

Patricia Hartland

[speech act]

it was too lonely to be outside. blue came to pull more coins from the sidewalk and tie a feather to each one. clouds slit churlish in the light of a passing eye who on my hand writes with evasion my body my snakes as i lose the rules. we could do without this level of abandonment we could not do without oh you who are my flesh wound yet could not take a hand not-not there and we must

always be moving we
must always be
moving must al
-ways be
moving must
always be always
must moving and we
be always be
must

so that for one more ounce of conditioned metronome in the crawlspace of my ribcage
i could once-again-just-once tease the air with a little of my own longing the longing i taught my theory-fresh
enemy to look at a crawdaddy with

in one craw
-daddy out the other
as this lyricrot says in
my clipped lip like too
many cavities too
many dirty tooth
-holes come before it

so that inside the crescent fixture of a marble i call
crackclaw i call speedthrift

in a revel anyway
eyeing the eye of a bird inside
it dies turned white

so that i become free to tell
the sentence happens right now right
where the cut brought blood to the air
at your right finger pointing
and it is in this air the lyricrot lingers
aromatics mingling there too
for my god is a garlic
a bulb in my chest
stretching scapes out the scaffold it makes
of my throat
my throat for you
to put things in and take things out

so that in the last song i sang a river became a grave
a series of graves not-still
that is,
animated because it is
and is, still

so that when three times the boatman asks with his hands
to twist against the bend and against the visible
piece of dogbody i cluster over oar
make a real splash
make a scream not from my body but from my sorry
passengers, yes mine now a body now too
and when the boatman tells with his eyes take
your clusterbody from the oars now i do

afterall the land turns back again turns
back to lack
and back and back
is dark like that is dark
like that

so that
when i find a way to be lonely again
the gutter mutters up

a fresh braid to pluck
like dried catgut psalming another sleep
to make a fallow pasture
of our deathbed with

so that this too is my singing
this too you bury you
bury it with me bury me inside
it in this now
snow
-sentenced instant.