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## Raise the Still Rabbit

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RAISE THE STILL RABBIT

by

Michael Kroesche

Bachelor of Arts  
University of Southern California  
2008

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

**Master of Fine Arts Degree in English  
Department of English  
College of Fine Arts**

**Graduate College  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the thesis prepared under our supervision by

**Michael Kroesche**

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and Dean of the Graduate College

**May 2011**

ABSTRACT

**Raise the Still Rabbit**

by

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Donald Revell, Examination Committee Chair  
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My first collection of poetry, *Raise the Still Rabbit*, explores the literal landscape we live in, the themes of language and lyric, as well as the relationships between people. The poems are rooted in the experiential, the moments when the act of writing becomes a navigation of the various themes of the local environment, cohabitation between individual people, and the geography of the poems' content and textual construction. Navigating these themes, the poems attempt to dissolve the illusory barriers that appear to separate subjects such as the interior of a home from the desert surrounding it. In this collection, the poems demonstrate their shared landscape, where language, place, and individuals are all cohabitants and are all, as such, of significance.

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**1.**

[...*black box*]

## Ballet Rehearsal

behind the thick tree  
a sound of wings  
Jasmine flowers open  
around green leaves in the rocks  
rocks dissolve in the rain

When my father died  
I didn't remember it  
There was my mother lacing  
frayed ballet slippers up  
a hand veined  
gripping the rail

soft thump of footsteps  
on the wooden dancing space  
her students bow, small kicks  
making oval bows from their legs  
Impossible women, parabolas  
the fence emptied of sparrows



*walking, Quebec City, June 27th*

clouds book it past the horizon

tops of trees, forest one

big dark beast in

pine hackles

red mulberry, forsythia

leaves green and agape

of generations, 700 rot

agone

abridged Build it closer

feel the gravel dance up my calves as

mud moves, you were patient while

I counted coins, paid for my newspaper

a coke then left the can

huge and heavy in my

jacket pocket. I hang a left

on Myrand to Sainte-Foy,

shrink away from the bus spraying puddles from today's rain

I pass a Jewish cemetery, the hard

consonants on the

headstones foreign in

see summer earth

we and piled up near the gate

God come down into this  
cheekfulls of laurels and ivy vine, the runny  
minister words hollow and  
leaving. I stop

sing laurels and ivy to  
your dirt, thank the world for  
every moment I've never been to a burial

tight eyes, breathless  
mouth in lines. Beatrice gone and thank God  
I was young, my parents left me  
at home with the dog as they  
dropped her bitter corpse  
down.  
John crazy and silent waiting

on that  
empty house

So on to Grand Alle, workmen  
fixing speakers into iron above the bar  
at Maurice, I grab

a beer at *The Golden Ring* on Saint Jean,  
watch a game of billiards, the cues  
sliding between fingers.

through two layers of glass 3

girls walk up to the bar, one pulls  
at her earrings as  
her friends order shots. It's 6:30

sun still up, clouds lit in

summer

evening

roll past the church, graveyard  
an iron fence all hackles ivy

wet moss, peat  
you can smell the earth  
from the bar. 3 girls

taking shots, one  
pulling earrings.

upon translation I grew new legs and found cover

brown world

pipes in a forest

translation fails so seep

into every dark puddle, very word

becomes us

Paul goes to Spain, sits in bars

writes a love letter 53 times to

every woman talks about

the cats they have together

no children, office sanctuary

rain coming down

stopping

every 10 minutes

*strange day*      *the small bird making*

nervous movements near a cigarette

is a woman with newspaper folded

crisp in ticklish skin inside

inner dent of elbow

her skin creases beneath her jacket

in the rain

so a steak comes, a staircase

forgets stomach

rumblings      16 is

a good age / *end of an era*

*to speak*

grand things

words heavy

sluice from behind a bus top shelter, Spain again

love letters to

your apple ass full

round in jeans

I miss your

apple-full!

day sparrow by thin smoke

so nervous its feathers      p u f f

rain assaults, mists

makes all

damp a shiver

routs my gut out-

wards

bus stops full of strangers

ignore me since I trimmed

my hair

a girl with  
sack of crackers smiled so I let my head  
pull water down through

hairs taut too

a gutted cathedral

'cross street ribbed in

old pianos

feel

*stick of keys*

*see wood*

your labyrinth

scratched it among stones

rainwater through

pipes below

roots

[see. ...les *racines*]

the very tree

made an acorn

capped it        threw mud pine in hand

every acorn sang a love letter as the drunks lifted

gray heads at the bar weeping

remembered for an instant then became saw-

dust again        Paul takes 3 brandies

he can't

believe he forgot

her name everywhere

his cat pawing pages

FOX FUR      M O T H S O N G

coming out of the footpath an old man

huddles in bushes near a creek before

becoming an oblong gray stone,

then disappearing      altogether

a red shoe  
speaks up slung  
'round a rail

by its laces says for me to

it's back to

plastic baskets

& processes

that always not

stop the repeat

I hoof it down to      "*le cafe au temps perdu...*"

order

a white horse  
a glass  
1 small cup  
onion soup

a *Quebec Semainaires* left on my table bolds a headline at me:

"UN BEBE A ETE TUE PAR UN CHIEN"

glance right-ways at the Quebecoise woman  
wearing absurd-huge tortoise rim  
sun glasses



she sucks beer foam through  
thin red mixing straw

*nous sommes dans un magique cite // nous trouvons LOVE en  
suivant les chansons des // pa . pill . ons // de nuit blanc!*

she tells me floating to tree top, legs X'd

perfect

modesty

*Butter-*

*flies I*

ask

*non*

throws her shoe

written inside in bold is

#### WHITE MOTHSONG

sole smells of warm lilac & milk making  
my tongue fumble teeth searching for  
a single white  
toe of her to try

The glass comes fills with beer

empties of beer & the sun

scrunches down beneath

layers of asphalt & heat

feet slunk up & down wet mud

tree branches with full stems

curve their clutter green leaves above me  
turning all air around to  
dark tunnel

twigs chatter  
threats in underbrush--

throats guttural in a swallow of wet bark  
mashing it up until it's new language eaten  
by dozed rolling night spines on backs  
on blind black caterpillars  
that've come

all this Autumn dark is silent is underbrush  
so I sing in Spring . it flows out  
white moth wings I follow flutter  
trace their darts

sing mothsong to the open trunks of each tree,  
help them  
find Spring, my moth

finds palm lands in  
creased hands . *LOVE*  
*is that thing!!*

it hums to me  
mothsong sung to trees -- a repetition in my chest  
her flowering whole note into Spring in  
heart

bones & sweetly

me as

a fox

stops between my legs

becomes Wind

leaves .

a gift  
left me

vanilla fur she  
laced into  
my knees  
repetition

every fox hair a Love

each one retains her

shape of breeze

*man turns into black boxes*

1.

rain does not fall

becomes instead

present

finds holes

space between thread

or hair

moving my hand I move you closer

to a glass on the bar

water runs together in creases

becomes damp

you feel my wet sleeve

you say

*you make smoke*

*black boxes when-*

*ever you look away*

feel them squaring

off in thread with

gesture

become flat rendition

black boxes

moving up

stairs

2.

this dance floor is empty & everyone  
lives in my black box throat

when veins pulse I pretend to a world  
put blood in the bass notes a drop D  
musical key keeps them

I sleep & they slow they pass drinks  
to kill time inside my throat

anticipating staircases  
a sharp flood to remind  
leg's movement home

**2.**        *raise the  
still rabbit*

*sans nef n'importe ou vaine*

*a bird flies out*

*up*

*off the branch*

*into blue*

*no hickory or*

*holly vine*

*feather and*

*movement*

*up*

*out and away from the world*

*from*

*the rough bark*

*on its feet*

*the wind carries*

*to boat to a sail*

*mast*

*rigging*

*is a cloud and*

*sky*

*water*

*beneath*

*noire :: now our*

under oath zero

there is no marriage

only love of

watercress, green stalks

among the puddles

dimpling circles in

lake mud

deep weeds

dusk

The watercress

flowers,

flowers petal

fall in the mud on

newt backs, their flat

tails zipping slow ripples

towards the lake center



*tall stones // harness // leather song*

tall stones ignore

near a cathedral

*horse smell*

a harness slides

soundless against

brown hair

bit wet with

horse hair

absurd

movement of

*lips  
tongue*

lips move fluid independent to

the carrot disappearing into

flat . stained-

horror-teeth

horse ignores a hand

fumbling its nostrils

smells fingers then

later

no fingers

*wet air . stones*

there is no more carrot  
only empty space where  
a carrot was

July

4 girls on a bench  
reading silently together  
tree tops sluffing off the last  
shadows of sunrise  
from their sides

Crow Morning

sing straight as I can  
through dusty floor  
the one thin

bed sheet on  
my chest

damp sweat  
pillow leaves traces  
of rest and home

big black  
crow hunts among  
dandelions stuck  
in wings

ahou goes beak  
black sound  
call culls

crow from  
another tree  
more seedlings stuck  
sung

straight too, trails  
you've left

four years  
and

one  
jumps the devil's  
melody of

N O L O V E N O L O V E

A rabbit body among  
plant & seed    wound's view

*"J'ai  
essaye de le  
reanimer.    Je  
n'ai pas pu"*

**3.**

*finding a horse  
in a lake*

Aviary

*for W.M.*

you sang it a spring

new earth

its fur moved but

breath & dirt

not from heart or

very love

instead you took

every rough igneous

stone from my chest

placing them among

the small patch of desert

the rabbit lay

open in

On neck            breast

a cross

you traced my cross

& new legs

found me from

I lay my head in

your lap

felt another

hand for the first time

a space

it never left

raise the still rabbit

in me            held

                  between

our bodies on

the mahogany "A"

a piano bench where

our song/drink sprung

inside you is

an aviary

*bird . . . wind*

filling whole

a space at times

flown through

at times

a raw Spring

then deluge

& suddenly

*laurels*

*ivy*

*the sparrows*

are meaning are



sincere in being only --

your hands do not  
flutter or alight  
in my hair in caress

painted fingernails  
finding my every space

A breath  
cedar near

the edge I slide  
my arm along as you  
hold my bandage on

little bird reminds me  
in every lattice of

*our blood*

*our blood*

chirrup the name  
God gave me

I don't know my name  
but you hear God  
& tell me \*\*\*\* pointing  
to the little nests you made  
by saying my name

each nest a call threaded  
in small silences &  
the dusky strands from  
your holly hair

I lower my head  
become  
an elm a bough  
for my names

//

only you can say      little nests  
or sing

I sing my  
drink/death/Spring song  
become a rabbit  
inside stones

find me  
fur-soft  
unmoving  
you raise me up

to spirit, desert sun  
warming bone & nail  
us kissing tongue  
to hot  
tongue  
& find

New Love!      New Love!

every aviary opened  
out to sky  
your perfect lattice  
lines in your palm

Here is your hand  
defines a space I inhabit  
my body  
a nest of names

you know  
from silence  
and God

from feather litany  
recitations of my

body    sinew    bone

I mend keys  
    place fingers  
    to  
    ivory

your hands remember my  
shape & I  
translate the sensation

of holding  
your pattern close

clef crests      raises  
up white & up inside  
my touch into your

hollow aviary bones

you raise

One look & we  
translate into  
a new wildlife

elk  
sandalwood

soft paws of a coyote  
loping towards  
a warm hutch    we made

children  
mountains in  
their bedsheets  
grow as strong & slow

never loved two  
slow mountains

or come close

until recitation

my nest is you

is safe among

elms & ivy, always

sincere in you

& my whole! my whole

echoes the same place inside

perfect twin

desert canyons

you press into

soft clay

our flora

latticed trails

in their cedar

& pine minds

your flight line guides

my river to

very rain water slipped

from your sparrow feather

to new earth to

my spirit in

river water bends

elm boughs

found me  
sunk inside dark mud  
there was the bar with  
mirrors all around

*& the perfect*

*shape of you*

inside a black dress  
your cocktail a wet jewel  
set in lined grip  
your eyes find  
& find a small rabbit  
my fur movements through

then nothing, you  
annihilate every  
old recitation

a world

then deluge

I say my name  
& God makes it mute, gives  
you my true name

your hands folding  
fingers into a nest

I am annihilated  
wisp & torn



my paws bend the new  
grass damp in  
what remains of dew

I had never seen  
any human, heard  
my names until  
you breathed a flight

a wind carried  
through space I filled  
at times, at other times  
not

All at once I perceive

you  
wind

my body  
a thing

Desert surrounds me  
I pass sand

the red scorch  
mountains into  
dark horizon

every bird in flight



is you is wind  
carrying me through

*windy*      *aviary*

I am shaken  
reach towards

reach the latticed currents  
I come with you into a space

of sky   our mountains  
the elk   ivy & desert  
beneath      pause

Dialogues

1.

The plum bucket's all churned out,  
toppled to sweeten the jays.

The geography wanes  
in face, ramparts  
have dissolved back flat. I see no  
point in returning.

And the plums?

Let the jays fatten.

2.

We'll street linger, cracking lovely  
with pliers while a magpie pushes eggs?

It's too cold for nests. Rest with  
the nettles and thin licks and twigs.

There's no frost.

Some sun, enough. The pavement  
recedes slowly so's time checks his watch,  
waits an epoch.

Locked?

Chalk it to an infirmity, your argument

down drainward in weeds.

And we...?

Yes, weed.

I'll lichen then on rocks.

3.

Sounds full-bellied and slugged.

Can't you wind? Tempo up the quiver?

With these yellowed feet?

It's *siesta* sister. I'll lounge

in the chiffon.

And the fennel water?

Again, for the jays.

4.

So he tripped?

Tripoded. Cha, 500 acres in the kisser.

And the lambs?

Unfazed as much. Went lambing, grass glutted,

the chew chew chew – stop to suckle – then chew.

They're a white rolling.

Brogue unaffected to boot.

Too boot.

Toed even. He heels fast tho, and lo!

There was dust kicking! You should've  
seen the manure wheeling.

5.

Damned twittering.

Oh prickle your tongue! And the jays?

Yes the jays – And the thrushes, finches  
magpies, mourning birds, pigeons, sand pipers  
sparrows, the larks...

And the gulls.

As such. We barge afterall. Those beaks...

Pray we don't shuttle trumpets.

As such.

6.

The ground, mounds and flat sticks.

Ne, dearie?

Nothing. My mouth's mashed, brained too. Enjoy your *siesta*  
your chiffon, the twittering.

Ne.

7.

Black and gray.

What? Like waves? or recompense or strings  
on a gold harp plucking hard cold. Chord.

No, just gray. A Sunday when you wake up and it's been raining.

Steam from an iron. Blue smoke, a lit end, sit cinder.

*D'acc* darling. *D'acc*.

8.

You look sad today. Are the clouds  
gray or is the problem supra-cumulus, something  
beyond earth and on and on and on,  
the pantheon muttering?

...

9.

I dreamt of her, four years  
gone, the grasping clutch

of brittle white fingers.

She pretty?

*Bien sur.* Fine skin, I could count her vertebrae.

But the dream, there's a car and snow. Young buck,  
antlers pronged in my stomach.

And?

sandalwood on my hands.

Tomb New

2 boats 3 bridges

lattice & vein

Lawerence

is long

wide with bends

cannons black dead

more stone

mouths into bricks

each slope

runs intricate

letters through

the latin quarter

defaced statues

punctuating the grass

in dark

invisible among

drunks

from a club

Lawerence beside me

the glass market

in empty squares

cement

Paul's feet slap

the other end

a 2 dollar piece

clattering down

The boats chop

water

wave moon

to slivers

while Stephane carts

slabs of marble

back & forth

makes a box

a room

places bone

& sinew in

empties

thrown dice strike

a table

sound rest

becomes May

elk

cedar trees



& dew

blooming on

stone

New nature

his room

empty save for

one moment

child's bones

little

teeth thrown

a clatter

pause

Paul writes love letters

Nick writes love letters

marble shapes a room

becomes letters to

A tall fir inclines

moves roots around

pipes

a trail

Gerrot wheezes drunk  
under trees walking

*A city magique! It's  
a new  
magic city!*

while Henri adjusts  
his baseball cap  
a little light  
where dirt &  
forest end  
more night moon

their English  
clatters  
into dew  
moves

then rain  
Lawerence  
riled rips  
his shudder  
towards stony cannons

every empty  
cathedral  
pauses  
takes in

river sound

a deluge

uprooting grass & stone

then nothing

until gull squawk

takes wing

towards the dorm

mud everywhere

Paul graceful

dirty slop all

over his shoes

lets himself in

the marble

wet

still clean

a new May

in the box

smell cedar

on the plains

leaning in

acclivity

grass in dunes

more cannons

charred marks around

Nick walks home singing

song in F

piano keys with

ivory skinned

show wood beneath

a child's old

white teeth

clatter against marble

Stephane desperately

glues

holds the sides

up with his back

the dice still beside

call in new

cue lily

stable

May

the elm & elk

among empty trees

Poem 1.

Bird flight line,  
the phosphor, gauze  
moving straight up  
and I and darling  
on the porch, watching  
filmy light fly  
nightward, passing the  
mountain horizon, the blotch  
purples, oranges far below

hands hold hands  
with closed lips  
the only sound  
a coyote shuffling through  
the rocks of the empty  
lots beyond the black iron fence,  
snuffling up rabbit,  
of the flight above

\*\*\*\*\*

Poem 2.

Rowan, in his name in  
he speaks all in *awns*  
and *ohwms*, but he's  
speaking to God, even when  
Windy is in the kitchen,

he on the floor feigning tears  
over the roast beef sandwich  
2 o'clock, his  
hungry, it's always his hungry,  
dry crying, fists balling eyes.

And God hears him,  
says \*\*\*\*\* he looks up, the  
quiet *awns* waning, scattering  
almost like cotton in the carpet  
and huge eyes looking, seeing  
everything but \*\*\*\*\*  
then lunch.

\*\*\*\*\*

Poem 3.

Numbers fail, look up  
the gel caps roll blue  
and orange on the counter  
discord as you squeeze  
the beads. She  
picks dog hairs out of  
a sweater, leaves the laces  
on the kids' shoes tied.

Walk through the construction  
the home frames making H's,  
lines of empty windows

the streetlights fade behind  
and stars pop out among  
the woolen night sky,  
each step crunching gravel  
visible, barely, is a black crag  
mountain shapes  
and the fox eyes, empty  
white smoke-light  
you from near  
the scrub brush  
locking the body in the moon.

\*\*\*\*\*

Poem 4.

I make my animal yells  
and God can hear me.  
Lunar catechesis,  
the lines of moonlight lap me.

My naked body, the moon,  
God saying \*\*\*\*\* to me  
and I look around in panic, searching  
finding nothing, and find it.  
There is only the divine alphabet  
of silence as the box  
air-conditioning units shut down  
in deafening waves.

My feral noise beats its  
lizard-skin wings  
against its cage, Oh!  
This land *is* my land this  
land 'hysteria'. All creatures  
eyeing me, the hollow-point  
shells of their jar-eyes locked  
on the moon, too.

The moon lights up every curve  
of fat and muscle on me, little  
shadows from the granite scatter  
among my toes.

Grin a canine, make an "H"  
from mouth, from bones, serrate  
it; "h" becomes "saw"

Lordy there's a spirit in me!  
Lordy there's a spirit in me!  
Lordy there's a spirit in me!

And now, Dove, do your back scars,  
nail marks, prickle now? Are you  
awake and wondering where  
that deep-burn is resonating?

The moon grows husky and yellow,  
capsizes to the West  
and my soul, my soul!



My spirit is occupied  
the way the snow of footsteps  
people a battlefield; some great  
roll is curving me towards  
the desert, pulls.

And this is also my land,  
this red rock, the crunch-footfall,  
I can read it, \*\*\*\* is  
a clarity, the response;  
glass fibers that fog  
a quartz-body. Hear me morning.

I turn my creature inward, soothe  
my heartbeat in its heat.  
The moon dips and disappears  
with a promise of new language,  
My night lays down as  
coyotes and foxes and jackrabbits  
resume their silent running.  
The moon-less dark is immense,  
the electric light trickling in through the fence,  
and all I hear, I need:  
Footfall, footfall.

Finding a Horse in a Lake

Two bent lines  
form an "A" an  
"A" doubled forms  
legs

Whinny

horse legs in lake  
meadow larks  
chirrup chirrup  
wet stirrups  
soaked leather  
saddle flop, lay thread  
bare on bars  
of sand  
crescendoing up

There is the horse  
there is the lake  
there is the horse  
in the lake, *lac*  
tic-tac tic-tac  
all bluster and staccato

a sing song  
Bach broken  
down, grain resound  
the waves *ditto*

again crescendos so

tic-tac tic-tac

clomp the horseshoes

clomp the horseshoes

squelch the horseshoes

in lake mud

quagmire, Q's bend

like A's, an "A"

lain flat, sand rupture

cup spilling drops

on the barnwood planks

tic-tac tic-tac

Here is a cabin

your father built

bankrupted

rotted

rented again, then

rain drops plain

Geese guzzle

lake water, rain

water. Drops down

gullets tic-

tac tic-tac to

plop, stomach full

swallow letters,

swallow Q's

A's, an "A"

flighted to New York

*"Poetry magazine and*

*Z says to be true, honest*

*sincere."*

And Bach mends the keys

the ivory, hammers

tic-tac tic-tac

Mother, Rabbi, Jew

skeleton, 4 countries passed

through. The pillars!

the nudes, Paul begging

for cards, staring at

statuesque breasts

marble nipples

singing to Z! And

Lorraine...

Lorraine

propped top, baby gone

drops track

in a needle

tic-tac tic-tac

& she's empty, thinks  
of birds, cabins, father  
shell casing barns  
lining the lake

An empty, exact  
specific lyric, song

melody beats of lines  
in nursery crib bars  
measures can't

You see the clef? Hear  
keys? Z says

*letters*

*--stop-- too close --stop--*

*Paul*

*hates you --stop--*

a violin, cat gut  
strings  
sang for a time  
then hung, got  
pulled taut, the pegs  
turning  
tic-tac tic-tac

Versing is nothing, compares  
nothing.

*There is the thing  
and then there is  
the thing,  
understand?*

and suddenly there is  
Spain, England, Italy, *La Sonne*  
New York  
the woods, a clinic  
sounding against  
statuesque breasts Paul's  
cards your letters

your letters the years  
in between

And poem poem

Every lake bottom is  
your bottom

and not in ways

birdsong violent  
among the waves

harmony in  
letters in Q's Bach  
straining in the page

the stoop full

of Z pondering...

*horses* street signs

A's

and Loraine! Loraine!

Rent is due

a barn empty raining lake

water on wood

tic-tac tic-tac

Love is due, resound!

Horse, its shoes

lake-bound

whinny!

The sound of a horse

entering water

standing still, a thing

a thing a thing

4.

[*my names*

//

*little nests*]



## Moving Towards

There a hawk snaps its talons  
around a mouse, carries it off,  
a feather strikes the earth hard,  
dirt strikes the box finally, and  
whoever she is  
is unavoidable  
in force, in fierce. Haphazard love  
The soul stays somewhere and loving  
making new glassy components  
energy moving from one blade  
of grass to another, feeling dew appear  
wet energy in the rolling crystal shape  
'til sun dissipates, clouds roll in  
for a show. Don't choose  
Mind dies and the space remains  
there is body and dirt, people  
saying above a box  
The place does not go away  
A jewel partners light  
enters the dance, moving among  
facet edge and flower stem  
foaming waves crash down along  
Glide towards the mountain top  
as grains slide down a hill  
settle small around the grass base  
yellow-young, thin tender

Wabisuke

I lower my head

smell hot

top soil

pant knees

browning below

skin and bone

Black ants move

up threaded seams

Skin peels,

hears nothing

over cell crackle

the sound of

sand ground

between vertebrae

apology

a movement, prayer

my lips

Smolder, mountain

scorch

sun reddening

my neck, bent down

craned and featherless

A hot wind through

Pine Needles

I can't place  
a machine in the air  
between

pine needles

song then, transitory  
makes a new situation  
before it has gone  
air again  
a stillness

sparrow lights  
needles bend  
tender down air  
curving along  
to new air  
the pine needles  
again still

*“desir ibds weitheir rofasl!”* Daffodil Said...

Bear paws

press the zinnias

A toothpick stuck

between bone, the grass

the root-gut, dark elk

rutting

In the forest

leaf muck sticks

to toenails, goes

tracking along the dirt

the bear prints peppered

with zinnia pollen

Flat blue-vein petals

in claw spots

Fox prints cross

the bear path

two blades

of rust fur,

three brown

Fallen nest by

the tree foot

shaken, shells

unpieced, oblong

blue speckled

in deep dirt

Farther, thin  
skeleton  
mouse skull clean  
a tiny femur  
the owl still  
sleeping  
through sunset

Daffodil dusk  
the stem reaching  
condense to stamen  
yellow dust  
on petals around  
the cup lipped  
by a bumble  
bee  
sit still

*“desir ibds weitheir  
rofasl!”* Daffodil  
said, so

listen until  
the bee  
wings rumble.

Rediscovering the Basement

I still have 27 left.

Scotch warm and cold all at once,  
the shadows viced, turbulence,  
sweating palms after 1 ½.

It's not your fault.

Windy, it's  
not your fault.

*Agricola*, the farm succumbing  
to dust; my spirit succumbing to  
my throat – voice – air  
aural reception, penned analysis.

I like your haircut. I like  
your professional tie. You seem  
young so my rust cracks  
and sounds come out. God  
guffaws nearby at my  
falsetto.

*G says 'you have a great  
life . . . that kid can write'*

I have 27 left, heavy.

Flown, rank lake, home  
smells of curled brown spiders

the gulls missed,  
angles, catastrophe legs on salt rock.

An arachnid shape, one  
point in an ellipsis  
nature's unsaid, its fragmentary  
alphabet of silence, signs in  
a network of significance  
my life is a  
significance only God hears.  
Its name is \*\*\*\* and  
the name is beautiful  
and Babel and epoch.

Each mountain points a flat finger  
to the shoreline, salt crust  
the rock jetty curling and  
altering its death-shape. Jetty  
and spiral, rock binding salt  
in new skin, new  
language wrought with

breath from whom?  
Nowhere, it is enough itself  
the breath  
being breath once instead  
of noise, motion, meaning.

I can not see it or taste it  
I can not name it though God

names it \*\*\*\* and it's unknowable.

I won't presume this alphabet  
wings clipped in linguistics

Let there be a rock spiral at times  
and at other times not, only  
salt coursing its little bonds.  
The crystal is for a moment,  
until there's more salt, each  
finite undulation rearranging  
a chemical alphabet of bonds  
each compound is a word, fragmentary

*"tree"—"hydrogen"—"pencil"—"carbon"*

the language is there, it only hurts  
when I look for it. I hear

the clef, let it recede with  
the pedal, the ice sliding down,  
a plane's rump descent, ativan-blood  
regulating my heart, ribs.

Underneath I am all pink  
and latticed, there is  
only the friction  
of all my cells.

Each has a name, God named each



one \*\*\*\* though they don't say it;  
my cells are entitled to secrets  
and the tides of lifetimes in each  
gene-story, in the day-fragments  
they're stitched with.

*red wheeling through a thick artery,  
a hair curling, the electric crater of  
a finger's tip, eyelash shying inwards*

I am my thing, my name is  
Babel and beautiful and made  
of quiet stones, wordless  
quiet histories, the caulk of epochs  
pressed grit to grit,  
tongue to tongue to say  
nothing, and find it all the same.

Somewhere there's a sun  
on a fingernail, naming a cuticle  
dawn or dusk, its bright belly  
full of alphabets that love more  
than tooth and click, tongue, more  
than strung sequences we capture  
by naming. Even the chemicals  
have been caged in names, in  
scattered letters hyphen-locked.

Day Quatrains

She lays

delicate

ash on

a hair

Breath

call

molecule on

to tongue

She calls

lays my head

to breast

sings song

Sweat

sap tongue

legs wrapping

locked

Fogged sun

lacing

fingers come

undone

Sung song

the breath

my ears

warm

Tongue Tongue, You & Mine

The sun crawls, kicks  
batten down, batten down  
and muggy air breathes its small wet life  
into the dry thunder ahead.

Somehow, rain disappears before  
striking ground.

Call me, little dog  
the furnace bellowing awake  
causing hackles to raise  
and settle in to  
stiff fiber, russet fur  
fox fur, the ears  
perpendicular to the head.

Katie, Katie, don't struggle  
as momma wrapped blankets around  
two babies, two boys  
tight knit vests around chests  
soft and paunched.

*16 clumsy / and shy* the photos  
in the loose frame melt together, isn't  
this heat suffocating? Or has  
the rain raised the hackles on our  
silly fur coats?

*Better the bird in the mind, poet,  
or the wind?*

and that is to say I love both  
bird and mind, and mind to keep  
the cage doors open  
so that pigeons, paradise doves,  
feathered clove diggers, song  
birds rain birds dirt birds  
birds with nests ransacked screaming

*caw! Child!*

*caw! Child!*

but nothing, hide the yolk

grass got heads and shoulders  
and stiff stature to keep  
such things from feather pure.

Are these our hollow bones built  
for high things, for alcover  
and cliffside and gravity's  
quiet tyranny over  
*notre bras?*

*Dans une arrondissement, il y a une femme qui possede une skelete vide. Il n'y a rien et c'est bon, ses cheveux brunes et noires comme les vetements des soldats dissent quelque chose incoryable et abysme et brillant brillant brillant...*

*Esperez-vous, chere bische, mon oiseau du vent / il n'y a pas beaucoup a faire, seulement des choses necessaire pour vivre, pour mettez-vous les drapes qui couvrit les visages des enfants lourds, trop lourds, trop lourds...*

so let us go, you and I and eye  
and all the things you held in seeming  
and stitches and simple cut of fabric  
ironed out, ironed down.

The headdress weighs, with bird bones,  
12 oz's, color aside, my neck  
gilded for support while shoulder  
sways, sways.

The lake ravages the little white feathers and somewhere  
Paul sings songs of drink, love, failure  
to see only pristine, see  
the ageing oak and its vicious lean  
toward my home.

For the boys I pray, I pray  
*to ask / to respond /*  
*to accept bird-life . Reindeer-*  
*death* as Dijon disappears into  
small memory

And Paul call and respond to me!  
Let me hear you sing your drink/death/spring song!!

I'm naked and the language smooth of *vous*  
and *nous sommes* is rusting on my tongue.  
If only man could sing the poems  
his poets write, indeed!

I want sing, melody  
the lake water breaking  
in wind licks against the boat,  
harmony flitting past ears  
and suckling fingers of two  
small boys in bed through sun-up.

Jericho, Rowan, the heat is hung  
along your hairline like a club  
and plums you ate won't save you  
from your fumble tongues.

Your phonic syllogisms, the logician --  
discussing "dog as cat" among running  
rhinoceros horns -- matters somewhat  
but that sly French, sly French  
gargling in the back of your throat  
claws skin, attempts  
to break into your lungs.

*Vide! Vide! C'est complètement vide! J'ai trouvé le jeune oiseau sur le trottoir comme une petite ange  
noire, et les os étaient lourds même en face de l'aube. L'aube, l'aube... la répétition d'une femme  
adultèreuse... Je ne peux pas voir, et puis il y a seulement les boissons que je touchais continuellement...  
Tristement, le trottoir est vide, et les oiseaux se jettent sur le vent avec les ailes lourdes... les ailes  
lourdes...*

Now mist gone, cloud cracked through  
dawn and feather and mesh screen to see  
look upon  
the little white bodies with their spit-  
sticky fingers still sucked into maw.

The night's hangover sidles up, taps  
the rim of the glass and says "well bird-wing,  
what's it gonna be?"

The silk filament lanced and gone,  
cereal soaking in milk as the television  
glares to life.

Paul is quiet in the cigarette ash, all thought  
of Spain and Portugal gone  
while the echoes of his sage-drink-advice  
slip into the sound of the dog leash  
smacking banister smacking collar  
pulled taut to Katie's collar and body and,  
ere go, neck.

Your neck moves left to right, my eyes droop  
and cup the long arch of leg beneath the quilt.  
Windy, there are things your skin misses  
in sleep, things my fingers give quietly.

And compound, compound, Paul's songs  
smolder and scar pretty designs on your thigh,  
my tongue tracing hip bones before  
you even wake up to kick.

I'm your pantry boy, your soft graze, and the score  
set in 4/4 common.

Let me beat out the moments before you wake, dawn  
cursing his spoiled jibe.

The flames can lick later all night, so now  
I'll tuck your palms beneath my thigh, heat  
and song beats in the blood beneath skin.  
There's love in each cell and cut, in every wet  
breath you shudder against my neck.  
I return them and one to something beloved  
brown-haired/maned

the sour flit of your lips  
culling French promises from  
my lips, the *s'il vous plait?* I keep  
behind my tongue. I love  
you wrapped in sheets, asleep  
everything after as it comes



While revising a poem, a hummingbird

God understands the ellipsis,  
is an ellipsis in its tacit  
nature, the unsaid rocks  
breeze among  
orange grove trees  
a breath saying  
everything in nothing

There is the thing and it is  
true    sincere

*leaf trembling*  
*on autumn spindle*  
*twigs, sincere*

*see*: a shivering  
spinning out flat  
above a dirty fence

I read a line: *I am my thing /*  
*my name is Babel & beautiful and...*  
soft beating by my ears

a perfect green  
hummingbird  
wings no longer wings  
a static image  
of wing motion

The image hiccups  
as the small hypodermic body  
twitches from space  
to space  
Onyx eyes eye me,  
my flower face  
I open my mouth

Bird hover the animal is  
green mercury  
in revision, the recitation

Hummingbird  
God

come to say  
*black beak      green wing thwup*  
says nothing I can repeat  
repeats its wings like a battery  
near my face

Desert smells snap off it  
grits the gravel smell

The poem in my hand  
turns white feathers  
molting untethered  
a hummingbird still filling  
this space, then that space

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