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Brandon Shimoda

*The University of Montana*

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# LAKE M

Brandon Shimoda

B.A. Sarah Lawrence College, 2001

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements



for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

The University of Montana

May 2006

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson  
  
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5-26-06  
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*for Midori Shimoda*  
*b. Hiroshima, Japan 1909*  
*d. Denver, North Carolina 1996*

*poppo poppo to tondekoi*

*oddod-omy*

*oddod-omy*



falling

from the mouth

The throat expands  
Assume the songs  
of all your guardian prey

May 23, 1942

My—

*I sent to you today a parcel containing stones as follows:*

*1 semi-circle red, polished*

*1 natural stone, mountain painted*

*1 oblong green, polished*

*1 small white, like a bird's egg*

*1 small green, wave-like design*

*1 string of necklace pendants*

*white green striped tiny chocolate color*

*flower painted blue, cross embossed*

*(took me half a day to make this)*

Where water was

a body

and from the land

strands out

to the basin in which it lay

pressed, a lake at hem in the valley

enlarges as it moves

a mass across the sediment

dissipates

the water startling

into ice, the ice

bottoming

through a formulated order

hereunder

forced

a tongue seized    what thinks it

into the gregariousness of age  
sucker towards multiple leaders, revolving in

new air  
but is braced, and wears  
into its meat and  
in neglect, its vein, a hole

where it cannot extend

nor for,

but enter

At night, you craft your figurine

from stone,

emperor  
gathering his maiden

into a porcelain gown

beneath a penetrant lamp

Her feet pristine, sharply white,  
arched to quiet in the hall

Her fingers rest softly  
on your arm

A bridge of birds  
constrains her hair,  
bowed above her faceless head

each finery crest displaying

Lean in to carve her mouth,  
a tiny craze across her cheek

widening *take me*

Before I am taken away  
by the light

I climb on the nightstand, singing

swelled waves upon the surface

enlisting with another tongue

with another removed

on all sides strewn

sand and rock flour

the vermilion mouth still

by a swiftly folding out

on both sides, a crest

Geiichi Kawaki

laid down

faulting in the waters

your brothers

called together to sing at the window

imagined you

emerging into the air of their song,

a girl, beautiful green

You emerged instead

a boy

into a lap of hot ash,

a cautious, yellow glaze

Your brothers' mouths depressed, without a sound

One held your head, the others  
your arms and feet,

pulled in each direction twice

calming wash away from your skin



reduced

to small fragments gently

dissolving in colors

on the glass

The bank breaks down

and still  
the bed emerges made  
with a twin impression

bodies      once pressed      lifted

together to the steeper slope  
below the sandy soil

stripped numerous

natural stones wanting the eye round  
passing before the settling skin  
at dusk

held within the light's reach

screens and mottling—  
coming apart

a film on the veiling floor

reveals. Come out

will catch it water worn

•  
•

Mountains buried to the necks,

bodies out on either side

and a hand closing  
to keep your head—

Clouds catching on the leaves  
where within the shifting well

resolves a single drop  
off the shoulder bone

a pool of water into a ribbon—

in the gently subduing dawn

you will press again,

your neck weak

against the mouth of the emasculating hole—

*Into a white sash*

A widow moves along a hill  
into a pine, drawing  
a narrow drape across the snow

from where her husband  
had been subsumed  
by a hand below,

wanting back. His buried head  
peaks through a film of salt  
and plaque, each strand of hair

encrusted. She gathers herself  
and hardens about him,  
a landed crystal in relief

Everything you want of her

she sends

by censoring parcel post

thin, translucent fingers  
on the fold a scale  
of lip upon the seal

her shaking hand unlining

An envelope carried across the field

opens

organs falling to the snow

exposed the severest

dyeing white

blood spreads over your kneecaps

up your thigh

to your groin

clenched your future love

and pulls your witness out of it

and splits from it, a girl and from your vessel pulls

two boys

She gives herself up

cell by cell

You take her in to your own,

eroding



In the evening  
you dream of her lips

how they might feel    overcome

by amnesty

breathing your body

back into itself

the touch    leached

from your lips, and creased

    a blue prevail

The last drought has you arriving by train,  
struck into the moodless hills

fractured, repellent jewels of water

compel at the levees  
a savior

cabbing speed beside the cuts

Everything shakes

A draught of stolen perfume leaps out,

subtle prints on the obtuse neck  
glow in the side-drawn light

in your palm

lids down a lips a stirring salt

She arrives from across the lake  
and is cut by the fence  
    immediately    makes you out in the field  
hastening to pass  
her long sleeve snagged on a spike

She can see you slanting, though  
you cannot see her

Her face has shifted off her head,  
and hangs

Her eyes, porous, off their pole,  
unfocus on your narrow form,

her stomach opening up

You try to move to call her name

    She deepens  
not a drop of blood

The lee road bends  
through the trees  
white buildings dug at their bases  
bunched skirts of soil

Among them—  
tracing a deep re-entrance  
the ravine from her hand  
generates through her fingers  
spooled from the fields absorbed  
in the canvas, with carnations  
in silhouette  
and the warmth of her waist  
dissipating slowly  
in the air

silent below a cadent sky    The sky  
is off its stretcher

draped across your shoulders  
its corners touching the ground

encloses you in wet process  
captivating the men beside you in the field

The shutter has always been open,  
letting everything in to attend to  
mentally: nothing comes out    moving  
in the continuous movement  
of everything

distant chanticleers  
end her in the mind  
closing the shutter with an excitable, stroking row

Alarms beneath it seamless  
grinding light as light, patterning  
in the corner of the ceiling hangs  
a body

floating a silent mark  
contours pale  
hers  
in the blear wind, constellated  
lanterns steady from the beams

emit a fine light cut into saints  
by a split stoma, infecting the land  
calling over ice, by rising,  
invades or sinks below there is no  
is a way

Your head opens at the bellows  
to a melting bulb. Throw it off,  
your immovable life,  
discollect in drops along the grass

Wind

into the bellows

hanging between the crash

and the shore a lapse  
with salt, discarded clothes

crusting as pox on the slow  
crawling stones

not shot capturing headlong

innocent breaking  
evolving rock

for looking as you do

from the north

without a collar  
or tie, without  
cuffs without belt

having taken off  
and leaving form  
stiffened bladders around

Shoot in the wind

the east depresses, pulls away

blades  
across the sea  
again

to the detention of home



Dress the coming fog in a robe  
by sleeves, a sash around a flooded field  
purling shadows widely—

A formal light blushes from the skin on your head

your head hanging loose  
with nothing underneath, but a face rawing from faultlines  
across your canted back, senesced

spent flesh in standing water

cannot speak: an egg lodged in your throat

breaks its yolk  
to your lips, unwell  
a lobate, dodging tongue

as if to take a part in—  
you crawl, disinterred  
into the bulkhead of her face,  
match eyes to eyes, illumined  
in spite—  
wrench around,  
hung on every splitting end  
Fractures off the hollow skull  
kills and young graves  
  
In your age  
a familiar face shone blue  
in the pond behind—  
You stooped, stuttering,  
and the skip of your eyes  
filmed, as if picketing the water

When she asks where you are from  
the shelves fall sideways from the walls  
with the weight of facing, flammable things

held in anticipation    soothing

you

said    from here

One vessel opening    an idol outstretched

its lips parting to spill

in ovules    cheek walls tapering

from a mute mouth    twining light

through colorless, delicate germs

on the wood, fallen

•  
toward your hesitation

enflames the overhearing ears behind you freely

does not burn

*from here*

*from here*

Come out of the water she said  
in the sand

a polyp reaching down

through tubers underground

to bloom

My life, laid here for you the air

is nothing

though she is

wading in

Is there a part rejoicing

which is you,

the place where armed

and ordered to?

which is her? of the dream allegiances

there is a part in answer to

your will

is which

rejoice revised into a solemn walk

around the field

the place where rowed

through water

toward prepare

A loosening varve  
with gentians

widening shawls tipped-in  
and the fence

dissolves into the frozen ground  
footprints spread

in you the ice hangs

buds at the back of your neck  
cold by a dried for word

cannot unfurl small ringers  
line your calf *in*

pulling the entire muscle  
clean *or* flamed for—

She has never been closer

Something is moving across the grass

How many times did June whistle

across the fence

He lifts his head at the sound of her breath

a caul rehearsing its pendent toll

and burns his eyes to the swinging hinge





*November 7, 1942*

*My—*

*Oval green stones are very common here. These and red stones will shine more by polishing with cloth. You may laugh at the red stones which look worm-eaten. Straight, diagonal red lines on smooth oval stones will show better if you put a little oil on them. Pebbles in the sack should be seen in water, you may put them in a goldfish basin. Each pebble, however small, was carefully picked by me, so please do not make light of them.*

incense to air a slender bell

The emperor

                  drops in

to you at night

curls naked beneath your bed,

presses his hands up through the springs –

          his chest into your spine –

          and whispers

                          sputtering

The men who come to tuck you in

draw the sharpened edge of the sheet up to your neck

          a radiance burns them

back into their sheltering

                          —redolence

of your lop, impacted ear

listening the single window pane

                          in smoke

A river from a sink  
sapphire

evening along the purslane

Sweeps incasually and disappears  
into a slit

pulled out

*a forest of peach trees on either bank*

*spring paces in bloom on the banks of the stream*

*a small opening in a hill from which a gleam of light*

*but fragrant, and falling petals*

*whirling all*

to be a thing

itself  
without

Foreign fruits  
arrive weekly in wax

turning in the slow current

calm of flesh  
and plump  
edgingly onto the sand

to your hunger

A gathering

and familiar, yet

you eat only the stems

focusing frail and drawn

split open

subtle seed bestrewn

Pressed into the seams

in a scintillant strip

day, a shield  
I part to put my hands in

the skin shrinking

the reflections

pulled taut around a core

colors floresce

envelopments in your fists

keep

overturning

at the edge of vision

stoppages of green

acquitted cinders in the fabric

low to your heels

light through its hunter

falling, and your black curls

loose men will—

On the ground    Your head falls back

    Your body befalling

        Sound rises from the mud  
unrinded from slick, desquamated skin

    Your rod    of eyes looks up

polished in wool

        around the rough rim

tall with the drain  
where it cuts

    against the oracle

    fitting stones to gnaw on



Half way to the top of Blue Mountain  
the view presses softly against your back  
testimony budding from the limbs

*Are you willing*— the stand

draws the clearing closed,  
each strand unloosed    *will you*

*swear*— The gray  
and greening ridge *and faithfully*—

where the miles conduct

is yellow *and foreswear*—

droops, swept  
thin among the needles

You have fixed on something crossing  
in the distance  
your arms held behind you

Something is falling against campaign  
Something rises against—

a lily spot—

Speech thins at the base of the mountain

into the larch the men

cease into its whorls

their newly striking dress

among the fascicles

*I cannot go on, nor stay*

*nor say*

vocal cords threading on a limb

Brows of black smoke  
thicken in a suspect, cautionary arch  
its ends burnt flesh, coils of organs

growing over

Haul the wood away  
again

where it will not startle

Unfreeze your hand from the wood's threads  
hair woven in each fracture

balled into a proxy, small,  
to coat with speech

Let the ribbons waste to your backside

The locals raise a giant lens into place

wet with a draft of fog  
suspended on its edge

Everyone is distorted

Act up before, and out—

Rub the glass with pride  
opaque in their anxious palms

A voice commands them to return—

about to begin, and—

They make for the posts  
around the perimeter

slender their bodies between

for and by—

A black curtain funnels a scroll of loosened air—

Watch through tungsten eyes—

Hills where mountains stood—

the curtain rippling out its force  
stage right  
a gentle  
    gentle  
        threshing  
through your captive half worked soil

the river around its bow  
flaring the bank  
a shelf of darkling tongues  
of a curving hook  
stuttering its bottomland  
collaring at your blushing throat

an imbalance of laughter sounds

Wooden faces  
and your cheek

entraps

bright  
severance spots  
on  
the beet-red blade

A committee of intervenors

forms in the ground

outside your door

spread, nearly splitting

the skin between your fingers

veins diminishing with the vacant air

curling your hands into fists

as fragments of a whole

were never partial

coursing before you in the field, disquieting the set    overhead

bay doors slide along their blades, and the rain

tipped cylinder steel

While in the river to your knees  
you're being watched

The willows part and snap

The guards withdraw to comb the barracks  
a furrowed morgue

Eyes in accusatory mouths  
held by cupping tongues  
each flash closing in a dim room  
hands placed flat on wooden desks

They've gotten all they can  
They've lent their fishing poles to stay  
you fluting the water, softspoken

When you return to lift your hands  
you lift them to their open mouths  
feeding them

*so you could direct*

*the blowing up*



gathering around you

growing white as pipe

pigment sucked through holes bored at intervals in your skin –

the taste of a fervent gut, at once,

to throw you up. Translucent

diamond, uniflora cast  
by a hollow mouth

of scoured, paratoxic land

englobing  
Grass in all is

Just wait, quaint pear,

reproducing through your hand

or leg

a crush, mull gathering around

Your dream holds you  
by the neck

and bends you  
at the knee

Both wants and halts  
developing, a seeded head,  
picked over ground,

elongates its fingers  
and tightens

It finds you  
cleaning the rank of your lenses

in the root cellar, gathering  
from the gracing stocks

dampened light, intelligence

Your neck is craned in the dark—

    a nail etching a brand

from nape to crown—

the lenses will not rinse

Into your conscripted eyes  
waste from the man-less fields

shines off the water                      that weak light  
is not a beacon

but a burrowing

from the rafters

Lie on your back

The hope of weeds

unhook the weaving

rending quietly the roof

a ways

a way    a hand forcing back

a constellation tacked

the mantle is a layer is a cellar    you thought you were at ground level

over    over

pardon, a colder

ridge on your trial, stretching foreground to hind,

coming unloose, and spurring off,  
as you bend to clear the soil from around  
the season's first destructive bulb, opening down to light

Sleep, to be  
spooled out    burnt

silently awed, laboring for breath  
plumage falling from the mouth

slipping

watch

the river

withdraw  
the

morgue

softspoken

The current calls upon the people

birthing sounds  
ascending twiced above the silt

the bitter bourn. A tree  
in which faces hang

in arms, and spin  
their lights in you

She does not approve of the conditions into which she is lured

A covering keeps her hurling back

How could she dare, but repeat herself  
endlessly across his mind?

Slipping down is why

Your maiden, a billow  
along the canvas wall, quietly

worded against moments of shadow  
violently burned

across. Your barracks

have never been anything  
but immaculate, yet

you've been scripted  
to fold  
and re-fold

every detail  
into every other, from dawn  
until pre-dawn.

How much of her  
is condensation on your lens.

The wish to wring  
a pale, white neck



*I am here because I loved them*

*I was I where was suspect*

Her hair is longer now, or was it  
longer then?

No emperor in this tree

but a rib  
solitary upon a crooked stem

no robe  
upon the moment when

it touched your scalp

became you

Fear the hill

will be  
too dark, the ridge

will meet its opposite ridge

There will be a lady there,  
knitting the reft projections of the skull in her arms

breached, emitting a voice

eventually going off to fight

against the islands to no reward

the shape the scent  
of a temperate fruit. She will not be  
what you had in mind. She will be  
even lovelier

The mountains are dressed  
in a mist. The blade  
has been withdrawn,  
wiped clean of carnation,  
and thrown  
into the precipitations  
of the river

It is lonely without knives

It is cold

and lonely without the arms  
to draw rubies from the earth

We pass through fields of snow,  
cold and prone, entrancing blooms



*November 16, 1942*

*My—*

*I received the beautiful stone.*

You've made an able mark. I've grown  
an able line. Your preparations  
are still attached.

Pull the corners of the worked skin  
back until the cut  
is of suggested width.

Your flesh has made the curator's list,  
and is being framed. Set  
over a slow flame. I blind

on venereal steam, that no force  
disembodied any such  
oppression. I vow

to breach the fence, and meet  
the river's proportions in bloodletting.

I take you on display

before you

now in flames, we stand a dousing flash

*here—*

*breathe into our bodies*

*Fill our sacs*

*with ornamental, spotted ash*

Voices on the crown  
contain a tongue of oil –

anointing the shuttering scalp  
with light

stems falling out our nodding



They're dissolving  
petals that I don't see

I send these oranges

encirclement and snow

for you to peel

would be unfortunate and false

Keep your ordinary skin

to show that it is not  
your one and lone defense

Petals in the grass

damp over a spreading bruise

break the lid of breath  
an edge

your strand empowering a rupture

Bear me now

a hollow third  
blood rung around your neck

excites the sight of seeing her in me

made within my body I feel you slipping beneath

capillaries plaiting your neck

tied off tense with a prominence

weightless in passage

conversing

your voice off the benighted hedge

row supplicating among tufts

rush interleaving springs wet mat. Water sparks

showy

cleavaged wings from a hard, heinous body

presses through the standing—

All the air is used to speak

no sound reproduces itself endlessly

you

were never only partially

disquieting

overhead

long blades

in the grass

a cold, core living

heaving your growth of stones  
through the gathering drift

The teeth of your disfigured plate  
take root, a narrow stem

pushes through, is drawn  
prostrate, purple blooms

bestowed upon erratic rock,

what you have bit into

soft color for our gaping mouths

Your child is lying

in a cut of the terrace  
over you right shoulder

swaddled in peach skin,

juice in fleshy strings  
from lip to lip, dissolving

small voice at once. Or, no—

Don't be afraid

Split lonely without me    sent

washing up your legs

face of a glacial stone

Where are

the birthing sounds

love

is longer

by the loss



reach  
a purling voice

and kill

its quailing source

temperate fruit

even lovelier

Walking to where the dead are kept

I step across their counsel

Opposite, my echo

strikes against a hand through dry leaves

I look around

no watch

no tower

in the field Elk from the dark stand suspect

break their posts, lead to the floodless lowland in the dark

against the ability to remain

turning the wheel from years

into you  
hope  
is no beacon shining

The graves of your bedmates bulge

Slight umbilicus taking in light,

branches    the ornamental wind

They were sentenced

free to go, and left; turned up

raked against the river's edge

a head of white

into roomy shafts, men pressing their ears

up into the dirt

to the sounds

of no—

to listen off each other's dreams

I swear to suck their breath

back    a poison in the springs

drops in

the springs

whisper

radiance in

your ear

In your body I bend  
to break us both

Out does not come I

but smoke

the scent of a burning crown  
removed

We look into the other

I am a dropping boy  
reversed

and without looking through  
either of us  
gravity

flares endlessly before us

in the barracks

echoing

the slight foundation

the burning crown. I mean

to take from you

from me

and cleave

and pull from it

our spine

wild flowers heading out from the grounds

enclosing a sea dispelled

in the high desert, a ghost

swiftly you put your faintness in

bores back inside of you

and spurring half

with your wings in the dirt

both shoulders unfolding a fan

*a small opening from which a gleam of light*



Through the hole in your neck

bears into you

and out your shadowed side

a white line  
on the leaning screen

The hills fuller  
and stepped

the fetor of burning  
whips a voice

Look me from behind a strand  
or else below

if I have  
in common

contaminant—

Skin comes off your body

Shinings strip from the cenotaph

*lost you here*                      *are you*

wrapping around the spindle trees

your standing burns

Wind-tied knots unfurling sashes of skin

anonymous              euonymous

the wound, the water  
is shallow      sees

The wound sees out

You are bright fruit

blushing

flesh

in your throat

breaks  
to your lips

A white collar and encircling  
rock  
meltwater flames from the blade  
how so your body beaconing

no cultivar  
performing  
nor with my hand on my hip  
hair slicked  
the ruffled hem of the slip  
my stockings rolled

I am the bleach or have been  
bent over your name on the valley floor  
among mouths of copper in the tailings  
extending to tempt you with spit, though they are not yours  
a gift  
sent undetained

up torsos  
catching decorative folds  
weeds long  
into the well, balls of sap  
with faces finely pressed

what do  
and do what say  
the long-stem gawking  
where used to be a stand of risen companions  
sheltering the drake  
fought, with scales  
on Minnehaha

a breath expires  
or so in granting  
or so green first  
over  
birthed, where walking felt you arching  
no way  
nor clear  
present in the dark  
you would enjoy  
the garments spinning  
in the mirror  
a hand on a stick

who is that feminine  
and does mine grow  
or will

dowsing

we torch the black madder

to find, invulnerably

the river, buried

beneath the valley floor, crusted

to the croppings  
in

allowance      how they turned  
your eye from its vision to distrust

your prints

flown right without reason

lapped onto

the curtain pulling back

a hand pulling through

and laughs      always much older than  
step up a bird in the tulip  
a coo beneath the broad benches  
step up      cuts broadly

and stuffs our hands inside

into the frame adore      adore the staining

into the flash

dressed in thunder

around I reach

but—  
you're crumbling in the hand

drape across

his buried head

a film

encrusted

in relief

I do not know  
the sound of your voice  
rung whispering through the coils

but your thighs  
rubbing against the poles,  
splinters along the floor, I do

your ass

is not Japan

am

over

breathing

softly

at rest



In the shade

unsettled water remains

open, a fulling mouth veined with light

hand reaching through ash

overlays our skin

and kills

I will wait

pitted at the bottom of the lake

ready

to be refilled

with our rotting

our fitting robe

burned

into

dawn

on your lens

white neck

to the clouds

I have risen

without you

cut

your flesh

I

am

the fence

### *Notes & Acknowledgements*

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