

Jami Macarty

If There Were Anywhere But Desert

*—after Jabès
& for C.D. Wright*

We would relieve thirst

kneel along real creek
drink water from sweetness of hands

If there were anything but this insanity of sand

anyone born before this war's wind

We would celebrate trees replete with seeds

if there were anywhere but desert

we bear too much
the countenance
of militarism

Whose Bed Is This to Lie On

Is this wrongdoer a miner whose namesake is this mine?

My broom underscores what I am to mind sweep.

Who hallows woodcutter tree-killer killjoy?

My eyes spill spillages.

Sun rising into sky's slow blue chest.

Scale, gallows do whose will?

An uplift of leaves enlightens the trellis.

Tremolo wind.

By whose will wind?

Woodpecker hollows to build.

What I am to mist.

An uprising of leaves.

Whose napkin is this that I underside what I am to mistake?

Morn's fog ignores the mountain.

Do I understate what I am to mistrust?

Fog fugged.

Whose narcotic is this?

Needles make me sad, make me see the dead I ghost.

Did I understudy what I am to misunderstanding?

An upswing of leaves heightens the trespass.

No fence.

Is this yard mining miming whose narrative is this?

Did I undertake what I am to misuse?

An upturn of leaves.

Eyewitness hollyhock spires.

Do I undertone what I am to mitre?

An urge of leaves.

Too apologist.

Orange lilies make me sad, make me see my mother kneeling at the flower bed.

Whose narrow is this that I undertow?

Crow habits a spruce.

Heron piles a piling.

Bedsread grass-spread makes me sad, makes me see shotgun struggles.

Whose feather is this?

I undesire an urn of smoked bones.

Scapegoat, executioner do whose will?

Bee makes me sad, makes me see what will leave.

Whose nation is this bed made to lie on?

O Beautiful for Post-Traumatic Stress

O beautiful for spacious skies—
You, my soldier up early attacking the lawn—
I let go the hedge
over which you have gone
for amber waves of grain.
Is love
doing something covert?

O beautiful for pilgrim feet—
No there there for you. No here either.
You contraband of you
who more than self their country loved
and whose keys
are not where you left them. Incoming?
You recon the zone by use of stealth.

O beautiful for heroes proved—
You need to *confirm*
thy soul in self-control
to drive mood-crazed woods
to surveil till something new or overlooked
appears—camouflaged truck, bullet husk
a body *in liberating strife.*

O beautiful for patriot dream—
Through the desert your platoon *a thoroughfare*
for freedom beat. Obligation dutifully dispensed
You tried to keep me out of it—
in letters home said remember
the taste of our kisses
that sees beyond the years.