

John Sweet

king of crows

unfolds his map of hearts out in the great western desert  
and laughs at the thought of january in upstate new york of  
me and my notebooks and empty canvases  
    my bitter hatreds my  
    fucked up points of view  
    and i say to you here  
so what if cobain is dead?  
    and i say to you here  
so what if the war is lost?  
because you still have your dead-end job and you still have  
    your internet porn don't you?  
still have your pills and your shotgun and your  
    wife's sister to screw on friday nights and  
    isn't this america?  
        i ask  
    and aren't you truly blessed?  
and i know he's laughing at this small impotent speech  
out there in the sunlight i can only faintly remember and i  
know he's laughing at my failed attempts at success  
    at the headlights that pin small animals to the road at  
    the houses that burn and all we have left between us  
    at this point  
    is our drunken staggering race to the grave

**an essay on power**

found that fucker hiding  
in the basement and  
dragged him up into the light

cut off his hands to help him  
start talking then cut out  
his tongue because he  
needed to see

let the crows have his eyes  
just because it was funny

let his children have his  
bones just to shut them up

just to get them to stop  
all their goddamn crying

the prophet, without shame

asked *but how can you be*  
*starving with a stomachful of broken glass?*

asked *how you can you stand in the*  
*light of a dying sun*  
*and tell me you feel cold?*

was the end of an age, maybe,  
or at least of an era, and it was the start of  
another doomed century

i was told it was a gift, this being  
allowed to grow old in the kingdom of crows, and  
i was told we were the lucky ones

was told to pray until i  
coughed up blood

asked *now doesn't that feel better?* and  
i smiled, but i knew about the murdered  
children, about the shallow pits just past the  
factories, the wars fought for oil rights

i knew about the wealthy  
devouring the poor

the two of us standing in tanguy's back yard  
all winter long just  
waiting for the sound of the gun shot

the jokes you made about the  
futility of both art and love,  
which i never understood

asked *aren't you happy yet?*  
but the wounds were still fresh

the mother was stoned on the living room  
floor, the baby dead in the bathtub

on fire in the middle of the road

a victim of indifference, which is how  
i would describe most of us