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:

Chairperson
Dean, Graduate School

5-26-06
Date
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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

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for Midori Shimoda
b. Hiroshima, Japan 1909
d. Denver, North Carolina 1996
falling

from the mouth
The throat expands

Assume the songs

do 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, repellant 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
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 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 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
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
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,
branchesthe 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
backa 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
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

read
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

The three letters heading each section have been adapted from the correspondence between Iwao Matsushita and his wife, Hanaye Matsushita, collected in Louis Fiset’s *Imprisoned Apart: The World War II Correspondence of an Issei Couple*. Iwao Matsushita was interned in Fort Missoula, Missoula, Montana from December 28, 1941 to January 6, 1944.

My deepest appreciation to the editors and readers who have so generously lent their eyes and ears to these poems, especially Jill Beauchesne, Adam Clay, Patricia Goedicke, Kristen Hanlon (Xantippe), Lynn Itagaki, Sueyeun Juliette Lee, Reb Livingston & Molly Arden (No Tell Motel), The Museum of Natural Futures, Elizabeth Sanger, Prageeta Sharma, Karen Volkman, Emily Wilson, Devon Wootten, and Greta Wrolstad.

Thanks to Aimee Lewis for her companionship and support.

Special thanks to June Shimoda, Karen McAlister Shimoda, Kelly Shimoda, Midori Shimoda, and Midori Lynn Shimoda for their influence.