about knife throwers,

when in fact, they are apt to hit their human targets
w/ the hatchet's or dagger's handle
based on the point of release&distance
to dry throat—

adrenaline can be the perfect addiction
w/ no one in your life to protect:

[stanza break x3]

no one to diminish the BurstingMan's pension
for the WorldSplitter's heart.

And you will do,
ShallowGraveDigger,

yes, together you will be their very own flesh
&don't ask don't tell storybook.

Nothing in youth quite breaks you:

throwing your battery-operated lazer-light gun
into the disappearing tiger's cage—all that adventure-ready hope
poised for torture:
each settled line erased
stripe by stripe; evaporated—

vaporized, no clown sober enough to explain the trap door or showtime—
just magic tigers vanishing: your fault.

If only emotion kept you that way:
rapid&wise—

w/o a doubt you would vanish all the time
if you could,

but how their union only taught you
the circus trumps the carnival by better facade,

and you could vanish every day
w/ so little knowledge.

[stanza break x2]

But you will remember the daredevil's tender thumbs,
what mounds they were

gloves off, large loops of his name
lettering your popcorn box:

TOO FANCY TO READ, the Marvelous BurstingMan—

he climbed into a white coffin
performance after performance and each night
death left him
center of divine splinters.

You will remember how swollen his hands were
like he'd beaten through the nailed-shut box himself.

What work is there for a man pistol-deaf from the East Hills&mean?

But he will keep you safe
clear a whole city of your DNA—
to save you from the DeepGraveDigger himself.

What waits for you:
the end of verbs.

boy man turtle

dog gun squirrel money
no more beer secrets
boy nature

tough man
soap opera w/o credits:

the and end:

chainsaw sidewalk initials.

Say Goodbye to the Carnival for the Circus or Gestate Over There

Be removed, let their ramshackle union of tambourine mechanics
rattle to the next town w/o you—

there are enough juries silenced, verdicts unleashed
to make anything true:

WorldSplittler, the headlines are endless
ceramic dish piles glued&broken against the wall;

the assumptions wouldn't distill you into such a watery alibi:
excuse
excuse

excuse—will you ever remember how you dropped
into the BurstingMan's arms like a petrified
trapeze burnout amputated as the last spectacle of high-wire tension:

here the bomb sounds:

you are not the angel
spiraled to this family,

nobody is saving anybody, the BloodGoodBabe's heaven
cast shapes of expulsion—you're out, WorldSplitter—
maybe you will never be welcomed back.

W/ a deposit slip you can be anybody—
anybody w/ an entire circus behind you.

The tent above you like a mouth,
a cub's nape caught in sharp digestive aroma,
the kind of cage w/ spacious bars: you

could slip in&out forever.

*And the BurstingMan [Adopts] the ShallowGraveDigger from the
Zealots&Carnies&Exploding Show*

One evil for another evil for another evil: anomalous car on the ditch:
black Monte Carlo
white knight/black knight

to save the duo from rats&claim

:the BurstingMan to collect the WorldSplitter&son—

this chimerical memory: watching her load into the cannon-shaped car,
she had become a bullet, part of his bombastic troop.

Potassium Nitrate like calcium in those coffin-white bones—won't ignite
again

and every night after night, he disappears
behind the elephant cage

in search of clearing tigers: torches filling the parking lot.
Family broke his nerve—he had to quit after

the elephant mauled him, finally.
It is not a fairytale.

and in the middle of some town
a lion roars; the concrete echoes it back:
slapstick, so exotic across the pavement

The same story in a different language
means the glass slipper loses to a lynch mob

but beats the evangelists
every snake-charming one of them.

Last of the Sensitive Gentlemen

At night there are no demons

the BurstingMan can see in the trees.

Just coon eyes and coon-eating beasts at the end of his high beam.

He believes there ain't nothing in the
woods to get you, anytime--

especially at night

when most people are sleeping, their prayers said

far from the demons that are not there
and the coon eyes that glow
like hot river stones in the tremble of green leaves.

The BurstingMan asks why any man

would break through a cornfield

like a wooly worm had crawled in his peter.

Demons, says the ShallowGraveDigger.

Demons do not exist.

There ain't nothing but river wind speaking through the hallow sky,
[stanza break]

he swears, so there's no evil
hiding in the trees.

What kind of man believes in demons, he wants to know,

illuminating the top of a KY Coffee tree
as if he were chasing away

another monster from beneath his own bed.

Bursting Man Takes His First Job, The Circus Begs Him Back

Explain it any other way.

The snaggle-tooth grid embedded how many layers of skin broke
and for another day of sandblasting away faded paint?

That darting trail, time: chapter little chapter—please don't lie.

This escape: flee the living room; the car is warm—you want to disappear
all the time—
whatever happened to the iceberg that hid us all?

O, you are exhausted of change—change, long change.
You could bet it.
Stand it, count it.

All day the sand gun paring you like fruit:
domestic life or the circus peril, BurstingMan?
You just have to lay there-explode and go.

Take the 9-5.

Or blow yourself up.
That bomb, that lie.
Tease.

You miss the ribboning wave of your skin:reverb:
the stage, fist fight, bedroom:what gives back.

They don't know where your thrill is.

Reason Enough to Hate Anyone, This Poem Could Be a Narrative Hiding Anything Else

Friday, late-afternoon dimmed the white cinder blocks
of that juke in the recess of a tobacco field,

so there was little difference between pulling up to the bar and slinking next to a speakerpole at the
Star-Lite Drive-In:

Headlights blitzed on&off the darkening umber side of the shack
as the BurstingMan cut the lights of the Monte Carlo, restored,
and the ShallowGraveDigger wished for a childhood flicker of Dances with Wolves

to paint the simple building w/ floods of Montana
and brave&buffalo b/c that's what he remembers best.

Each time a drunk man caught a hooking right to the temple and laid his ass out,
that's where he'd wake in the morning
and find his empty wallet, car keys.

[stanza break]

That's where

the BurstingMan taught the
ShallowGraveDigger persistence

with fight after fight—dollars&dares, then too many victories and
the BurstingMan cracked him across the jaw,

b/c confidence isn't a thing you carry w/ you.

But something you give to a person.

Whether it be the shattered grin of a brawling veteran

or the will to see that yes,

thick and thin, a son is his father's best friend,

even if he just want to go to the movies.

In the End Paternity Wasn't the Issue

You wait to prove
it was the BurstingMan
that zipped you up—

Nothing will ever change but what you have started counting on
to continue.

Mortality doesn't dare you:

circlearoundit&circlearoundit&circlearoundit.

The crimped birth certificate w/ more than defeat at the disappearance
the empty stage the rustle of velvet curtains the acrylic piston of high heels
skirmish w/ your altar aflame—blank

—how the world doesn't want to know anymore
what you could do to him
to it, easy as amputated sea legs—

the iris of a tack knife on its mark—this sudden:
this nokill nokill nokill nokill

this goddamn catch&capture—what
do you need anymore to retire the arid history
of childhood's mensurated skies.

He would say anything,
bold&bolder lies to inspire you,
anything;be his son.

Let the examination of his human body
not be a process of difference hunting the de-scaled skin
for glimmers of wave crests that once drowned you.

How much do you need
to resemble the BurstingMan
who knows w/ propaganda that can't change the truth:

he is not your father:
everything is okay
everything is okay

everything is okay.

Will you just stand by as the ocean waters itself down?
The horizon believes no one is looking.

Putting Herself Asunder, The BloodGoodBabe GluttonsGluttonsGluttons for Comfort

The less she killed, the more chocolate she ate,
 until the BloodGoodBabe's clothes
 were like colored foil
 wrapped over a chocolate Easter bunny.

But the muumuu that replaced her negligee encouraged her gorge more.

AHHHHHHOOOOOO, the blonde perm screamed:
 the same recount every empty bottle of Old Crow.

The girl shrieking over head.

 The pigs squealing beneath her:
A chorus w/o forgetting
 and smacking, smacking lips.
 And enough.

 The WorldSplitter gone w/ her BurstingMan.
 ShallowGraveDigger, feeding her still.

The infection. The legs. The green flesh.

 Now, she couldn't tell you who was responsible.

Ranchos Los Amigos Scale Revisited

Collective decision or not, WorldSplitter, some descendant
must pull the BloodGoodBabe's cord w/ a signature&nod

not the pack of powder&copper in a single .30-.30 slug—
nothing messy at all.

No one waiting for her to wake: her heartbeat had become
the hooves of horses no one any longer cared
to tame.

What attention exists between divine and hand
that line she'd been hung out to dry on:

The leg, the infection, the gangrene, then renal failure, then coma.

Eyelids would reveal the room (should they open):
what memory of the sheet pulled.

The business of a pacemaker.
The business of an ecosystem: connect—

Done. Go
catatonic at the dinner table.

How do you even subject, cave to the subject, subject yourself
to decisions, odds that

after years
get better and better.

[stanza break x3]

The BloodGoodBabe at 40:1.

The question to this multiple choice answer:

- a) How would you peel a hard-boiled egg?
- b) How would you remove a sock from your blistered feet?
- c) How would you learn to trust your ability to fly?

That kettled&boiled woman so alive&dead-minded,

revenge easy at your feet,
WorldSplitter, if it were choice
again for you to break

she did torture you—
clan&chain for a guiltless life—
just let her go again.

Send her out,
again,
how often must you

be reminded no piece is more important than a pawn
in a kingdom w/o a queen?

If she were to wake from that coma
would the look of betrayal on her face be enough
to kill you?

Your moment of victory so universal,
it could be sweet as a glass of André Spúmante
toasted to the music, the mathematics of
the moment spilling

your solar system over the margins of notebook paper.

The Over-Protective Gene Is a Mutation, a Miracle of Disparate Worry

Dialysis wasn't going to save the day,
the BloodGoodBabe in a coma;
the BloodGoodBabe consistent
for once

and the WorldSplitter, even
couldn't keep her
in the body's closet

like a bilge pump
in the last inches of well water—no one could even look at her like that—
cascading over the hospital bed, tubes full&tubes empty, in&out.

Where was that strychnine
congregation
and their bouquets of rattlesnakes;

their river-bottom miracles
to thin that misery monger
and make peace w/ her kidneys.

Who would keep the WorldSplitter on a leash,
ration of days,

fried pork belly&sermons:
that black man gone w/ the carnival so long ago,
and the boy a billboard for what she did w/ that DeepGraveDigger:

Poster in flock—
just tantantan
a soul to save.

Now the WorldSplitter
w/ a chance to erase it all.

The Book of Mormon Has This Effect on Gullible Death Fighters

B/c that Mojara, he said, buried him like a good day
in a wasteland.

What celestial family could make
eternity w/a demon in its ranks?

TSSSS, the shit a man w/ a few grams of gunpowder
sparing his life every night

like a Magic 8 Ball at the guillotine—
will believe

ask again later, outlook good, it is decidedly so

or the woman who loves a man
so fearless&lucky.

One of these days,
he said, there wouldn't be anything of them left
if they didn't start over:

Those walls were sheets
labyrinthed in the BloodGoodBabe's basement;
the ShallowGraveDigger
heard it all coming:

Pull the plug and lose the punk—

and he saw their body language articulate that perfect vision, dark,
across the linen architecture between them
like a spawning mangle of cottonmouths—
their mission, his redemption:

Only the pure, only the white.

The BurstingMan convinced the WorldSplitter to forget
that heathen

as far as they could drive
in a weekend:

Florida or Bust, as tacky as that,

so over the top, it would

take a sunset on the beach
to conclude that kind of plot.

All the same happy smiles,
their slates chalky
but clean.

Not All Contestants Reach the Showcase Showdown

Against the tachycardia pulse of a machine

waiting for the break in death, the WorldSplitter held her breath

until the best price was announced,

the pillow in place

and she cussed Bob Barker w/ the same names: evil hag, blubber bitch, motherfucker
as she did the BloodGoodBabe.

Who could blame her?

The casket barely held;

some supersizes aren't as easy as the jingle of pocket change—

the funeral director told them
to get the 3X, but they skipped embalming

so her round would shrink and the mortician could tuck her in

like a child for bedtime,
after removing handfuls of her—

[stanza break]

is she an apparition now, her remains
incomplete, searching out the missing
pounds of body?

Even w/ less of the BloodGoodBabe in the casket,
the WorldSplitter didn't believe you could hold up your side,
so, as strangers

carried her out the back door like thieves w/ a big screen TV,
you watched—

the day she died,

you expected her face to twitch when the racing beep stopped,
but it was the same
slab of cheek dead and alive.

WorldSplitter's held breath released
as a contestant heard the good news: Plinko! Plinko!

The BloodGoodBabe closed her eyes like dropped tokens,
plastic discs that changed her life, fell in the 25,000 dollar slot.

Hear Bob Barker still making a deal
b/c, really, there is no sound to a flat line.

The Holy Spirit Told Them How To Repent&Run, Joseph Smith Gave Them Life To Do It

A conduit opened right up into heaven, and the ShallowGraveDigger
divided himself to let the smaller portion levitate
at the BloodGoodBabe's descension

when howling from the tube down her throat
guttled the WorldSplitter's patience
for the old jailor

to just fucking die:

then ShallowGraveDigger witness to murder he'd never admit.

Matricide and the BurstingMan, puffy accessory to the crime.

But now father&son.
Mother&son. Yes, at least there was that.

They said it was to start anew
and only Lamanites join people of the Lord:

some secret keeps any family together. The viscosity of violence,
such harsh brainwash—it mangles your tongue.

Life and every Mormon moral after—family&eternal retribution:
how that ShallowGraveDigger could not please those
called-upon parents—

to know false prophets by their fruit and every tree that bring forth
not good fruit is hewn down
and cast into the fire.

[stanza break x3]

At times how he misses that holy-rolling bitch.

To bring back the BloodGoodBabe:
bodyguard, key keeper, lesser evil.

Eulogy for the BloodGoodBabe

The HolyWord suggests I will never picture
your face in the infinite as if Heaven replaced
all the earth's minerals and elements—

when you are gone, I know

nowhere else to look but spaceward

for a residual scent, something that tells me
distance means I can bring you back,

can reel in the carbon-chained skin over your elbows,

like I can draw the universe around me

and through me and back around itself.

You leave some form of energy where

you've been, and the infinite suggests you will always be,

then, every where you were.

Even if that's just the idea in an equation,

like numbers that expand the universe.

The Family You Are & Aren't Related to Leave You on Vacation

Teal shutter-sliding plastic camera in Florida sun,

all Doritos, blood-orange marbled chompers
and snap/snapping way away

toward the other-side-of-the-planet blue,
nothing but sky shots:

what were you even taking pictures of?

You hit it: a clef of meteor-dust white
breaking the ocean's reflection

like a cross-imprinted wafer softening on a red tongue—

before stepping into the shot, she would
pivot&pivot&pivot herself into the cap of a world-sized sky

so heavy against her surface—she the tip of a hidden iceberg
—pushing her heel-deep in the sand.

When she broke the frame w/ her bottom-toothy grin,
the picture you took of her tipped the afternoon crescent moon,
from her blush-swamped cheeks

the way movie magic told you to see the moment
for what it wasn't: a long vacation
trailed out in U-Haul commercials
as they come back for you;

[stanza break x2]

so many signs told the WorldSplitter one thing after another
was your fault,
ShallowGraveDigger.

She left you on that beach like a pernicious talisman.

Back-breaking straw: she found you
full swarm w/ seagulls barrel diving Doritos

from your hands like a Christ
resurrected from the Pieta's encasing.

You dropped the metallic bag
and stepped from the performance simple
the way a person steps from a shower

so simple it could have been a miracle:
how film develops

takes what you remember of the beach's stroke on memory

where over-exposure

flags the sky in surrender,
and your mother's a gradient,

grin and bear it to empty cradle—

not at all what she remembers.

In the Beginning Paternity Wasn't an Issue

You were happy to be a father, BurstingMan.
Stop giving the genetic voids time enough to prove
disbelief is an honor the fact-full struggle to accept: let

the buried hatched be sworn off and have at that DeepGraveDigger—
steal the son you raised

to know there are no lost astronauts
if you believe the moon walk.

Where is the line you're waiting for him to cross,
waiting for a penny&double-cross debt: space&space,

y'all until you are continents, continent's
tectonic plates cross-drifting the ocean, father:

before the sun or space invaders or a Chinese child prodigy
proves for once and all
God is what we made of him: that easy—

times and time make the sum more than forever: how

he was not afraid you would disappoint him, mercy
and you're gone—you left ShallowGraveDigger

on the coast to see the seaboards become aquatic ruins—claim
to fame: you buried the next generation of Americans to come there.

[stanza break]

Extra-terrestrial intelligence will find him posed, on the sand,
the same happy manikin
giving into the sea—

how then everything will be left up to something else.

And you couldn't give the name a chance,
let him be a part of the last painted people,

the Bastille so thick on their tongues, it wouldn't matter
what kind of dish revenge really was,

and you'd never settle the imaginary blade
in your paranoid heart—

o, how your drama increased when anyone noticed
that ShallowGraveDigger didn't have anything to do w/
those physical parts of you.

Machiavelli's Lasso: For the Names that Will Come for Them

When did any memory translate an age: there in
red-doored motel—they're escaping—red hands.

Then again, he'd tell again how the Cadillac was the last of KY he remembers.
Nostalgic through the lam.

When do you know the strobe is finished?

That BloodGoodBabe squeezed into the ground yesterday:
the WorldSplitter never so happy—that bigbig mama
snubbed out—

in the orange lampshade light&the BurstingMan's sarcophagus arms
locked around her.

They will die together,

apart in some of these truths.

No one else knows the pillow contoured the steeple profile,
and the WorldSplitter&BurstingMan pressed across her mother's face.

No one else needed to anymore.

If they had come back for him, the ShallowGraveDigger

still a beached marvel beneath a seagull capsule
smiling like still they'd just driven away, he wouldn't say anything.

[stanza break x2]

O, it was so funny then.

Returning day&day feather& sand in the same purged gesture.

III. THEY PULL YOU FROM THE WATER

I Am the ShallowGraveDigger

And the blanks are there

and there, merled over the paper certificate:

illegitimate eternity: bastard mutt,

let yourself read between the lines, you,

w/ a desert over your face desperate for names

like water—

do you know how often

you've looked at those blank spaces and

penciled in the monikers of men&women you want to resemble?

I will tell you.

Beating that locked box the WorldSplitter left

against the sand until glass formed beneath you

and the contents spread across the clear coast

like decoder rings across blank paper.

All those answers w/ nothing to tell you.

And you gathered the materials of that haphazard heritage to attempt
[genetics]
[DNA]

the way a sea turtle

knows just how shallow to bury her eggs, safe,

so they might emerge from that grave

[plan]
and be proof of this earth again.
[species]

John 11:35; Context:

Jesus (more symbol, (10 pocket watches (a knot heavy (cross-tacked heirloom, (coins of dingy silver (worth more aged (history gets presented

(I am children eternal as paper attendance certificates)

w/o hesitation) than when minted) and flat Ladies of Liberty) an inherited crucifix) w/ gold necklaces) of tarnished brass) than savior) *wept*.

The WorldSplitter's Fire-Proof Box: Her Father in Objects.

What They Didn't Know, And What I Have to Tell Him

DNA Donor:

B/c you'll get tired of fighting everyday.

B/c you will be recruited first by MS13.

And the Muslims will save you after the white boys come for you—

I know you are a murderer.

This is not a prophecy, heartbreaker, DeepGraveDigger
Phillip.

B/c when my mother's eyes do not even recognize your never-spoken name,
there is proof;

I am satisfied the system will eat you too.
I will never search you
on the Eddyville inmate call.

Or. Request a visit.

But I am afraid you will need a kidney eventually
and I would have to admit
I would let a man die—
let your body poison itself—I know what you gifted us.

How it isn't the chair,
as I have dreamed,

crackling the life from your body
like a rind.

When did the truth lose effect to ignorance?

It's been the longest time, DeepGraveDigger.

You swept the playground sand into banks,
four-sided ravine,

a sandbox w/inin itself and laid my diaper- bottom in the crevice
and lifted my mother by the waist and said
there's another
baby and there is
another baby.

Baby there is another thing.

Oh yes. I would let you die.

But it isn't your kidney or electricity coming but
the dwindle of white cells
melting you like a honeycomb rotting—

b/c you will die,
and I will die
and the WorldSplitter will die

and the other babies die too.

I cannot say it enough.

From My Biological Family After [Freddy Krueger] Raised Me and Died

We came for the end:

to know we began, refused to stop time b/c w/o motion, what is left
to measure success?

He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou

Darling child,

but did we know error
when not even a butcher's altruism, now,
can stand to look/blood in the eye—
we were hit, taken to arms w/

lead in our bones,

the series of chromosomes blotchy on our backs
as pin-permanent crosses.

What history does our skin share if we have never

found each other: The marks hit&miss,
 fire features,
 hit&miss.

God save us:

We come for the end
b/c some sacrifices are not meant

to be completed;
limbo is a hair trigger on
the rest of our lives.

[stanza break]

--[I AM THE RESISTOR]—

He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou

Our pictures thin;

Darling child looked away from the camera
b/c he could not fake innocence
anymore than our dead shy away from the lense:

We know you have not looked,
so cover the butcher

b/c we come for the end:
his arms crossed in the silk echo of a casket;
We come for the end,
to know the man is dead.

He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou

It is hard to lose your people:
We do not recognize each other:
Our markers leap
an iron filling dance
from the DNA test.

Our eyes are magnets.

Tell us what is wrong (we know/it is).

How many days, darling child, did you miss us,
who touched the wrong button

and put this harmony on repeat: We love you:

He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou

--the war,
it could not come, for the end
was in your voice,

the cast iron tone
did it ever break down and beg,
break and bleed, lambent,
as metal should, the mercury, a system of heat, porous in you, rising like a song
and plunge, spatter as fish climbing the light,
belly up, the mercury, a system of heat.

Our eyes are magnets—it ends
w/ us touching the wrong button.

He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou

Darling child, the butcher,
he pulled the furnace from your body, watched you turn blue,
raised that handsome remove

like static charging
the tinsel of a dead man.
W/ enough electricity
we could suspend his body above the grave,
let you replace his vault w/ fire.

[stanza break]

What he wanted

happened in a flash:

his life

his life

his life back

meant at least one option had been explored.

He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou He'sGonnaGetYou

Darling child, he's gonna get you

in broad green heart beats

as they row across the black screen,

funnel into nothing like fingers

dipping the surface of water.

--[I AM THE RESISTOR]—

We come for the end

to wash your life

from ours, the butcher long dead, our fear Romantic,

but we have not won

a battle we never fought until now, w/o threat, darling child:

we would not recognize if our faces carried the same current

operated the myth of science

:This appliance could mean your life:

The power is missing us.

We come for the end b/c

it's a start.

The Rumor of Agnate Lovers, This Poem Icky as You Want It

Stanley Steamboat Road, sow odor as landscape, thick—
olfactory forest meet agent orange:

the smell of pig shit fending off N'Tassy's penciled lips
in the restored Monte Carlo, borrowed.

That kiss dead as fish in a barrel—how would you escape the water, ShallowGraveDigger,
to suffocate in the fresh air
if you flapped from the car

and didn't fuck the undiscovered cousin: suspension,
arms flailing like desperate gills,
breathless, free,
guilty enough to die.

You know the BloodGoodBabe is watching
you, the girl; she is the hog farm,
a yesteryear confession—o, what is wrong:

your tar-bed tongue insulating your windpipe,
smoke stack swells

until the earth empties itself in 2'x6' boxes—
you carry too many dead,

every kind: coughing&lugging minor legacies—how often

you replay the ventilator's flash burn
like a light house bulb
leaving the lone boat to shore again—

[stanza break x3]

the talent a smell has to open your eyes fast as a shot of tequila.

It isn't

the virus you've been close to.

This is your safety unlatched: skin sag and absent mind,
the BloodGoodBabe choked under the WorldSplitter like a coal house.

Those recurrent secrets: you never forget the way a person smells as
they die,

and after they're gone, you will wear their pillowcase
like an executioner's hood:

how you go,
the scent your own, lonely.

Catching a whiff of pig shit shouldn't bring anyone to tears,
but there she is in your mind,
the last time she ever smelled

that way: at the table w/ a glass of ice water, fired—b/c

her tennis elbow dipped the splay blade
deep into her own thigh,
and the foreman cut her

from the kill floor,

and the BloodGoodBabe bawled at the kitchen table
as she dressed&undressed the infected wound;

[stanza break]

you can't help but cry w / her.

N'Tassy, unbutton by unbutton, throwing
sympathy over your lap.

Horoscope for Hives

At the tremble, when the membrane was thinnest,

you held her hand like a pastel&wrapped Easter gift
no one dared open before church,

before hell&brimstone said you were wrong
for sliding the dirty tips of your fingers
across the static blue in your legs.

You were wrong for unspacing your unwed bodies in the Monte Carlo .
The foreskin edges bloom like a full bellied watermelon.

Quiet, your horoscopes suggest y'all spread yourselves in silence,
that you skip words and wrap yourselves
in flannel sheet nightmare shields.

Until the planets find the advice you've ignored,
in the blistered fate that is confusing coincidence with destiny
can astrologers interpret the not knowing

with the hand holding, so

at the tremble, say you are careless,
say you are fearful of the serpents you've handled,
your palms are nearly tattered flags of fang-sewn sympathies,

At the tremble, when the membrane is thinnest,
forget you skimmed yourself of dignity over,
the come&go of boys&girl,

speaking of truths last remembered when either
of y'all held the innocence of the other like an ace in a hand of blackjack;

see that what brought you together was nothing more
than a day-old horoscope lost in a water ring.

At This Point More Is Obvious Than You Have Imagined, But Her Bump Still Isn't Showing

N'Tassy,
put on the little girl voice, the sweet-Jesus-you're-innocent voice
(here is an uneasy morning)

and no one will know: briar after briar of rose bush pricks
from his calves—not even the flower bed

beneath your bedroom window could keep him from sneaking in at
midnight, letting you out of the hallowed museum,

(how old are y'all? how did you do this, any of it?)
seeing you in the exhibit, waxed
behind the shotgun-armed man w/ a barrel on his throat—

this is how selfish sex:
(that's what it takes to be in love long enough)
He means a riptide:
beneath the gaggle of goose-feathered waves breaking across the ocean,
the earth's only/most endearing testaments to infinity—b/c
you said so,

and he believes
you—

to trust is to survive, and

you don't have to wonder what the lie is anymore
that he agreed—your body is only your body—

your story isn't worth risking the safety of never
going hungry again.

So They Left You, You Did Get Away With & From All of Them

:life exactly as you want it,
happy as a soap opera cross-over star,

but to make matters worse,
you're just like them:
all snazzed up & how
that inbred

black&white would unroll bright as lamp light
creeps into the treeline as trailer after trailer bruises the pines:

N'Tassy's lifelong hickey stays a secret
for the naked Polaroid of HuffNtuff's mom you kept in case
he ever hollered
nuh uh nuh uh motherfucker—

that ain't how none of it ever happened—you'll never
have to use it

Mark your words, ShallowGraveDigger, they will never
bilge the water's murk:

HuffNtuff is dead,
so no one has
to know.

If she, you know.

Mark it hit it
hit hit hit hit
hit it

&hid it

hid hid them kisses hid'em:
the sense is listening—

trust is a cardboard voice that collects knickknack lives—
who do you love,

ask.

[stanza break x2]

Incest so normal

&ignorant/ innocent

your kin won't call it

what it is:

more stories than they can handle living up to;

confession: the fountain of youth is a matter
of finding any chance to sell out.

There Was Nothing More to Stop Her But Confessing

The rumor might have put N'Tassy
at the scene of a marriage
waving a broad sword like a lollipop,

and in the saying,
you're fairytale and dragon-brave

in the Avalon mist
that must accompany such an ill-fated scene of love.

This saying goes something like:

who suspects anything when
there are truths hidden&zippping through

the rumor someone,
mostly you, got started,

eared-heavy and sworn to silence when
what did it matter
that you were kin.

Do not put the pieces of heritage together,
to understand

what they have to do w/ genetic inheritance,
to talk yourself into anything you can't take back,
but you know the snake was never supposed to be handled

b/c beneath its cold scales—don't you know those snakes

are so full of tranquilizers they don't even know their alive—
there's that secret

colder viper, ready
to drop you dead,
to leave you behind

the fastest horse Kentucky has ever dreamed,

O, you could not help but ask her to get married.

You were kissing.
You were more than kissing,
and you told everyone, and a snake came alive
in the crowd of a sermon—

and it was like she told
the whole of Grecian Street that

when she swam up for air by the dock on Miller's lake, your penis slipped into her mouth.

After a rumor like that is proven,
people will talk, they will,
but so much more if someone snaps

from a trance, exclaiming y'all are related, so

and you owned up to everything
because it's true about the urge,
people would only talk so long,

but nothing would save you, if one of those keen-eyed mystics
caught on to the rumor of her broken heart.

Stand Up Guys Are Too Organic, Anyway

Fresh becomes the fog of synthetic fertilizer,
takers of perfume

oh we sniff, wrinkled noses dancing
to place the flora in our childhood,

and in the end/it's green.

But how we like our Kentucky to stay in season:
the everything between

home&town, heartache&virginity,

yet we hold on to a panel of manipulated carbon molecules,
anything constant,

because even if it's fake, it's still there.

And how are you {this} for her?

Shackles, shameless inmates
waiting for a 2for1 dawn execution:

you will pay for this urge. (damn, what's wrong with you?)

You'll take her with you,

take her as long as she'll go all the way.

Understand the urge to be with someone
is a matter of letting go—see how much society&genetics means
when you decide you're more than chromosomes,

and do it—fuck her,

because after all what you return to is kudzu highway,

Southern myths that attach you to [this] like a granny bead necklace—

[stanza break x3]

the dirt in your air isn't as preposterous as the links of laboratory
on your throat and the oddity
it becomes to explain temptation

in terms of natural course at the comparison of a world
you've decided is just easier to fake.

Saudade of the NeverNever Land

Initials&Initials, Dumpster Spray Paint:

Answer written in the blink pattern of substitute fireflies:
[the cat will be alive and will be dead and will be between the breath and the death when we take
our lasts]

 imagine how much beauty
 those tortured glow sticks—bindi of youth—they see;
 imagine what they got themselves into

[how crepuscularity became something you defined to keep me in light, to say what you need
to hear because I know]

 worshipping the lightning bug so much they are the more of it—
 I dare you

 ask me how much of my day I spend thinking
 about that part of your body.

SGD+NT, Perfect&Pure.

Initials&Initials, Freight Train Spray Paint:

 As an isotope we turned into a clock: 12,000 years before
 I last saw you, then, you loved me—
where we've decided to make sense of our planet in figures— to attraction and
the big bang,

[ask me what I would do for you, ask me to tally the opened skin]
[what happens when we refuse to see the elapsed as dirt, once dust cloud, once windy day—stop]

and time blooms to love's whip again
[oh god it is this simple, this simple].

Across this Country&Forever, SGD+NT.

Initials&Initials, Overpass Spray Paint:

Understand energy, make ammunition of me
 [I get used and I get satisfied and I get used and I get satisfied and nothing]
when tragedy becomes foreign to you—

if the boom is big enough:

naive landscape badlands catching thirst—just dress it up, refuse to let go:

molten-wax body sculpture:

there is no one to disappoint;

there is no one in the quondam world

where we are the cannonade.

SGD+NT, 4E.

Initials&Initials, Water Tower Spray Paint:

Spoon out an elephant's weight of the astrosphere, if you have to

[what is a ton of space? does it take an entire universe to feel the nothing?]

implode back into a single water molecule:

[where could we say life begins on a chemical level, when does it finally make any sense].

The letters; The numbers; What we've got:

The very oxygen never breathed,

the only carbon that had never [it is ecstasy and abyss, ecstasy and abyss].

H₂O&Eternity, N'Tassy is my girl.

I've Always Been So Good W/ Titles, I Could Have Dressed It Up Better Than You Think

There was a time that your body

leapt across the center console
b/c you just wanted to fuck,

so if you must capsize the cauldron
of swallowed tongues in your chest,
remember

I would rob the junkyard
and drive until there are no dogs
left in America
just to taste the bitter perfume
alcohol on your wrists.

When you told me they scraped the fetus
from your uterus w/ a safety pin,

I could see the trashy tattoo of an infant
silhouette cradle in the walls
of your vagina. I saw you

pull the oxygen apart,

prepare to hover like an expanding satellite,
an electronic phoenix; I waited

to make sure you really wanted me to hug you.

In my dreams there is a city where
children are blessings
b/c they tell men of safety;
they say: weak-armed fool,

when she comes for you, I will break her like a sparrow's egg.

And I know I cannot catch up w/ your grief.

When you say go, I can loan you light
when it is raining. Look for me to spell out
never in tiny rainbow stickers that
tomorrow is just a day:

turn the empty baby blue room into an inspirational poster.

Silence settles—that is a promise—you may ask God for advice. But

our parents have answers between their bodies
that only losing them will let breathe.

VITA

Travis Eugene Morris was born and raised in Daviess County, Kentucky from 1984 until 2003.

Western Kentucky University bestowed his undergraduate degree of English Literature in 2007.