

Adam Mackie

Madhouse

It is now clear to me that there was no difference between ourselves and people living in a madhouse; at the time I only vaguely suspected this, and, like all madmen, I thought everyone except myself was mad.

Leo Tolstoy, *Confession*

In a saddle, everyone else is in
Sane, I think, I think and, therefore, I am
Mad, to see myself in the mirror, damn
It, the light destroys everything that lives
To glorify heroes and syllables,
And words of obfuscated poetry,
As this verse, here, conjures up plural Z's,
There, on a map, I point to capitals,
Prepositions, adverbs, even pronouns,
Being levitated so detestably
In context, only for synecdoche,
My mind, thinking cliché and description,
Burked by a madness of name-breathing nouns:
I leave this house worse off than I found it.

Groundwater

For Michael

“Who’s like God?” A question implying
an answer: No one, shadows, everyone
created in one’s own reflection,
within those actions always acting
renders an argument arguing
against a darkness disguised as self
predicting a science of what’s felt
through a shattered image ascending
the possibility that’s floating
underneath two levitating feet
where nothing above groundwater rests.

Overgrown Field, with Tombstones

I've imitated these lines now,
these lives – so many times – I believe they're mine;
we both know they don't belong to you:

You look surprised with the same old stare,
while swallows sound their well-known tune,
 the poetic passerine sings,
and the robin continues to chase worms.

 The movement attracts me more
like grasshoppers in the weeds near a wall –
quick to change colors around locusts,
quietly camouflaged – sharp ovipositors,

in an overgrown field, with tombstones,
where so many hyphens and wrens rest.