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Emending the First Report

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EMENDING THE FIRST REPORT

I. Eighty-three and Other Things It Was Not

It was neither my contempt
for phantoms of excellence
nor my praise for all
that whirls outside myself,
nor the mathematical coincidence
of my grandmother's eighty-third year
with my eighty-three degree summer porch
and its tarantula
stationed at foundation's crack.

It was neither lack of love
nor the old love-lust-guilt confusion,
nor Billy Burroughs' allusive tongue
rimming the corpse's crotch
who screams in his long sleep
like that starving spider.
And no, this newsprint was not meant to shock
the tenderness of your true self
nor blacken the tips of my honest fingers.

It was neither serious
nor Garden nor God nor Jesus
nor Matter nor Devil
nor wren nor robin
retrogressing into one.

It was not longing for long roads
to loved one waiting
like birds for evening on the Amazon,
neither calm locations
nor uprooted revisions
nor labia of tomatoes
nor stream of consciousness
melting its milky snow

nor romantic numbness
in your grey girl's eye.
It was not the prophets
nor foregone grandmothers
nor will it ever be us.
It was neither nauseous
nor did it have Nastassia's face.
And it will never conclude,
but there was a concensus
that it leads to the kind
indifference of ignorance.

II. Offspring

It's 5 p.m. and 95° in Vincent, Ohio,
and that's exactly what it is. Sweating,
an old man sits on his porch, tapping the rhythm

with his cane, while mating sparrows match it
in the clematis surrounding him. As I run past
on the gravel road, I'm trying to be serious

about centering myself. Luckily,
I lose interest, watching dragonflies
swirl hungrily in the dust.

I will hazard a guess at fate, Moira,
that our genitals will never join again.
We collided. We did not meet.

An impatient cadillac roars up from behind.
With "LORD" on its license, it swerves
around me, slinging dust into my lungs.

Screaming for Jesus on a megaphone,
the evangelist rattles pollen off the corn
filling the sky with allergic blood.

I breathe the powdered bones of my ancestors.
But in my groin, a child is waiting — I will drink
creme de cassis and soda, eat lily buds

and raspberries for supper, in training not to try
too hard, nor rank myself above the *Lepidoptera*.
Some decadence and conception, Monarchs fill the air.