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water-bridge-for-god, wyoming

by

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B.A. St. Mary's College of Maryland, 1997

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

The University of Montana

May 2003

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Date

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tourist

the sacred city is still / set off in quarters / I've been told and the women in their desert-dresses step / cautiously through these taped lines adjusting their wigs / it is fish-paper or the sound of a market bag under their hands / they did well today / I've been told in their bargaining no lifting at the scales the grain not weighed / down with fish / bags or hands until it is night and the women slanting up the side of a hill their faces each / become a throw as might hang on a wall until there is nothing to see but a hand / across my mouth as I wait in a rented window's room 2 tickets / left to pay

the sacred city is still blue children's / books and in this written front / table a room where no one eats / any longer because the city is of grains and the cup bearers lost their way some time ago only the crowds / still come to push their heads against shiny / placards that reflect / back until it is again cool stone they will press their heads against / their pockets filling with holes tomorrow I go home / have I said this / to my self for how long / have I said this / but I forgot I had slept through / my hand on a casual stomach the penny postage not enough to set / the bones again and the teeth fall out as mounds of long-grass the profile / was last year's queen and suit I'm told / is not the same who is it / is it me who will be saved

I still remember the women playing chess in the market when the plane fell / but that was years ago I'm told and the streets still line in utility / coats and the sound of fish-paper / wheels of a low cart moving / through / I have stitched brown paper over my plain-eyes with a 2-spool-course-thread and I am still here / to come to terms with a body that doesn't want to be a body the grain bags pour loosely from the bottom building small cones on the street / this will finish before hands can find a new / first born and it is my own

the asthmatic. (alchemy)

I breathe through stiff paper-bags straight / as this city's old runway lined / in chancellors-bones
or children-bones straight as the blackened cutlery strung / on the banquet walls / these are /

the bridges I breathe through a hanging dress chests of white flour the long-loaves I watch for a
shovel / a tunnel through / down to the hollows' lungs and short-alleys past / milk street

and past / bread street down / into the city's ruined center / after 2 the walls are shifted newly
covered in posts / directions to alchemy save the mute-wolves neck spine alignment repair

or replacement no extra charge / I ask for air over the high shelves the night-chemists standing in
their window dressings / the pack-aspirins they balance still dye / their hands illuminating

as if gold or / vinegar / so they can once more turn their books back a panacea / a cure-all the old
lecture notes titled still / the science of water and this is how they draw my fortunes / how

easy distance is from here / a motion towards which buildings will / and the fire before it
becomes / light and my hand beneath a tenement door I will ask for air / until morning moves

through and I can still see / smoke before it comes it is written on the sides of buildings beneath
the riser seats when we turn our heads / back to watch the mirrors carried away on their

sides and I will / breathe through how easy distance is or / your smooth wrists and scaffolding /
salt carries my pockets along with vinegar its / color of lead and these / announcement walls

the fat man. (says color)

the aisle is a tongue or a forward / sleeve shown in the details box on the old hand-map / worn /
it still tells the same year have I been here before through the double / door way into the saint-
threadeye- church of / alchemy / it is dark as the children-lungs due to the fires of some years /
past I remember or do I / remember the newly printed pamphlets say aspirins / will help with
illumination that we import all / match books from the north now nothing to worry over / the
water-clergy shift in between the pews behind me in their fine / lead / clothes gathering the day-
meats from the collections box / they speak over their long fingers their mouths full / of white /
flour I track along the hollow floor have I been here / before I remember / or do I / remember /
the city turns over in a window box the heat edging over / the spires

the announcements have fallen from the confessional / the same north-wolves for years an x at
their throats lie still by the entry / ways their mouths a black grate bending upward together / and
how does it look from here / in long-mirrors everything is multiplied / turning from the city
where I still am / leaning over rations / a stalk in a splitting jar / water-clergy who carry away
finished-loaves under their arms I am handed the broom / its hairs empty as easily as teeth / the
dust pan covered in left wasps from the old city from the over- / chambers my chest / from the
newsprint that covers how slow / the reconstruction the milk cartons flattened out along the
tentative / foundations for it has been raining and I believe I have / slept / how easy distance is /
the city turns over in a window box / our bishop in prison / for eating at covered tables too long

(dialogue)

and how do you know

where they will stand it's not as if

each place is the same a thousand

thousand

hills and they choose the same

one to feed each night as if they had marked it in banner-signs

that twist into old linens 2 nd hand flags

still stitched shut I carry them in my vest

planting seeds which are small eyes after you

are finished sweep up the matches I collect my breath

deer along the dark underside of a hill

a thousand

thousand where the hills tip down like a hat

tipped down when I met you for the first time

and you say

this is who I am look

how do they know there is no door

marked with throwing knives I aim towards

moving rings to distinguish

eyes or dark sleeves her sleeves

are heavy with water or a ring she was waiting by the river
she doesn't want to choose
throw out the queen then who held my coat
I can collect my breath only in pressed cases I hold them under my arm
why do you tie them over and over in rounds as you do
I slide them under the seat I will only show you
one
at a time
you are careful
I am careful
deer along the underside it is
the 2 nd night a thousand
thousand
I collect my breath
only
when I meet you for the first time
a hat tipped back they have chosen and you
this is my burden

lay low, saloon

snow is a tipped needle bearing
down into my own sure arm the ceiling
measuring under the weight of white over-
coats 2 lean shoes set
neatly by the upturned stool
the piano-back is its own block of fire I cover
these matches carefully cut down the trace
behind me steady
the swinging sign in front the walls
already warming I cross the street push
through the pawn shop's lit door where
the shiny counters resist them-
selves I sit on my heels and point
out dinner for tonight 2 tacks 4 ring fingers
and a bag of old fish

at pudding lane

buys were lower the month / look
to the ledger / books I have been
away / the eaves now
over-streets and the hanging / signs
thin silver
bordered I recognize
the same from the patterns
book / at the bakery black / curtains
so worn they were / paper
cards sifted down now / under
the grates was it
like this / before
remind me don't eat the warmed flour
it is bad for the / liver
and I have been away
the wood doors slide
down their walls / adjusting you look
older now only
illumination along with
clean / details
for the new store
foundations / even
the pope was / in
on it / I heard
destruction of / centimeters
close enough to break
the walls in it was / decided
it was written for the books
fresh their coordinates
because you / look
older and still your legs
won't hold / through
the low / alleys or glade
this back until all
the guests will up
root the buildings from
the fire / line again
and this time
it is for cash / only

monuments

crowds are the famous-hands and the minister's white cloak pinned / to the arena floor / they fill
carriages with bound jars in preparation for the next leading storm / you call this maneuver /
crowds set into piles / the black-waste-cases left for the monuments / you say / it is all for
measure / finally a signal from the radio play washington / d.c. please speak slowly / we are /
still headed for the north

they call this maneuver / the white buildings set / uniform in the water line / reflections are /
the same color mosaics are underneath / crowds form around the bank buildings the guards ask
do you carry / the eye chart the patterns of teeth / set or bone here is a table for the living / they
tell us the landings are made of wood / pay rolls the names of ages action / papers june 6 th
governments still pay for the flower-cart 4 o clock / tickets to the fair

in the age of oak arenas fill with old furnitures / the stadiums are door to door / in the age of low
metal I will ask you to dig the ammunitions out from circular-walls / diamonds were stitched into
old bodices / you will gather them for piles near the monuments tell us / what is / measure /
this / is all there is please / speak slowly / the guards are our hands

maps

I watch the light move slowly over a dog's smooth throat
the trees are lit strings
10 old women stay last until they have weighed fire in scales
and thrown bags of pennies where the hawks made rips
around the houses by the ledger they've lost 6 bags of sugar
the wallpaper rolls down
as a heap of clothes diamonds will be left behind in locked
boxes lining the inside-walls but they were only
glass and the houses false fronts my hands the hanging curtains
up over my face
the guards will say I do not now recognize you
the trees are hollow throats and 5 strewn hawk nests

*

I watch over the dog's throat these grey stairs sized like houses
and the sound of a trap door shutting when I climb them
and the sound of a hawk lined box when I climb them
the water bled map folds as door-shapes in my pocket

*

there are twins of myself
I carry a lantern a lighter a sealed over box
this time the corner-built lions have starved themselves into matches
I throw a long-coat over so no one can see
these are twins of myself I cannot cross
the lined guards at the top they link arms walk
in rows the birds rub snow or white gravel
into their small eyes I am a blind walking away

*

the guards whisper over their smooth throats and hold
pin lights up to each other's eyes their faces
are drawn down as heavy cloth bags how they gather
at the top and you will believe what you want
the ground covers over in old horse racing tickets
I cut at it and 10 guards curl their thumbs
over knives or piece water in cups
it is temperance and I do not know what to hold any longer
I throw my hand up
over my face but you throw your hand
up over yours then hide a water bled map in a hawk's chest
or throat it is for distance only and I do not know
or recognize you
the trees are women standing

dialogue. (the water-clergy begin)

seldom have I said it
advise the stairs for st peters
the bottom teeth are made of wood
still I've always said his eyes
were of this
a fish or
his eyes the roll-paper
we wrap ourselves in
beneath the window
under-bar of light I see
no light do you see it pressed
into the flat-eyes
the color of
fish through hip
bone ribs a hand
moving through
it's seldom said
of the windows
they were blackened some time ago
use tape for the edges any extraneous

I have left the stamps
to pile I have covered the holes
the color of
eye the fish we wrap
in newsprint
ourselves in
over cords
of fish what sound
hymnal 63 say
this
I thought you had stitched the blanks
for the extraneous
you were sleeping yes
I have been sleeping
these 6 long-years
you were sleeping
yes
I have been sleeping
level is distance
rib or hip set for coins the teeth
sewn into the high minister's
black dress it is all before impact
the crowds the formal will wear
who will make the first round

watchword

hip

level

what do you wager

that one is my favorite

a model we will assume

I will assume

we wrap ourselves in

the water-clergy speak. 2 (riddle)

geographies are from the inside I don't know the distance
I will buy all postcards with the bones-of-ships print

tell us where you've been

water moves through the center the streets now black costumes
distance over the 1 st blind square
the tiles are gone for betting

are you sure this is what the writings say there is no center

only line the maps call it eye-mouth it is the most profitable /
center and no line this way the fish-wives carry
mathematics paper to the family records center

why do they still move towards / the group block buildings

#1515 turn down the pages on your left windows right as young teeth

I see how the light moves through it is not incantation

they will institute the names of limbs they will say
#5 speaks through wood teeth

but her accent she said from the south

children pick stones and claim it for the riots-page they will erect a mural

*I've seen it before
on the bone china wall the color / of fish
wrapped in / blackened they become*

still-division and / after-math

at 3 it says you can hold up your hand

I won't stand on either side
we watch the street through white newsprint
side mirrors the books say impressions whose dream is this
only that the wire-bars will catch on
military tags for licensing on the left
the fresh mint presses it is / the most popular

this tells me nothing

the coins cut into eye shapes
maybe it is a state of owing

only tell me who is worthy

the women wear flat-shoes for the factories-work
they each carry a bone hair / comb for the noon hour
the eye is for presentation this is how we see

the maps say eye-mouth still

the distance you mean

I don't know the way

it is all half price until you wake
how the water moves in shifts
the wood panels they are the roads the bone china
teeth the fish wrapped in
blackened they become / this

*and sometimes we leave them there
where we stand the oceans / are under us*

this is how to see / this is how the light moves through

and it will be a brilliant color

song of soldiers. (west virginia)

this is the war in the windows of the children / pitching glass into the black / tooth roads waiting
in the lean here these 9 years this / is the war in the windows / of the children in the windows /
pitching glass into the clear hook roads not watching where / any of it falls these / 9 years they
turn their heads

and watch the sky move without knowing / and cut off their hands in the hand / of the window
together / wondering over what glass they left once / in an empty box / in an empty room / they
kick it to the corners of walls

100 down soldiers take 100 down birds / from their front pockets and look to the sky / and call
it / sky how it moves without knowing / and the lean of the windows / as an old man in west
virginia stands in someone else's front kitchen / stirring pots and brushing / glass from his hair
waiting for each of these / roads which is / 9 years / and warming water in a bowl

fortune at the cashers-wheel

water is a board over us we gather
box-luggage from the river
and smooth it on the crooked rocks
we eat
like thieves spin die
in a drinking cup we gamble
for roads
black chairs a quarter pitched
through the window early
a plate set on wood before
quick town any
night we eat like thieves
it is for keeps today
I sit with the guards
on the bank we call this night
or a train taking
dark a bright lining on the track
I am sure we will make it
this way we do not stand as
doors we are not keepers
of walls
no one
looks past and here
we can't see
we wipe our mouths it is all
loose pattern and nothing overhead
I cannot think of anything better
I cannot

after st mary's maryland

the chairs won't hold doors back
in all this wind and after many years
the fine buttons begin to loosen on their sleeves
water is where the mirror fell down

we took from its stay at the bottom
where it broke then waited
to see a front-house rolled into the old woods one night
and the darker bird sitting still watching for the last step
and a coin where it all used to be
at the bottom and we waited

for the sound of a train's bearing through low slung doors
though no prisoner shook yellow dirt
from the heel of his hand since long ago some other
hard spent war this water
is where the mirror fell down and how we finally knew
that each of us held the old twin cutters and their edges
in the same sure way
like a last running over the rails

*

the tables are up to my arms and salt a pile
by the glove I find what had been moved again now
and lost in some red painted jar on the lowest shelf
it is what I cannot see a room
where the boots leave white tracks
how the stairs are cut one morning for kindling
while we spread maps on separate walls
in all this wind while water

holds its own certain hand
and I say aloud with keys wide across a room
this is what is left
only water along the sides
and where the fences have made a break
and nothing after this

dialogue. (towards dunes city oregon)

cut teeth will set

in the color of a blind

child's fish book

even after these long-years

of turning to the faces

or houses of a pocket coin what do you see from

here I still see no water

where it does not move

as pillar shaped or as a maker's

hands over a ballot box

the name changes on folding-paper

did you have any doubt

I can see no water only

charity pamphlets handed out along side

lined suits pages of a fish book

looking out from half curtains the woman still

in her flood basement a bent ship binding

the pages dyed

with children-teeth has not seen

the water drawn

like pillars of a government

house her name is ruby

sides of a flip coin or water a pamphlet
how was I supposed to remember
past all those low waisted roads these are
boot tops in heavy polish it is too hot even
for a game of coins or the square table
here are the thumbs and the new teeth
caught in a high silver trap
because of the weeds you would not trim
just slip the cutters under
neath the door with the blueprints
something will happen I am sure
a maker's hands over the ground
yellow from pressed hornets
beneath no water you will not see
hung like a fish
in the woman's basement
she collects flat-water
in a pot wets her stamps in it
and looks from the lower slide window
something will happen I am sure
the stamps have faces with 2
green eyes because it is still the same year

turret

it is a marked ax underneath these stone steps

or the man's overcoat that once dragged along the bottom

it is the bundle of wood he packed down himself it is the stair up-bending
it is the bending up

I raise the chair over my head and look for the ring

still in his mouth
the stair is an under-mouth we pack it down and now

the locks bend over the stair is a crooked walking
this is the crooked lantern sloping up the stairs

to a window

that I cut in my hand this is my hand see out
to some toy light

and the steady coins falling

from a window

what can I pay you I pay you I pay you this
the square cut out from my hand fire on a round tray

fire pressed into blocks

the green around everything except one jagged tree and that ring is clear I give you this

a black whistle
box plate through the window the 1 st tower down
this is not my faith

the wolves wear knives in their sloping chests
they walk over bent knives they bend them
I watch from a small hill in water-bridge-for-god wyoming
they are the grey linens walking over my in-breath here is the wall I press to
the stair up-bending I watch
the 1 st tower down

and this is what remains she turns to me and says what must it have been like
to stand there and feel all this life leave at once
and I say I don't know I don't know what it must have felt like
what it must feel like
it is the 2 nd now I have lost my way

it is snow in a knife gown
don't lie down for a hoax the sea runs it over

the lines of wolves in my throat I mean they are this

your name scratched on a steel plate I will slide it under the bed

a rope fraying into old rings

a rope curled in his mouth it is a ring don't breathe
or it will tumble long it is fire

and a ring

the coin I throw the map maker puts her hand through glass
call it back to the rounds
a glass jar on today's postage stamp tomorrow is how the glass hits

sometimes you feel it for absence only stand a chair on a chair to the window
see if you can get in or down

it is a man with white sleeves this snow lipped poison

a cane dragging circles in the snow
a cover in the statue's belly

who says it any more say it honor bright

a runner for the sea and its arm
it works on statues
and the light the birds move towards they still eat at the eyes

this is where a penny took the water down
what is left of a 2 nd builder-tower or the 1 st
it is a rip in the riding glove
we cover our hands for the cold
and will walk this far away from any fire
when soldiers throw a coin
the water looks like this

in water-bridge-for-god, wyoming

I used to climb the water towers rungs of a ladder 60 ft up
fear of heights has nothing to do
with fear of falling now what do we have left
the wolves grow into rope around the window glass
or into backroom curtains or
into books I throw them in the separate river

book of ghost trains of prison crawl space book of keys of glass of children-rings wire-hawks

book of taverns of flag-hills of games book of square deer I collect my breath book of charms

book of garment piled boats and traveler's tales wolf no. 203 of the joseph pack

federal wild life agents killed a lamb
killing wolf this past week
I watch the playing cards fold and flat benches
before shuttling my faces in a parcel bag
before carrying them past bridges
a trains under-bent
before leaving them there

sleep is a sorry teller I have forgotten
to collect water in the pocket tins
tonight the rain was red and still unkempt we stand
in doorways lean in blank halls the streets
hold wide enough for 3 tinned fish and the fish are
guitars until they turn to corner piled
snow who was it that tipped their hat tonight
the wolves grow into rope around the window glass
they say it strayed
130 miles from its home not the river I stand by water is
1 with 21 zeros after it a wrecked house rising
and every 7 th wave a killer

a memorial service was scheduled for friday

a memorial service was scheduled for friday
in water-bridge-for-god wyoming restaurants seating approx. 55 a grocery store various lodging
with visitor center a laundry and shower facility a gas station a horse operation
defenders of wild life will compensate
the rancher for the lost animals
the bones are laid out in a wall in the city up to but not
exceeding 21
book of games who held my coat

waters

water is a sharp hat falling
in the grass the first drink
I see for miles water is
a teller without the backing
water turns lies
into the 7 years
where I reach through
water is a back crooked
over a wood stair and a roof
leaning in it is more
than I have asked
for I have never asked
for this
water is the bounty
the store its low counters
where I buy my knives
in their sure wrappings
water is the ship flag
a riot at the door it throws
builders to the ground spits
on black roads water
is a basket the name
of a boy around its neck
the first drink
I see for miles I am trying
to add
to distance now
if I sit still
enough I won't hear
the glass shaking

calendars

we pay for portraits at the public-house
there has been a precision in the metals / factory
in cell # 10 suspension bridge-sets / parts
become manageable after payments guaranteed
unpacked in a day wood and moved towards / bread
it is famine where we didn't think there could be again
the punch tickets are scattered over the parking floor
the holes drilled into flat-trunks / they are eye shaped /
still / what will be written for the papers / it is a tower / or
it is the thread running down / the mirrors bend back
on the hook we buy numbers / sign for gasoline charts
we pay / for portraits we have forgotten
water jars stacked in taxis our heavy glass / gloves
we wore for the pictures / speech is brick shaped
moved / under arms in clean white newsprint
the constable ties the tree back
each day we will mount the new-hands which are
player cards which are levels / to the far back walls

carnival. (in 3 voices)

the chandelier hangs in the back parlor we hold the plates out under it
the women used to sharpen knives on their glass rings at 12
hills move upward toward the apothecary

who will eat the black cake in tiers who will find a ring in the store window

the apothecary in the back parlor sharpens a plate

*

we stand in our rental shoes our faces are made up from newspapers
we watch our reflections in the store window

are you certain even when it rains

when it rains

*

blank posters slip from the walls

what would they say

say it the walls

*

we pass the posters around as luggage we take them to the after-houses
the doors slide in my hand I open my hand of cards
it is full of this speech

what would it say

I open my hand of wood cards

*

they told of a carnival in the city
at 12 the streets split into black paper the ends curl up
like the tip of a glove

if the blank posters fall from the walls will they behave lay flat
as envelopes as dinner plates as
bread

envelopes fall from the plates the ends curl up they split
into carnival-walls

*

the streets lay flat as jackets and sometimes I can still see
from my white eyes I turn the pages of a play bill that I hold in front of my face
I remember when it fell from the wall

sometimes I stand near the overturned train in the yards it is still filled with snow
even in this rain and I think yes I could sleep there I want to sleep there
who will re-string the masks when they break

I remember even the masks in the rain yes

*

it only matters when and what time and how the train turns over and what name
she gives to the door it only matters
who buys a newspaper and who makes cut-outs of windows
or loose pills who leans in the alley when the train is 2 minutes past

who leans in the alley when the train is minutes past

it only matters when and what time

*

at 12 the women reappear carrying yellow blankets
under their arms I step out from the door in the wall
it is a cut-out leading from the switchyards
I scratch my name in the lower left corner

what is your name

at 12 it leads from the switchyards

*

when it is 12 I drop a mirror onto the street it breaks into hands
who carries the yellow blankets or small clear pills

I break into hands

*

I drop a mirror onto the streets the mirrors are jacket-sleeves collars sharp
hands they carry blankets and fade

and if I cut back into the train wall or write my name in block style on a door
if I spread out the cards which are tablecloths these women will not see me
or they will think me mirror or pills they will hold out twine to me
and I will say it is you who are broken it is a city in cards
what is this for 12 it breaks into hands
I take them with me

they will fade even

*

it is 3000 to 1 I throw the first hit see a 2 nd pair
of holsters under the skin here is a ring

are you certain even in the rain

in the rain

*

we bend down over our rental shoes tighten them from the bottom until
the tops curl under in the back-light blank posters slip from the wall
they told of a carnival

and the chandelier

tighten it from the bottom until the tops curl under

*

in the after-houses paint turns white and falls from the parlor walls
the keys shift down to the bottom of purses the women
sleep their mouths

what small print was written on their faces

keys turn white in the after-houses

the lucky band

I cut an opening in these hills
and behind them are the 10 sisters standing
and behind them that lonely light
some wood-footed guards adjust
their coats along the road behind me
they are pattern only the floor
falls out from under storms come in from the east
towards water-bridge-for-god wyoming and I stand forward
on one of these 5
straight hills the one white hill which is
a factory flag ironed into plates my skirt
the small movie cards falling from a blackened wall
I cover my legs and tip my hand down a drinking glass
and its throat
to think you could be anywhere a spit and a throw
with coins laid out in flat-bags like rows
of paper-guards the train splits
along a loose track
the boat-corridor is old as garment
if anyone sees
I'm just taking the air everything
in its right place
call it a crossing for the lucky band and here I will
no longer think as this possessor

shipyards

the wind knocks along the bent in walls and water is
a slim boat this is the sound
of throwing doors in an open hall or tossing wood
in the center of a room

I busy with tables
and dull the knife on the cutters' board
we take salt for meals as water
breaks down wood in clean rows

a woman here in a white hat stands sideways will
turn her hands widen over her stomach
like cross guards at the door they walk
with black sticks they are more now
because no one has looked in days

her hands widen over her stomach
like hustlers in the game they turn the diamonds over
before taking a spin around the room and hiding
their used spades behind some masks
and a breaker's wall

there is no black stair to fight no glass
to bury in the yards inside
it is 3 white jugs of water that cover
the floor over they are as tall as children
inside it is flat silver in the bottom boards and cash-rolls
in the chimney we carry boxes in our loose sleeves
across the floor and walk carefully
this way of robbers inside it is a gas mask
listing to the side and not knowing how to strap it on
we open our mouths over grey cloaks
I always sit near windows or doors

who will take the ship for white eyed but still
bend cards to catch the light we are
coders by the underwall jumping at the sound
of what is overhead and looking at the sky now each time
through points in the strung black beads

a woman in a white hat widens her hands over
her stomach it is more than yesterday
I can see this already
she stands sideways and will turn to say
something about the 2 nd child she carries inside
of her how it is already
remains she says how it will be born
in 3 months it will not have a heart

I look the other way
to wipe down pistols then tighten them
in mason jars set to the left of the door as water
breaks down wood in clean rows

this is the sound of throwing doors we walk carefully
the way of robbers it will be a close distance between us
and another old fisher waiting at the gate midday
ready to lift a warm bucket surly
and start wiping down the sill

charm

there are factory-sounds above us finally it is the half rotted wood propped
to the ceiling that keeps the fall from over us
my under-wrist is the grey light we see by I watch
the smoke move around me it is the size of hand bags the corners turn over
in garment machines blue shirts roll down the racks as identical cut-outs
he says I guess you are not speaking again
here are the flat dresses tacked over the walls like small black posters
I trip over their long sleeves and each of their strangled waists

*

my eyes are torn garments the smoke
moves over as opened hand bags small pouches of rubies fall from it
I map door-locations on the back of an old dress marking around the print-roses
doors stand in rows of 100 on each wall with circle chains
and cross bars when I tie a blue shirt over my fist and punch through
door-pieces fall as blocks crowding the frame
finally the rail tracks have slid into the river
here is my throat in a box in the rubble

*

I watch the smoke move over and the 18 repeating children work their mechanical hands
crushing glass lamps into the ground we walk on
they tie blue shirts to their ankles with twine finally it is the light we see by
I draw half circles in the ground near the closest child
she has stepped into a white sack and has closed the drawstring
to her throat when she speaks
glass or rubies fall from her mouth she says I will listen to what
you have to say they say it together
I put a shiny medallion around her neck
they work their hands out from throw-over sacks

*

he says I guess you are not speaking again rubies fall
from an over-turned hand bag finally I watch the woman walk towards us carrying
a small deer along the track of her under-wrist
she feeds it from her square chest the train has slid into the river my hands holding onto
small chambers of mud she says her name is us and this is true
finally I watch him through a blue shirt I raise to my face he turns back to me
and says isn't us beautiful and I say yes it is true and it is

(to fall as white paper)

what strange birds are these
each window lowers the sky
for a stepping through I can tell you how
the thread lines their shirts
skirting their arms not keeping them there
I can tell you how the thread lines
and the color of their shirts against this glass
it is all of us here and dust is a table
how we huddle beneath

when the sky was as bright
as a knife on the wheel bright
as the last mirror before it breaks
I can see myself in the corner of a tower
what strange birds are these
to fall as white paper over the turning cars
riding down
in their pairs and more and it isn't snow
and it isn't a storm moved around in our arms
when we hold them and close our eyes
they are so soft that you would think nothing
was there any longer

maybe the walls will bring back to us what we've said
maybe they will shine like buckles from the bottom
and dust off their legs holding onto rock and steel
where the city is new and nothing
is changed or lost any longer

I count to nine and nine and nine
and dust is a table where we huddle beneath in our pairs
and more it is the last name I call absence
and my chest

gentle you goodnight

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