

OUT LYING IN SIGHT

by

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Dedication

*In memory of my grandmother,
Toni*

Abstract

To water words; the familiarity of sand in your toes, the constance of the tide, the danger of the undertow. Each poem should act as a wave; some should disappear, some reach your feet, some sweep you away.

In finding my way with words, my interest lies in making them memorable. Each of these poems represent a stab at unforgettability.

I believe poetry should be accessible. I believe poetry is meant to be felt, that it's meant to happen to you. If I come across a word I'm not familiar with in a poem, that magic gets lost. I could simply say I don't wish to write esoteric poetry, except I don't believe enough people would understand what I just wrote without this added context.

This doesn't mean I aim for my poetry to be abundantly clear. In fact, I hope to challenge the traditional understandings of language through my abstract use of everyday speech or colloquialisms. If you know all the words, what doesn't make sense to you? How come you find yourself having to read it again?

With common language as my tool of choice, I'm able to focus on the many other elements of poetry. Sonics, cadence, enjambment, alliteration, repetition and rhyme. Find yourself getting lost in language – let the musical lyricity carry you into unknowing what you think you know. As sounds splay in all directions, witness form become a conduit for enlivening the liminality of linguistics, seeking to stretch its powers and explore the complexity of cognition as it relates to our condition. Dive into the deep end of difficult emotions that don't hesitate to tangle with contemporary cultural, social, and political issues. Are you dreaming? What do you remember? Life can't be short when it's all that you get.

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In the Eyes of the Water

*Where I Went
Walking Under
Wilting Wayward
Willows Waterside
Watching Whitetails
Wade into Whitecaps
Washing Ashore After
Winter Wielded its Weight
Warranting its Wily
Waltz Away with Whispers
Wandering into Spring –
Winter May Have Escaped
While Wonderment & Wishes
Wait as Warmer Weather
Wants to Awaken Wilderness:
Wil,ful Workingwoman
Waking in the Wee Hours
When the Whippoorwill
Wins its Worm –
Where Was I?*

*We Can't Be
Where We Are
For Too Long.*

*I laid down on tide-smoothed rocks
until waves carved me into dr.fibone
and my skeleton burrowed in the sand*

*the riptide took my spirit by the ankles
left a dead fish with one eye facing up
in my skull where mine used to be*

looking out for me continuing a dream

License to Illiterate

losing a race with this minute
to be in the moment –

moving at an infinite pace
without a second to save

or any control when

the pits of a thousand
ink caves

gave way within the page
to seep

between

the bars in their pulp cages

because legibility can be dangerous –

torn up

eyes peeled,
propped ceiling tiles
in this pavement

of papier-mâché,

ink figures standing
and waiting

or rushing and running only having dreamt themselves to be

little swirls some right angles left
strung together to stream dreams

~in their wake~

that could take any direction

that feels safe

for the thoughts that race

behind
a face

and find a mind driven
from state to state
at an alarming rate

yet at rest

in a cage

[in a cage]

in a cage roaming free,

one could figure how to fish;
how's one to figure how to read?

Faith

I trust reading more
than anything except for
my own interpretation
of what I read.

It's hard to know
what I think
but it's easy
to believe.

The Age of Our Sun

the light repeats itself in space the same age
the light repeats
the light repeats itself on earth the same age
the light repeats
the light repeats itself in space the same age
the light repeats itself
older than the sun turns today
the light repeats itself in space to show time
the light repeats
the light repeats itself on earth to show time
the light repeats
the light repeats itself in space to show time
the light repeats itself
as old as the sun
as old as the sun
as old as the sun itself.

*a little girl racing her big brother
stepped on my tibia and screamed
in the eyes of the water*

*brother didn't believe her I hear
all within earshot of the riptide
stories stored deep in sandbars*

*words move through their dew
one night it rained on the waves
mother and son shared popcorn*

*dug a couch in the sand to watch
the fireworks over the smokestacks
reflecting on me*

my waves rushed streams of thought shored in memory

White-Hot Stars & Deep Purple Stripes

Fake light and failed politics
take blood away from the eyes,
a veil holding over the sun today
as the sail aligns when wind decides
to run a way that works for buoyed,
riveted, splintering walls dead to all
the calls of a mild-mannered captain,
chairman of the bored sea and the lot
upon it including the newly dropped
pellets of rain pelting the cellophane.
We're all goners

as her mighty wings
slow their flap, reverberating creaks
& squeals of rusted iron & steel twisted
over the land in settlement, screeching
a wake of air waves reversing the tides
in her oceans she lay her wings to cool
under the moon as it swings across coasts
backside engulfed with rays from our star
hidden in the shadow of the turtle shell
she moans, she needs to lick her wounds
beneath her boughs back on the ground
tickled by the pit-stop style maintenance,
under her hood peeks a warrior
of democracy, chassis decaying.

Bitter Volant

The feathered wreath you left on the window
Meant to flow in the breeze, flutter a bit
In the way you did and do, just not when
I found you or when you found me; see that
Is what I wonder peering through the glass
Up to **the sky** is who found who and why
What was meant to happen and how did it
Work that way because meaning is hidden
Besides, nobody **means** what they didn't
And I do too, things I don't mean to do
Happen to, and where I'm left is outside
Looking in at **all the light** pour right out

Every pore in your skin, feathers **stuck** to
The glass charading lightness **in the wind**.

Picturing **the** ichor encrusted on the pane
As a **way** to ascertain its stain in **my brain**,
Your wings were begging to work again,
To **beat against** your ribcage and maintain flight,
Your black beady eyes glossed as they twitched
In the low winter light, the daubed glass still
Reflecting what you had **thought** was more sky,
I peered into the canopy of tall, slender pines
Looking for your lover, a friend, or someone
Who could fly, you seemed so solitary
As if you had just fallen from the sky
One **story was enough**, two stories seemed too high –

Still I heard the thump from downstairs, found out why
And went outside with a wife beater and a shoebox

To save your life.

Birdsong

Without you,
without you,

the way
the bird
leaves
the nest
leaves
the bird
the way

without you,
without you.

*caressing the lighthouse midsummer
nights dreaming lights beaming each
explosion showed for a split second*

*an otherwise camouflaged horizon
where two deep indigos met flush*

the great lake and the night sky

in the eyes of the water

who came from a beast
who came from a beast
who came from a beast
who came from a beast
who came from a beast

i come from a beast
therefore, i am a beast.

see the depths i go
in a pursuit to reach for the deepest rhythm
seeded in spirit.

my chest vibrates at night
half-awake and paralyzed using my eyes to know what time
i leave my body.

i sleep alone
because my tongue never does or eyes and i cannot
always leave my body.

i have been too lost
to run and i have been going too far for far too long
to know where i am.

i imagined you saying
forty-seven things that you never did or could've ever dreamt
to know where i am.

i saw that silhouette
again where the sunlight shines through the surface of the sea
then me beneath her shadow.

Tell Me Right Now Everything That is Too Much to Ask

lying down next to you showing signs of death
to tell you everything is fine as I hold up my head
go into the next room when I stand up to God
is it just to weigh the odds of life in a living Hell

to tell you everything is fine as I hold up my head
you hold your breath like gold it will give you wings
is it just to weigh the odds of life in a living Hell
who doesn't know that this time shows spiraling

I hold your breath like gold you will give me wings
a treasure in the stern numb and unearned
who doesn't know that this time shows spiraling
cold wind blown still sets a sail the tide sings

a treasure in the stern, numb and unearned
two shields of ribs kept afloat, a bone moat
cold wind blown still sets a sail the tide sings
losing control where it's remote, wind rising

two shields of ribs kept afloat, a bone moat
to swim in if you were to sink alone, ungodly
losing control where it's remote, wind rising
I could lie if I wasn't still thinking of me dying

I swear to dive in if you were to sink alone, drowning
in my eyes now is life just a moment
I could lie if I wasn't still, thinking of me killing
the time is lost on me hidden deep underlying

in my eyes now is life just a moment
waves crash and hurl pearls up from the past
the time is lost on me hidden deep underlying
the carbon prints leave marks on the clouds

waves crash and hurl pearls up from the past
I made a necklace for your love I lost how
the carbon prints leave marks on the clouds
me, resting my head on your chest, shrouded

I made a necklace for your love I lost how
all that shines beyond what eyes see in now
me, resting my head on your chest, shrouded
counting as I listen to you breathe in and out

all that shines beyond what eyes see in now
us deciding to be blind together
counting as I listen to you breathe in and out
it's your face I'm lost at seeing

us deciding to be blind together
 as it burns from inside out
it's your face I'm lost at seeing
the whole world is lost at sea

all love is lost on me when I stand up to God
go into the next room as it burns from inside out
this is what it has to be the whole world is lost at sea
lying down next to you showing signs of death.

In Deep

I met you

and there was something
I never stopped knowing
that I can't begin to understand.

*cargo ships on graveyard shifts
half-watching the holiday afar
underwater and of it too I am*

in the eyes of the water

*10 o'clock & smoke swallowed
the strobed skyline mother & son
folded their blanket and casted out*

*leftover kernels like holy water
eight hours passed a harsh sun rose
several snaps and my driftbones were*

*all adorned in popcorn a family
of deer came out to feed on it
licked my ribs and spat as if*

*banishing their tongues
clearing their throats
cackling some*

*a wave rushed up all their hindlegs
spooking them back into the woods
whitecaps turned white-tailed warnings*

a boy poked his head out lakeside ferns

Sow

I keep a pocket
filled with dandelion seeds,
still in line to die.

Inkwell

i opened my mouth
and inside it was violet –
a wide-open cave, gurgling
blood into hemoglobin balloons.

my skin separated into a sheet of itself –
all that was left was blood & intricate bone,
silk cloth plucked out from underneath steaming fine china.

a feather fell from the sky and landed nearby

cold wind blew it into blood bowled in bone.

bubbled breaths escaped my jaw
bloody globes soared in the wind
light broke through to burst them.

books opened like wounds turning papercuts to scars
digging them apart to make a crevice into a crevasse,

pulp partitions split to catch the ultraviolet haze
catastrophizing it all
constructing peaks out of particles

then stashing that in open gashes
masquerading flesh, an origami swan climbs
the tallest pine in the treeline off the lakeside
before its collapse

to print.

To Make Concrete Just Add Water

Swaying between two trees near a creek, I realize it's worth pulling out the blades of lush grass that have been scraping against the hammock holding me. Not long after, a dog, close by, begins to bark and that turns to an all-out fit, the sound of a dump truck's exhaust sears through the half mile of trees between me and the main road it's barreling over, gold mine to dump site, dump site to gold mine, wondering if the grass scraping my cocoon was the real culprit of distraction as this dog is still barking, seems to be giving itself little time to catch its breath, a pickup rolls slow down the dirt road that's within sight of the cabin, which is on the other side of me, in these trees.

If I knew my birds better, I could name a few whose song fill the moment, the old truck drowns them out. I aim to read, I am merely waiting for a breeze through the leaves atop the trees, a symphony in the canopy would put me at ease, let leaves fall into a stream and wash up to dry in a patch of blueberries –

there is paper
there is ink –

the larger truck has come and gone, as has the pickup. Now, two vehicles can be heard approaching each other from the east and west ends of the main road, they sound as if they will pass right about where this dirt road meets that pavement. I wonder if the dog is hungry. I know it's not just now home alone as I haven't observed any vehicles leave down our road for the dirt one that leads to the main.

The barking stops for minutes at a time, if that, then there's an onslaught of sorts, maybe miles past that bark, I know there's a team of sled dogs. I used to assume they were wolves, until I started to recognize the howls were coming from the same area each time I heard them, and they can't keep killing big game in one spot, beasts can paint the same patch of grass red once every blue moon at best.

It should be quieter come winter, all the snowfall so heavy on the pines. Glinting hoarfrost, no wind, those barks will crack and glide, soft, slow. The old trucks should creak more too, and take longer to pass through. There will be birds.

These dirt roads talk with you, they tell you about the weather lately, that day. After the sun bakes fresh tracks into caked ones, weeks of rain show every rock there is beneath, wearing away the flesh of the earth, exposing its bones, its skeletal remains a natural mosaic, etched out one way and never quite the same.

*another soft rain pattered cooling
my wind-sanded lake-rinsed bones
the boy tucked his binoculars to keep dry*

*lurked out of the ferns
up to massive ship-dropped
riprap to settle behind*

*one large boulder
where raindrops splashed
into his naked eyes*

(in the eyes of the water)

*making his way
closer to what
looked like bones*

there was nobody for miles

Purty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap

I took the bones of an angel
I shot through the throat

and washed them in the sink
to pince holes and string silk and hang them on my wall

and weep where the feet fall in the depths of the inside
to wait for an equal

and leave their faces slick with pain
that would turn
into them and burn
from inside out.

I shot an angel having stolen my father's rifle
then crossed my heart and hoped to die for it

and stuck a needle in both its eyes
thinking I's the devil in disguise

bent over the tub rinsing my eyes of the white,
clung to the curtain allowing everything inside

draftswept bones twirl knee high in the corner
of my cornea, wet, cold splat-toned dragonflies scare from my eyelashes (culprit: abrupt ad)

taking their gasoline-soaked footprints elsewhere
into midair; I flashback hoping
they somehow know I saved their friend
at the halfway point of walking my dog
at the top of that tower in the middle of those woods –
this dragonfly's wings wouldn't work whenever it beat them

I gave:

a finger
a palm
the back of a hand
a forearm
a knee

the bloody thing alien-coughed
and started showing signs of life
as its wings beat harder
to where my dog got up
as if to celebrate life
by spinning in circles
and bespattering me with kisses to reward me for my efforts
and the memory changed my mind

from the match to the light.

Crossed the Country Using Only Animal Trails

left a carving on a dusty bar
left a carving on a dying oak
left a carving on a 'was here'
that was there already

left a carving on a bodyless wing
left a carving on a buffalo tooth
left a carving on a driver door
a Mercedes-Benz

left a carving on a dream's driftwood
went back to sleep
watched it wash back up
just to throw it back in, let it bob in the waves

left a carving on a horse saddle
left a carving on a velvety horn
they sang me not to stop writing

left a carving on a copycat
in a dark alley
left a carving on a dumpster door
saying who did it

left a carving on a brick house
smoke came from its windows
like bull nostrils in dead cold

left a carving on a sturdy oak
left a carving on a rotting pumpkin
left a carving on a too-small slipper

left a carving on a palm, won't say.
held a carving on a palm, won't say.

Be the Wind When Wind No Longer Carries You

Suffocating to live a little longer, holding breaths of poison left a carving on my esophagus.
I could've never met anyone if I ever met you, my teeth left a carving on two forbidden fruits
like stars dangling off the fringes of hair plucked like bright light licked clean from deep night
like the light that shined against the edge of the woods where the river leaves the trees that spot
the last tree loses its leaves where that man nobody's ever seen eat or leave sits in a wooden chair
just to repeat –

I wouldn't go in there if I were you

stand still and he would storytell –

*had two making that same face still ain't come back
starry nights faint fog wind that made the trees pop
under no conditions were their returns precedented*

*last time I was out there
found a tree with a hole in it the size of a horsehead
left a carving in my forehead
you could stick both arms through it and join hands
looking through to the other side wouldn't look right
everything went velvety
like spilling something in something else seeing how
it looked then and once it captured your gaze there
wasn't nothing looking the same from there on out*

*another time I seen a pilot parachuting a pirouetting skydive, let her plane ghostride
into a mountainside she ran out of gas after she had to drop some to shed weight
something went haywire once she got over the hemlocks
everything went velvety
she told the radio the way to go to find her they said no,
camp your way out.*

*all that was up and down the beach
was driftwood dead fish
rocks and deer prints*

*the boy ran straight to the bones
that my body left behind
he stumbled*

*even though damp sand
made for far better footing
he got up to me stared deep*

*into my bones
grabbed a sand castle bucket
from his backpack and got to work*

*until the rain stopped
the boy built a wall of sand
around my skeleton*

*then he dug a moat
dunked the bucket in the lake
to fill the moat and cement the molds*

*he looked up
and the deer was back
licking its lips*

in the eyes of the water

Too Far from the Tree

An apple fell from its branch
and tumbled to the edge
of the hill it was on before
plummeting down, rolling
for ages. It rolled so far
that if you stood atop the hill
at the base of the tree it came from,
you'd have to squint both eyes to see it
and even if you were able to pick it out,

it'd look like a *goddamned plum*.

The Last Oak at the Edge of the Woods Where the River Leaves the Trees

I plucked an apple near the end of a branch it seemed to be weighing down and stuck it between my teeth. I grabbed the branch with both hands, hopped off the ground, tucked up my knees and swung into the tree planting my feet on the trunk.

Thousands of caterpillars coated my legs in a greenish fuzz, it tingled from my shins to my hamstrings.

The branch was like a bent arm making me the hand on its hip, I felt splintering overhead, just as the branch began to break I let go and each caterpillar became a butterfly and each butterfly fastened their feet to my shoelaces suspending me in midair and then the world was upside down.

Somehow I left footprints on the tree and it started glistening, I squinted and saw a bit of wetness along with movement under some sort of pressure, a greasy gray, maybe a brain, thousands of maggots squirming, squished together, my footprints, the rings around these roses, the oak's broken arm stuck out of place with no strength to pick the thorns out of its side or I, afloat by butterflies, watching these brains begin to belch mud and bubble up bile before something solid surged out of one of my footprints growing fast and the butterflies swooped me closer. Every thought I ever think seemed to be alive before my eyes.

It smelled of thousand-year old wet leaves.

It reached halfway to me and its gray gunk seeped away to reveal rotten, blackened oak, charred and soaked. It kept growing and I felt swaying as the butterflies lulled me over like a rogue tire swing, too close to the trunk. The apple was still stuck in my teeth and I felt paralyzed by the idea I had given so many thoughts life.

I looked up at the butterflies and noticed my legs vanish into darkness as they were replaced by deep space. My retinas chemtrailed across the length of my body and rocketed my pupils upward where they rose into my shoes. Head over heels, I looked back at my eyeless face and watched my bones shiver and some veered out like shooting stars or meteors rushing marrow to my brain. I thought I would never see real light again but the butterflies shook me to look.

I stared through my darkness into their beating wings back at the tree when a cold bulb of wetness pressed against the top of my head and began to spread around the circumference of my skull, encasing it in a milky film of some earthy scum and like the hesitation of lightning my belief in what I was seeing struck in time and I felt my eyes careen back into their sockets.

This ill molasses coated my eyes, sapping them shut, like candlewax cooling to a close, caking my ears and nose. I spit this waxy apple out – heard it thump on the ground then felt it crack the back of my crown and right then's when the sap turned to ash and the butterflies turned to dust but my body didn't drop –

it gently laid to rest at the base of the tree and the gory guts it grew tattooed my retinas, took root deep in the wisdom tooth they couldn't reach.

The Finish Line is Somewhere Over There

I look in the mirror

and wonder about how my skull takes it;
every voice that reverberates, sinks, sears
every word that was said, told, wrote, or made
forcing its way out of my brain to etch in my skull

and drags,
to be true
for good.

Fingers sprout from my spine inside my head
there's so little brain left

to feel around,
along the carvings,

there's room to maneuver and feel this

inverted bone braille.

It's not all mine

but it is

all in my head

*the boy grabbed the dead fish
from my eye socket by its tail
and tossed it at the deer said take this*

*the deer snorted stomped dragged it
in the sand with its front teeth
then it took c,f full tilt down*

*the waterline whitetail down
showing just its brown bum then
the boy dunked his bucket*

*in the lake again this time
poured it out on me every bone
wiggled in its place a smidge*

*the boy dropped
the bucket to rub his eyes
with the corners c,f his fists*

*then blinked
to regain clearer vision
he swore*

in the eyes c,f the water

Go With Your Gut

feed 'em a little something,
keep 'em in the dark.
it can't be the best way
to raise them, that doesn't exist.
maybe the best way
to raise them is
to bury you, even
if it's only right
half the time,
it won't be
exactly half
and they won't be
exactly half of you.
and in the end,
you hope it's them
burying you. I bury
my seed, say I bury it
with you, it'd scare me
if it were true,

feed 'em a little something

&

keep 'em in the dark,

it's there and it looks like you,
stare and it stares at you,
look away and bury it
where you can to start anew.
there's where it splits in two,
different eyes, different views,
you can't look in theirs
and it won't see you

spit in a grave.

Be Careful Not to Waste Your Breath Making Up Your Mind

And one day your name is engraved in stone over your dead body
and someone will strike a match against it
and douse out their cherry on it
and sound out your name
and calculate your age
and leave.

Peaks of Belief

you there not knowing
how you could have been
loved and remembered again
before being calendared and forgotten about
one day your name will tickle the roof of a mouth not eating
and somebody will fight to match your breath
and they will flail in each effort
and leave pain in each step
and disguise their face
and go into public
and steal
all your life's work
in the blink of an eye
that doesn't even open right
forget the key they find to it all
at the same time in space as where you fall
the day you were alive in the worst way shouting your own name
and the mirror saw you closer than you appear
and spit it right back at first taste
and camouflaged your faith
and too dirty to show face
and music played loud
and stopped
you in your own tracks
looking back you don't see
them following you only you
following them when you panic
you can't stop to gather yourself redhanded
one day made it so you would never know your name the same
and it's the day you haven't stopped living
and the minute that you wake winning
and the light that you make dimming
and the weight you hold thinning
and the brace you feel weaker
and collapse
right back into your own hands
catch yourself once so you can again
never think about the ticking of the hand
now it begs to shake you awake from the dream
you are living within for each day you breathe a new name
and nobody believes what you say
and nobody believes what you say
and nobody believes what you say
and nobody believes what you say.

*the bones moved before his eyes in broad daylight
he filled the bucket with lake water again
he went to dump it on me then*

*heard hooves racing in sand so looked up
the deer leaped and skied over the bones
knocking the pale cf water out his hands*

*stunned he gathered himself
sat in the sand staring
the deer kept running*

*the other direction
never looking back
its front legs and chest wet*

with my spirit

in the eyes cf the water

Kintsukuroi

if I had a dream for every dream that died

I'd be too alive to not dream all the time

will be the death of me

so listen here I say I have a dream that goes like this I say
she says how does it go I tell her this this here is how
it goes she says I get it now go back to sleep
what if I don't wake up I can never tell you
my dream she said I'll give you something
to dream about then made a fist turned it
over and opened her palm

there was a firefly the size of her head
I went to touch it she closed her fist fast I gasped she opened it back up
there were two fireflies the size of both her and my head
she said these here shot through the sky
they're what's left of last night
she closed her fist

starlike light emanated from between her fingers
leaking out a shower of gold blinding my halfblind eye she opened it back up again
her fingertips turned into crocodile teeth her pointer and pinky knuckles were eyes
she grabbed me by the neck and forced me down her ear canal and said listen here
this is where you die

I stuck an arm through her sterling silver hoop
joined my hands together and held on for dear life
she shook her head jerking me back and forth quick
like a dog finishing a squirrel a flag in high winds a news cycle
like a steering wheel in a hooptie on the highway after losing my grip
I flew across the creek up the way around its bend taken high up by wind

climb trees while you still can youngblood the man tipped his hat neck craning out
the driver side window of a state trooper SUV like a dissenting soldier breaking off
from the march of traffic he looked up spoonfed his engine the tires churned gravel
the Chevy mudflaps looked all chewed up from it like dog toys
sure will I chirped back from up in my pine canopy throne
looking at the pig down a branch
twig stubs as iron sights.

The Art of Climbing Trees Underwater

this high up
the branches get weaker
gotta break em at the base
make pegs of em then stand on that
less competition there in the canopy though
so more grew out to begin with
less water made it up there
got more sun though

weird plant trees

used to go up em just to breathe in
like a whale
like a lot that lives underwater
thought I would once
went in under the ice
thinking I knew where
else I could come up for air
except everything slowed down

saw a black swan
and my vision got blurry

a buck swam next to me and said something
all I saw were bubbles float out his snout
his legs sliced the water
like ribbon dancing
he disappeared in the black of the river
I was ready to die I thought
then I heard a crash
the buck stuck his rack through the ice
made a hole for my escape
I swam to that light grabbed onto his tines
he pulled me out and snuffed
then he dashed off
into hoarfrosted
cattails.

How Bad Could the River Be Midsummer Having Had Dogs for Brothers?

picture your eyes peeled wide paralyzed at midnight
stuck in a dim room one slim window

borealis pink sheen on wood walls
stained with a clear coat

a dark spirit afoot
you can't look at

you sense
pressure building in the sternum

exact mass of the earth bearing
a scarry tectonic-plated ribcage

daring to incinerate to soot
lachrymal-glassed corneas

flooding with nothing
still cheeks streaming

fair pinkish gleaming
gut-dancing demon

no luck moving
visuals collide

a voice arises
calm & quiet

*climb the tallest tree on the lakeside
when midday looks like midnight
take the two-headed eaglet*

chest vibrations
the body aging

void of spirit
heart of ice

faint blinks
back to life

shaken awake
you look down

the devil is gone
the voice that was

purrs into winter ensemble

find the rhythm of the body

feeling the feet are taking themselves away
lake bound using only animal trails the whole way

left a carving on a flowerless willow bent for death
left a carving on a sturdy oak a stump away from the willow

saw an engraving on a boulder near the hill before the beach
it looked like arrows pointing in directions that didn't make sense

together it looked like a symbol something ancient maybe something new
cracked a rock in pieces against the boulder used an edge to add my initials

there was the line of trees by the beach and the man that nobody ever saw leave or eat
sitting cross-legged in a wooden chair at the edge of the forest chewing grassy advice

*be a brushstroke of your imagination
ideas shed their shells*

*to get the sleep you know you need
to be careful*

I said sure
I'm not afraid

*suit yourself
youngblood*

made way into the woods by the beach
the way you walk when you mean to

darkness swallowed the foliage
light drained a sly dawned sky

no sign of it and there were no clouds
to be seen like you wouldn't believe

no blue either gloomy fog encompassed the canopy
animal eyes dotted this darkness like constellations

just looked behind into where I came from
there was sheer blackness as if all a shadow.

*the deer veered c,f the waterline
went through the backyard
cf the eye doctors' mansion*

*stormed through their flower bed
the stained glass door swung open
a woman shrieked the deer split*

*the lady went out
to assess the damage
to her sa,f from crocuses*

*deer-wilted damp with lake dew
they looked atrocious she plucked
them to be placed in an empty bottle*

in the eyes cf the water

Lady by the Bank

It was too hot to sleep, you see the creep
of sunlight's impending return. Yesterday you

learned as a child, the beach was the best place
to be when the sun got wild. You get your gear

together in preparation for the weather today
is waiting for you by now you furrow your brow,

bummed about how your new shoes aren't the best
move right now cause it's time to go to the beach

down the road through the trees, a little trail winds through
pines until it hugs the tall white fence of

Miss Lady Billie Banks, that's the woman with the
Biscayne briefcase packed solid all with mint bills

from big banks – it must have weighed half a cow, the
children wonder how the sweat she shed to lug it

downtown didn't cool the land abound, step by step
her alligator boots set down the ground just felt a

pound of what Billie Banks hauled around. Your toes are eating
through the soles of your old shoes you wore to go to the beach

behind Billie Banks house where the bank is mighty sweet
and the kids dip their feet for relief from the heat, disparity

ablaze on a Great Lake beach.

Beacon

buried in sand
where river runs through it

stands a skull stuck on a stick
with song sparrows in its eyes

with good ideas
it's a lighthouse.

The Little Town That Never Sleeps

Did you ever hear whether or not there were more grains of sand in the world than stars in the sky? Is it okay to include sand that's not just on beaches? Doesn't it feel like that may be the only way a sand count could ever dream of contending with the number of stars? We'd need every little rock the earth could muster up; if we count the sleep in my eye, and yours too, would that do? Forgive my doubtfulness, Miss – the universe is so vast you could hardly miss the extent of its grip, which has been calculated, don't scratch your tear gland. What about the bottles too filled with sand that we'll never get the messages in them? Less an obsessive scuba diving mission lifted all suspicion, brought each bottle back to the counting session announcing them when they thought fit to include moon dust.

An Ode to CMEs and Betting on the Malleability of our Only Habitable Planet

once I turned my back
the northern lights
danced in my peripheral
asking me how dare I

break my gaze from such lush leaves
of low-hanging stars
with a magnetic hum giving silence
a run for its timing

when a green wave waves,
buckles, flutters and dives
buckles, flutters and dives
buckles, flutters and dies.

I confide in the darkness
as the tightly wrapped moon
leaves tracks in our moods
that puddle with reused light

clinging on to be collected
by my conjoined palms
that rush it to my face
to shock it awake

in the core of the dark
after the paralysis takes
the skull vibrates both eyes stay
wide open as the sky seeing stars

cloaked in pink-soaked green ribbons of light
the fingerprints of the poles alter each night.

*Barefoot Cabernet Sauvignon
on the white marble
island in her kitchen*

*she sat up
on a steel stool
stared livid*

*called her nurse
to cancel her 10 o'clock
cited sickness*

*started fighting with the dishes
other doc came down said what's wrong
she said damn deer trampled my flowers*

*he asked are those the ones
she said yes he said they look fine
to me she turned put the rag down*

The World is a Woman in the Hands of a Man

I met you in a dream
&
I left you in the street,

now it's back

to sleep for me
&
if I happen to repeat,

take my grief

cut its wings
&
let it sink –

I would leave it

to my neck
&
where I've had it

up to here,

covering a Vermeer in veneer.

wings

your body turned to birds
and i was the only one to see
the flying v
you were in over my head
saying you see heels
i asked can you feel
you said i don't know
the steps you stole
left the angels dead
the shovels bending
thoughts burnt
what heaven sent
to be hellbent and hell-bound on that highway
a stiletto-pierced windshield
plum-knuckled steering wheel
bursting at the seams in here the leather so soft
you asking me why and whether or not
me telling you i can't predict the weather at all
see you're hooked i can get you off
it's you who let me on
don't say i led you on
the path we steadied on isn't a lesson lost
yes and no
maybe so
perhaps
unsureness
is the truest fact of the matter that
none of it matters

beating

then your body turned to dust
and it all came over me
in a massive cloud
brush off my hair
kick off my feet
i asked can you see
i heard i can't even breathe
along the path taken
to feed the greed
meant the demons feast
all the evil
starved good spirit and ran it dry
until a sliver of light beamed through
to shine on the soul inside
choking a cry
stress in the face of more where that came from
ghost it all think of more where that came from
it won't feel like the end until we get to finish
and tell me you won't take some
from a runner-up
then look like who done it
a path we headed down to stay above it
no and yes
maybe not
if that
surely
is the truest fact of the matter then
no matter the matter?

The Waterline on an Elephant Shows it Crossed the River

step out of my skin
 to overcast water
in one motion
my eyes rope in

some sight, i lost sight

 on the
 bridge
 of your
 nose
 to dull
the pierce

 your gaze
 beholds –

i want to bury you in sand
 up to your neck

to kiss you
careful not to
 knock teeth.

guts to be left alone, always close to
needling the vein feeding euphoria splinters
in thin
air –

i'm left out of my skin
with you right in my way
and i'm wrong by the way
 you see what i'm saying –

too long are the days where my blood's worth sinks
and their walls become glass to shatter to salt-pince skin
and i once was an ant from a hill on the way to lunch
when all that i carried just became too much

 the wind swept me up with dandelion fuzz
 and it pooled us beneath goldening ferns
 pressed up in the place we'd stay on earth
 sunbaked southface of a house foundation
 concrete spiderwebbing ages the pavement.

*said look at the ones outside
that's how they're supposed to look
he did he still said they look fine*

*he sat down at the kitchen table
crossed his legs picked up
that day's newspaper front page*

*read 'Have You Seen This Man?'
people used to
every Sunday*

*until he got caught
for the ten-thousandth time
I have a confession to make she said*

Speaking Tongues Talking in Circles

I learned the ropes out of the blue barking up the wrong tree –
the devil was up there beating his wife dull with flying colors
for letting the cat out the bag – fish rots from the head down
no matter how filthy rich off diamonds in the rough you get,
you will still be pushing up daisies after you kick the bucket

into a bed of roses just around the bend ahead of the curve

where you break a leg, keeping your cards close your eyes
peeled off the chain out of the frying pan and into the fire,
just fanning the flames in between a rock and a hard place
chalking it up to it being as easy as 1, 2, 3 peas in a pod –
so chin up don't leave it to beaver and believe in a god.

Like That Will Ever Happen

When lightning strikes twice where pigs fly through contrails
while the fat lady sings a song that makes cats run for water
 one full blue moon will eclipse a solar storm over the 8th sea
 with winds wound up by synchronized-spouting killer whales
thousands upon thousands of snails will banish their shells
thousands upon thousands of nails will hammer themselves
 on decks and walls and stairs and shelves and boats and wells
 when rain drops fall on all the crops that would otherwise die
when they tip a diamond miner with a diamond from the mine
when hens have teeth to bite heads off chickens that cross the road
 in the afternoon on Saint Never's Day on a backwards calendar
 the way Saint Never bends his finger to make cows grow wings
when the reed plant blossoms flower and all the frogs grow hair
and the crawfish whistles on the mountain and clock hands quit
 when they handcuff a body and still taser
 when they handcuff a body fighting for breath
 when they handcuff a body riddled with hot lead
 when they handcuff a body paralyzed by the gunfire

FADE TO BLACK.

Once Saw Soot Scrubbed from a Clawfoot Tub so I Sought Good Love

At the exact same time is when what you said to me made its way through my head and bled to me. Scalding hot blood veins cannot contain rushing as a river through the body into the brain to bubble. (Ir)rational fear: losing somebody over something I'd always done that they never said bothered them. I'm an angular magistrate with hairline fractures on each mandible caked up with what-I-ate aftertaste. I dare to whisper my pain in a way that raises the hair from where it happened even if you don't have it. I dreamt I read everything I once said, wrote, not quite did, for me to be sure is only then me eating me. My mouth tastes of moose, a kind where the guts and marrow splashed over icy asphalt with last breath. It's as if you could snap and everything snapped back adding raggedy biofeedback to the moment seized. Billionaires left with bones after burning too much fat and forgetting how to get home without chauffeurs. Just say how you feel, we don't have to call it religion or say belief is necessary thinking of what's known. What you do think, what you do know, and what you do believe after all the thinking, *knowing believing*. That shooting star is really dragging out its last breath, you see it in how it holds the sky tight to its chest.

Every deathbed I've ever been on I found God in a heartbeat.

*I saw the boy from down the road steal
our son's binoculars from the treehouse
but I wanted to wait until our boy noticed*

*how long ago was that the man asked
she lightened her grip on the rag
maybe a month ago she said*

*I know it's not right to steal
but I also know what it's like
to grow up not having*

*now he has something he enjoys
so better that than not at all
she looked through the glass door*

*to the beach at the boy
playing with the sand
what's that in his hand*

**we are
who we think
we are
and we always
will be**

i am, you are,
electrified star
dust bar none –
chemicals peruse
venticles, up the stem
it goes like the story
does, an inevitable case
of originality the way your dna
twists and turns the plot you live
in and cannot escape.
trapped in the temple
that is your body
just so we are
clear, alive
and well, aware
you and i are
stimulated star dust moving
at every moment's notice, status quoted
twirling through grooves.
we think there's friction
and that's all there is
then, the imagined
version swerving
uniquely in tune,
eyes reading
the room
in your head
desperate for space,
not all is silk & lace
desecrating the star dust
that decorates our bodies,
faces and heartbeats
oddly.

this is code for not knowing

there is shallow
and there is deep
then there is all
that's in between

there are steps
and there are feet
one of each can't
follow less it leads

words find words
stacked in lines
ideas breathe life
or die during their sentence

shallow steps
leap in depth
and delineations lie
in crossed and dotted heaps

words unwritten
rebel in readers
where literary armies rise
minding mines in the mind

the poet who tried
to decide what survives
only finds no control
over all that's contrived

pulling thousands of eyes
from left to right still
tough to trick a tongue
into spilling light

Languine

I dreamt I read
everything I once said,
wrote, not quite did –
for me to be sure
is only then me
eating me.

I tasted like words worn down
by critical words worn down
by critical words worn down
by critical words and I lost
my appetite.

*the man looked over the top
cf his newspaper and said what
she said is that a bone*

*the man got up went to the glass door
and looked over the top cf his glasses
said hmm well f we had binoculars*

*maybe we could tell he turned around
sat back down crossed his legs
picked up the newspaper kept reading*

*she goes maybe you should go get them back then
he said don't you think it's a little late for that
by now my crocus dew was drying out*

*and the sound got blurry the still damp deer was back
in those dewy ferns peering through their blades watching
the kid play*

in the eyes cf the water

DNÆteor

That shooting star is really dragging out its last breath,
you see it in how
it holds the sky
tight to its chest.

My tongue twirls its light through my teeth like a lie,
the shine reflects
off each tooth
as I smile
in the night.

My lips press out sound to make sound sound like it flies,
my muscles rest
so motionless,
alone at last
I know
I am.

The universe as I know it there to see me fall from its sky,
black holes I pass
drool at the skin
of my teeth
as I hold on
when I spear
by space.

I know
at this rate
wherever I land
I'm there for good.

Death's On It

The kind of quiet where you hear no more
beyond the sheer thoughts of such a silence.
To be reminded, stop and recognize
the time it takes the mind to find itself
run amok behind itself in the still,
peace, and quiet. And to be reminded
of not much but what to keep in mind for
the kind of quiet where you hear no more
beyond thoughts of that alone; how does it
fade to black? Lay flat, look dead, and stay back?
Made to last yet laid to rest like some truths –
it is unnavigable
the kind of quiet where you hear no more,
the kind of quiet where you're here no more.

Tombstone

Inches away –
mention the way –
dented, ingrained to
remember the name;
depend on the grave.

in the eyes cf the water

*the sun hid behind a layer
cf stratus clouds a handwidth above
an orange horizon nearing 10 o'clock*

*the deer bolted went straight at the boy
the boy looked up and dropped
my radius and ran*

*the deer skid to a halt next to the skeleton
then cocked its head to stare at my wet skull
and stuck a hocf out to kick it away*

*then my jaw sprang open and bit down
on its hocf the deer freaked out
and shook my soaked skull*

*cf into the lake
a peregrine dove down
its speeding tomial tooth*

*powderized my skull which fast muddied
underwater there was a shrill
scream from shore*

*the boy ran into the ferns
& climbed a holey hemlock.*