

BlazeVOX 11

Winter 2011

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Despair has taken on the shape
each cloud leaves afterwards
—you reach across the hole

one hand crazed
a moon rising from the other
as if there were crossroads

and the sky winds down
into evenings that are not yours
—an unbearable headwind

weakened past sorrow, past drift
past sleep and your breath lies down
where nothing holds on

—you don't save the pieces, it's useless
—you look up and the air
little by little is led

past emptiness :the no lips
that are not a face, not a voice
and from your arms.

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The bay backs down once you begin
by counting the dead --your mouth
wider and wider with gnats

half plankton, half step by step
that will live on as beach grass
and undertow, dragging you

the way these gulls make pass after pass
circle the dying afternoon
in endless sorrow

—you walk till you're no longer hungry
though no sand flea last for long by itself
and every evening, by the millions

stars will drown so the sun
can feed one day more from your lips
left open to weigh down the sky

—you throw the Earth against it
holding it off stone by stone
that seep through your shadow

as if tears would close your eyes
with eyes and no one come near
or remember the numbers just as they are.

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You sense it knows, the road
narrows, picking up speed
and off in the distance its curve

can't escape, plays music from the 40s
—you are somewhere in England
listening to rain on a runway

—had it guessed then how its years
would end, here in Nevada, four lanes
not caring where the winds come from

or the radio half airborne
half static, half already too far
though the station is still on the look-out

and clouds are overdue
even in the desert
—it must know, it has to, the hill

constantly turning its head
and you slow, begin to sing along
have one day less to worry.

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It takes both faucets and each night
you fill the sink the way mourners
set up camp --one alongside the other

swaying and your legs half open
wait till it's dark, kneel down
as if it was not your own

and it's safe to drink from the rim
beside the zebras. the leopards
—this lake won't freeze or dig up

your footprints from the falling snow
calling for help and in the cold
you wipe your lips on the wall.

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These petals taking command, the flower
pinned down and the work stops
—your breath dragged back

where it's safe and in your lungs
hides the way each sky is named
after the word for stone

for this small grave each Spring
the dirt adds to till suddenly
you are full height, your lips

defending you against the cold
waiting it out in your mouth
—they too want you to talk

to call them by name
say what they sound like
turning away, alone, alone and alone.