5-2011

Raise the Still Rabbit

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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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
May 2011
THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the thesis prepared under our supervision by

Michael Kroesche

entitled

Raise the Still Rabbit

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing
Department of English

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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
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
pulled 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 sawdust again Paul takes 3 brandies
he can’t
believe he forgot
her name everywhere

his cat pawing pages
FOXFUR  MOTHSONG

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
'tround 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

    _P_`
    `.,

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 1

    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 clatter  green leaves above me
    turning all air around to
dark tunnel

twigs chatter
threats in underbrush--

throats gutteral in a swallow of wet bark
mashing it up until it’s new language eaten
by dozened 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 Sping, 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-
horrortooth

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
essay 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 breed
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  

//  
little nests  
only you can say 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
your feather love heart
aviary full of chirrups
all I have on wing
drawn into a shoulder
your fingernails trace

February promises
song & May
of March & the piano
bench you made into
an airy world with

3 words
my true names
cat’s cradle veins
bind tendons to muscle
fingers tips
forming a space
along the spots of
my spine every

vertebrae a new stone

this is our wildlife
landscapes in open wing
among my water
tumbling through
my paws bend the new
glass 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,
topped 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 yallowed 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

circle 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
eying 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

clopm the horseshoes
clopm 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-
tact 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 weithir rofas!” 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 weithier
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

glass 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 disent 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
claw 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
adultereuse... 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
ture 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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