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Lake M| [Poems]

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:

[Signature]
Chairperson
Dean, Graduate School

[Signature]
Date
Contents


[falling] v

[The throat expands] vi.

My—

I sent to you today a parcel containing stones as follows 1

My—

An oval green stone with a wavy pattern is very common here 31

My—

I received the beautiful stone 60

Notes & Acknowledgements 92
for Midori Shimoda
b. Hiroshima, Japan 1909
d. Denver, North Carolina 1996
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

    lifted
bodies  once pressed

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

cabling 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, unwells
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 hesitance
enflames the overhearing ears behind you freely
does not burn
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

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 rehearing 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 fioresce
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*

*wear*— 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
dampered 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
rendering 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

sottspoken
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 originary 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
is no beacon shining into you
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

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
dowsing
who is that feminine
and does mine grow
or will

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