

John Sweet

and if i could swim

a storm, sleeping,

yellow sky and impossible heat

sweat of fucking

taste of blood when you
spit into the sink

say this, say
we are not a war and then
smile at your reflection

teeth, outlined in red

faded eyes

in every room, in every corner,
cobwebs, shadows, dust on
pictures of the children

scream of cicadas through
open windows, through warped
& cracked glass

drink the faucet dry

aspirin

codeine

you can't live your whole life
in freefall, and so you grab
onto others

anyone would

everyone does

the illusion of time slowing
down just before you crash

a gift for the diamond eaters

in the desert and
still worried about drowning

in a room with crow
waiting for the news that some of my
fears might actually matter

waiting for a message from the
queen of open wounds but
it never comes

thirty years wasted in california and
then another thirty in upstate new york but
nothing you could call a life

blue skies and drunken phone calls

every letter ending
THIS WILL BE THE LAST LETTER
and all crow can do is laugh at
the stupidity of it

drive up and down state line road
looking for the trailer park she
used to live in but
it's a different world these days

it's the ghost of morrison and the
ghost of cobain and the
memory of dancing to slow songs in
the half-light of the high school gym

the possibility of escape but
never the reality

endless days of sunlight
and never enough oxygen

never the sound of
anyone else's laughter

poem of obscene wealth

the blood mixed with poison until
i can punch holes through time

yes and then yes again and
all kindness offered without shame

all innocence blessed

so easy to make excuses for
pain and for misery

so easy to cause more

fist to rock to blade to gun

gets all fucked up just
like everything else

fear is the engine that drives the
world and whose plan was this?

who invented the need for
gods and prophets?

the need for power and
subservience?

no one with the ability to cause
pain ever truly believes in
justice without punishment

because i will be the dead man of your dreams

and did it help in some small way
when i gave you the truth,
or did your house still burn down wherever you were?

did the distance between us matter?

the death of plath,
 of pilate,
 of cobain,
and the screams of the crows

was it always january?

brown leaves pushing up through
a brittle crust of dirty snow

young boy playing in the frozen mud
down by the river,
there and then gone,
but this is not his song

his name will not be remembered

and don't talk to me about cruelty, okay?

the facts are the facts,
even in this age of liars

i love you and i love you and what is time
but a weapon used against us?

and the act of giving feels wrong here

feels too much like the act of losing,
like the fine art of getting lost in empty spaces

i was a fool for growing old,
for digging in and
will i call 500,000 miles of running in steadily diminishing circles
a life?

yes,
but i've begun to doubt myself

i've begun to understand the need for oblivion
and for personal annihilation

always felt good kneeling at your feet

always felt pure kissing the filth
from your eyes, and so what now?

the truth,
but maybe the truth changes

maybe you hit the wall too hard

the drugs aren't enough or your child became a burden or
the snow followed you wherever you tried to hide

the ice got into your veins,
the frost filled your heart, or maybe all of
this imagery is just a simple blanket of denial

maybe we both became less

maybe there is a hole in the world
where all of the light runs out

what is there left to look for in
the dark but comfort?

first unfinished symphony

and the streets there have
no gutters and all roads lead
back to the beginning

all endings are
beautiful and soft

they are monet, who understands
the need for light even in
his blindness, and the boy is
not shot here and he
never bleeds to death

his body is never left for the
animals in some muddy field
at the edge of town and in
their hunger and in their
madness they turn on
each other instead

in their final moment of
triumph, they are
only human

[hell could be a colder place]

we were driving or we
are being driven,
we are north of here,
somewhere beneath the early autumn sun,
the clouds of dreamers crawling like
wounded animals across the
vast fields, and we were
going home or we are already there

isn't this what i said?

the same dead-end roads but
with different lovers,
and they are all tired of your bullshit

we are all tired but at
least the drugs are kicking in

the confusion is a gift

the news of van gogh's death, but we
have the names of his final paintings
scratched into our hearts

we own all of his records,
but none of the words have any meaning

none of my lies hold any weight if
you choose not to believe them,
but why should this matter?

why do i care?

all dogs fuck

all days bleed

we are in love despite the ever-
growing distance between us