

Aurora

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BlazeVOX [books]

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Aurora by Jared Schickling

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The Advancing Idiom: “kingdom hall” (here “in the parking lot, church” p. 64); *The Argotist Online*: “to grandmother’s house” (p. 22); *Feed Me Seymour: Name Volume Ate*: “rearrangements” (p. 35); *KNOCK*: “the canal” (p. 54-8); *Word For / Word*: “iv” and “v” (respectively #4 and #5 of “the canal,” pp. 56-7).

“the canal” won the 2006 *KNOCK Ecoliterature/Green Art Prize in Poetry*. “the mangroves of Ifaty” (pp. 68-9), “butterflies” (pp. 49-50), and “old fort niagara” (p. 44) won a 2006 *Albert Cook, Mac Hammond, and John Logan Literary Prize*. Other unpublished poems received honorable mentions for the 2006 *Arthur Axelrod Memorial Prize* (“butterflies”), and for the 2005 and 2006 *Academy of American Poets Prize* (“the mangroves of Ifaty”; “a day at the lake” p. 46; and “newspaper,” here #5 of “the canal”).

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Aurora

I

(lock #35)

cracked city, cubes rising

above, tangled trench

hazy gray. lemony
artery of a

mud and suds they come

down to

fish in it, and not really fish

address maybe, new Altamira, "Hamburger Hill," Buchenwald

caves perhaps

my name race

whatever my name is
we now know

they built their temples

to chirp, the temple stairs
chirp

rat, beneath the moon
some tourists, by day
by cubes corroding (portioned lap

of the canal: seen: from downstream, gravel grinding, along the old turnpike
limestone, steel, bolts bigger than a man, tall as a fortress in the sun the great
floodgates, mute and still in their cycle

before the shade of the widest common bridge: distinguishable torsos: smoothly
they are opening:

and a family trawler sputters to. forth.

the novelty. mile marker, signpost "Old
Garden Door

to West Proposed Terminus the water

of the locks, night rippling

old lamplight

sticks, paper cups

"what might have been (may

called "Pool of the Moon
Pool Where Moon

lives (in fact

"the unburied dead

(to get behind a machine)

(or, “to recoup”)

For a time, by seven or eight each morning
Behind a machine
To cut it all down cleanup comes

Towards the end of the day, when snails have already moved in
How late we’ll get home, too late or something

of conjecture? To be excepted
as I must be: small apartment. Do you know

What happened to Gina
I saw her today

Her big clear eyes look swallowed. She had half a tongue. But it is May

Springtime, that tattered gray moon
Etched out the door, timed for this pinkish vestige like some

Calculation; in sync, how the night
and the grid is, on the heels of dallying light

such a beast its shimmering veils, trailing behind

she is vast and heavy like a wave, spinning us around
All the ribbons and balloons and confetti

were for you (a heartfelt cheers)
And just this once

“She could have

(716)

They keep calling—a game we play. Detroit, “for example,” yes I’ve heard it
picked up and left for Japan—and all those people. But (“of what borders”)
if you call

You don’t get it, or you do, yes you have useful things
and I did see on the TV, the new Passat
“low ego emissions”; as good as anything I guess but
pizza

pizzas run much of this place now—and how could you know. We might be sociable
we might be pleasurable, nonetheless we are
hanging up. my name, your name, then. Here, after all

whose tongues are still
more than each other’s

second; you might say
the air we recycle though such things are tenuous. We could put it on a stage

A bustle behind the curtain would be interesting
and then it would open
such things on a stage

down the street, I know, they make rubber. Well of course
“they don’t exactly make rubber”

they recycle it. It’s a huge complex indeed
bulldozers and everything
given the vocation so naturally

dirty. some call it an eye sore. Everyone I know
pronounces it by name, for the most part, more or less politely
though somehow it seems

of what
importance

(unnumbered)

when I passed through a populous city
(what Czeslaw Milosz said Walt Whitman said) when I passed through
a populous city (hard to say what) a city moving
in no particular way, windows, greenery, spaced along the street
in the sidewalk and the doorways the continuous echo
of the honking din
tongue concealed, dissolving voice, where are these shifting riverbeds
of rainbow light, human skin and their crystal industry
what is that vague reflection of glass
and above, the steel sky glinting

—

newspaper loose
on a bench, pulled from tunnels
so precise, the warm even length of a subway gust
died on the platform, like wings of butterflies to stifle the hall
a jostle of exchange and dispersion; to wait. and the young woman
the taste in his mouth, an itch in his ear, licking his lips
he snatched off his hat and flipped over
spilling most of the paper.

—

and at half-past the hour the red brick wall
fills the window. it wasn't supposed to be there.

(“dirt”)

Half-past two, time for Randy to leave, his oldest he won't leave alone; or Whitey
who cleaned up his act and hopes to be off, on his way soon; we'll bend low
peeling off our shirts, tuck face into the arm
and enter the lush appanage

Picking in the dirt, the labyrinthine dirt, part pine needle
part twig, and petal, the fine lacerations turn puffy
with itchiness; you come here together, early everyday
like paid servants; no one waits for the clock to begin
you just don't around here

Let's take all these parts and bury them
Pile it in the truck, by the cover of night we'll follow the tracks
to the pits, there in the forest we'll raise a great fire
Rip it out, anything that doesn't belong

What is all this tension in the grass, these untamable bushes and perennials
mulch lapping like a moat, in the cool of the earth, the shady portico, in each pillar's
revolving shadow, or where the sun is less; so indifferent
it must scream with pain

Gasoline accompanies the day, like the cigarettes we've striven to portion
Separately, there is a part of me that exists
by eight until I'm finished, I do not care for this person

And the morning gushing forth by the unit

—2006, fond of the desert: best survival rates historically
Where shall I put this locked leg in my hand
Which bag is for this dead weight

Take your time, the slippery mess as the drip's irrelevance
Yawning belt straps, shall I toss it? Shall I hoist it for all to see?
The brown circumflex in the patient, surgical light

The smarter wars. The good thing is the next guy
wants to buy your shoes.
Back there, a raucous ditch passed by.

(silhouette)

I'll scream at my echo. I like to scream only if there's an echo. This is advice naturally; there's seldom a scream and it never shuts up. A morning here or there or don't—I hate screaming.

Leave them. Please, leave them right where they are. I'll bend my children this way and that, they do what they do and I can see each one clearly; leave it. Tack twenty minutes onto everything.

Jobs are waiting; it is apparent. When you get home, I'll be here my little dream with you. your twilight silhouette

 window—Aurora—waxing

gray, a cup of tea

clocks and the curling iron; patient. kimono silk embroidered phoenix, the children have unplugged it. Crimson.

They refuse to be consoled vespers; makeup. They light bleary cigarettes, they just don't get it. They strip

me and—you will leash the dog, slip into boots

and out the door—pulling the blankets up the blankets

go up like a little bunny bedding down for winter

(war in the street)

(or, Note To Self)

you puny peddler you hot blood you brute
you measly monger, hear what we say
Hear me, goddammit

Your tongue turns on you, allowing it free reign

When there was everything in the world to accomplish, you spoke
vaginas surrounded you and

Indeed, all concurred. From those polished jackboots
strung from the walls of the tower

You must have sensed it
plucked from the walls of the tower

dissected the tower into many little towers
Strewn across the walls of the towers

dry, alone
like tinsel, we bring you food

Food but no baby

(bullets)

Permissivity
in the creature
bred permission

Wikipedia: They may also lie dormant for long periods of time: note that Copernicus re-discovered the ancient heliocentric views of Aristarchus.

Memetic inertia increases when the meme transfers along with mnemonic devices, such as a rhyme, to preserve the memory of the meme prior to its transmission. Wikipedia.

And you! As a record! How much it, or will it

Rape as adaptive, for example

Everything in the world to do. I must be lying already. And the sacred is sacred.

(to grandmother's house)

1.

O tale, wagging, for whom you would bend
is there nothing in the world that won't
Will you follow us

along the paths through the woods, now that the way is the same
for to grandmother's house we go

We want some companion, no mate.
For the paths have been unmanned.

but the gates have eyes, is it quiet now
Please—bring the map—

2.

Last time, there were sticks underfoot, you could hear them, they were not simple

3.

We will wander here
Wayfarers

Where the blood of the family is linked to the dirt
Hair

We are wanderers, extensions, barely sure
prior postscripts, feelers and inevitable, reporting back

4.

There are sticks underfoot. You can hear them.
Look: Once again
on the back of this neck, standing hair

Up ahead, there's the clearing
Where she's always baking something

we're leaving tomorrow

(an old picture)

I live off living "...off the parking lot of Grace Church
proverbs that move by the movements of light
while here I would round things out.

"Today the preacher's sign reads,
The air is burning, and there are things to do.

Today with nothing to do. Here then is a waiting game.
It won't be this way if what I have done
should happen—call it me, I don't know. Like a postscript
I think of quitting

smoking but
smoke seems the way of the world, a particular breathing its
own established rhythms we become
aphoristic. Along the straight and narrow if I want to be recorded.
O Saint Mary's Church

Let's call you Grace Church
Father brought me to you
on weekends, which didn't last long

I would eat you for breakfast
You consisted of eggs
as my Saturdays consisted of you

Here, then, comes the Question? The point at which you crumble?
If I stick to the point, I'll make a point. La la la.

I could use some reminding. Call me, Area Code 716.

(a spot across the lake)

shards and dusts mingle
the sand and rocks, fishbone
gull feather
the beach is sharp. algae blooms as the summer grows
Toronto's a spot across the lake
and in the public grass a girl hands her sister
a clump of hair. second generation
Cakchiquels, born to winter

in Rochester
Memorial, mom was the first
and together they made it
forty miles to here. "och
k'in." she says they went back once
to see. twice
for her. she was fifteen
when grandma was killed.
she tells me this made home
very far away.

(something of reason)

she was dragging a trunk to make me a bridge. when it finally clicked
I grabbed the other end.

she stood in the middle
with feet getting wet

asking for rocks
the wider the flatter

to make us a bridge. when finally it clicked it basically worked
and my feet stayed dry, perhaps I'd feel guilty

about how it usually goes.
except that we had fun doing it. while learning glyphs

ignoring cats
mostly at night when she's sleeping with the dog

she'd quit smoking if it weren't for
me, if I didn't smoke. she knows when I'm talking and she's good at listening

she'd be invisible that way. every so often she sits me down
to make clear what I might be missing

and I don't quite know what she wanted. when I wake from a bad
dream or something

she always feels very soft. her heat is such seeming able to sense
the slightest of fluctuation. the morning she brought me

three pills and cola. when finally I woke
we had the best of days.

(the greener grass motel)

and these, “not our roots”
but a compost pile
of dried up stalks

never to flower might as well
we are trying to use
trying to save

whatever phone call there is
can wait until tomorrow
we’re well fed and this night is jealous

outside the night is hungry
as I settle in
to a nice, private dump

in the next room
in her undies
and Rocky and Bulwinkle

("this afternoon")

1.

I played a minor god, all day
long in a garden, or rather, prophet

or saint: the landscaper, the weeder, reader, a culti-
vator

First thing in the morning

Today, making coffee

Screaming rabbit, just outside the door

Earl's instinct Earl's gift
first thing

this sunny, green morning

A mercy killing. With my boot.

2.

"Don't git all yer panties in a bunch—ta-day
we gotta moov moov moov
I gah-some friggin batteries fer you
handing him two white pills

For a small town, relative to

you sure hear of a lot

3.

One day began
the cat and a mercy killing

sound of a bunny's skull
it wasn't a good day

One day began trimming hedges
one of the harder jobs, gas fumes and a headache

it wasn't a good day

over the phone

She says at least it wasn't as bad as having to kill the bunny

I don't know—
good deed, bad deed—
a machine

like a coup. like a kick in the ass.

I no longer

can eat in peace.
I everything.

4.

All day long
it never stopped growing, I was given thought
“note:

...towers of...ranked second and third (at 1,368 ft and 1,362 ft) on this list until their
destruction on...(see Disasters)...

I'll bet they're someone maybe heard of

5.

On the hot summer road to the lake, half-naked with the dog, old coffee, mugs cups
and change, empty cans butts bottles and dirt, clang about and a ratty blue tarp, loose
pens old receipts torn envelopes, scribbles, the tire slowly leaking inwards floating
flights of fancy, crumbs through holiday weekend traffic

“...ba-by
won't-you
car-ry
MEEE

back-to

Tennessee-ee-e-ee

—waking

with the noise in the speaker matching everything

II

(rearrangements)

("weeds")

where scoured insides eaten red eating
meat written off underground gold hides
obliterated faces
of children, harvesters and bored soldiers
march on
backward farms

the sleep of poverty
beautiful poverty. man woman
and bed sheets
hooded hope the executioner

fireworks explode outside the people gather
two hundred-some years ago
something happened
the reachable sky the unreachable
sky, I wonder what does happen
without dreams

(tuesday)

Birds. Moon this morning. Too true. Red numbers another
side of night. A shower. And the sun will. Remember

yesterday, moments, a week ago, let them speak now
dry-eyed. When is there not always

somewhere else to go, where is the day
and the night, taken. They'll eat

lessons, talk drink to the toilet bowl, howl at the moon like
in the magazines, poison may come of it

like an antidote, they'll sleep all day, cool and still is the town at night
mail could stop coming and

they'll just be something
else

the coffee's fresh

(237 upper)

...with bills due it's becoming
limbs of each other (porous, bone might crack

open and continuous

light revealed
a cat killed a bug

whose medication smokes. Rage
in the lake

the jet ski lake. no Fire
no Glass

no diving from the Pier. night exists
Elsewhere, a chiropractor whistles

desks and desks and desks and desks, sun
glasses, whose dark

hairs glisten, whose oiled chests bristle
whose nubile women

whose cool ride down
to Pineapple Light hummd Digital

caloric Unit
and sweetened, whose Sea
and shell, whose Velvet Sand
whose distant Palm whose
Sip

eevn'n, warm Cherry

Cheer, o poppt
collar physics o

mud, of angels. in where the lake is silent

silent scream, o thing-they promised,
normals grow fatter

normals emaciate. but o how she sleeps
o Kimono

when the toilet belches, when the fridge moans.

when the windows stopped working
when all the cupboards whisper. Animals

entered children
They heard far away screaming

or so they thought. the birds
were ineffable. everything was green

& juicier than expected. they palaced far enuf
inland

a small, vacuous place. planted tomatoes
raised cats, left docs

grew limbs of each other

III

(crosswords and castles)

A bit more please, it's not ready yet
it enters by the wayside and ends up sleeping.
And a message board informed me of the endemic

we must pursue. Sundays each Sunday when knelt at the brown
shades of the old and its glass keeping pictures. Over there
and us over there

the spaghetti and balls with the silver utensils.
how it became mom's, when told what was under our plates.
when Max got the scraps. Grandpa'd do crosswords and grandmother's books

she gave us for making of castles.
just the other day I learned she was

Polish. I remember too the hands in the garage. Two of them, pink
just above the table.

last time we drove past was men up there. the roof was piling to ground.

We arrived in the drive, pulling into place, you were right there to greet.
We kissed on the lips and received a booth. It was then we were handed the menus.
I almost remember just what was my hanker

ing, on my way. and don't the waiter's eyes shine brightly his tie

(old fort niagara)

the mighty Niagara meandered
into a lake
eras

patched rock the peering walls
closed

cannon hole breakwater
falls away

fossils. steel rods. where the grass ends is a trampled fence
and paths down.

(a pastoral)

a time there was spent scribbling
squares black

the wood floor was false, put in

the outside turning
of limbs, curling

when from a window seen
and walking out, what wilting petals stay, bits of green

and rain, in the wind
a cat the gray swaying

of curvatures of trees, hazy blocks

of chimney. inside
the floor was swept.

(a day at the lake)

in the woods along the cliff that is the shore
the shade was good. there, alone
in the clearing, there
on the old stump

a colony of mushrooms. gutsy bulls-eye
center metropolis
and sprawl

island oasis
orange and red in a tangle of green—vague

to itself, forced inward
frail in the presence of bigger things

unknown things

its potential a fine powder
thick blanket, further exclusion

the gift of all
just waiting

for the wind

not so very different...

(salt)

Christmas came by the number, two degrees
a nylon snowman deflating. The hairdryer's an impotent
well, extension chords lazy with the whirring
gears of a jingle box. For thousands of years the candy cane yard

has been changing streets. By autumn reds a promise is still
turning plots. Candles lit, for gravy all the innards
are kept. We've memories. Weights of mistletoe, with their berries

strung up, with hats removed
for the invoking
all will be here. Pitch. Pitches. Eggnog later, no asking how the heat was
divvied. At the foot of the bed was

an entry point, little Ella is visiting, she brushed her teeth and left
cookies before prayers. A quilt is already somebody's
old trunk, air would only tangle, the scent of mothballs swept up

the passages are endless. All through town, snow piled and was blackened
flesh has fallen from the hard bones of wood
bricks were fired
chimney leans

for each thing you give and keep this year expect the receipt.
We're keeping ways for dawn, and hear there are still
soldiers to return, and you can time the neighborhood

by the carving of pumpkins. Mother
straightens herself, wiping her hands, grandma's old tablecloth is smooth now
each place set. At four o'clock she unties her apron
pouring a drink with creamy

windows, where planes of wire crisscross through branches
stitching the place together. Hearthstone
the tender math of dinner, turkey dinner, with streetlight

up and down by dusk mute, gray reaches
smoke. His fenced yard, it twinkles. In a matter of months
the walks will be clear. Till then cookies. Children.

(butterflies)

Last time was '96. So Frank had a spell for drawing
lines in the sand, the horn. Many things awoke
to dreams: A vote was taken. Mars or freedom, they'll do. The lizard I bought
died, but it got me laid first. Where Dragon rolls, the sky was a reef at night
the Milky Way. It was all so fresh, when Magda needed her second leash.

Finally the air goes elastic, with hotdogs splitting. With horseshoes and sports. Up north
they've seven to nine kinds of snow. We've a station up there using advanced
refrigeration. Diaries opened

as Chuck was on the way
through submarines he smuggled a picnic basket. Black armbands

were like gazelles. Like an ant, the bone is corn. In the meat of the earth
was a voice, after washes the pants were

like records. Colosseums, almanacs, living rites, they've a podium and their shtick is
to molt. Fingerprints have marred you white
we're waiting with buckets at a plastic well.

The years departed, eating Jon's smoked herring. No one ordered parsley
but what can be done. I now fuck camels, and the moon's always full. Gasoline from faucets
a view of the canal

She brings a glass and wedge of lemon. Our summers watch
the flowers dig; probably we saw something new. Have we sent our bodies off

to war, to a war with Lucy's neighbor? We told them to remember
to send things back? Please, be a headset, be a great big umbrella

I'll keep files. Sleeves are offered as trees are whittled
for martini olives the cities
bunkered down. The skulls they rented are now destitute.

The streets are turning early, dark and unknown. Late autumn we're hearing

we were screaming over papers for crying out loud. Family quotas are fifty years old
at least lately; but a pile of sand came yesterday. It was found in some chocolate
of questionable authenticity. No return address.

(back roads)

in the afternoon sun, the still space of a day. down weedy slopes of ditches
the hard edges of gray back roads. drifts. mosquitoes.
behind the wheel she dozed

mumbling waking in the morning was no trouble
no trouble at all. mosquitoes. the naked side
of her body

cooled, one night in June
against the wall when the room was still empty, on the peeling sill
she lay her chin. holes

of a dirty screen, the air
warm, on her face, curling hands
to caress her, small, dry,

aching foot, a curl of mist combed from the dark

wet hair; goose pimple. quiet. in the street, the neighborhood below
a car approaches, stretching light and shadow
her small

foot. or going

through pockets, no lighter,
but a forgotten penny

the streetlight, that day in the street
was bright, and looking up
a curtain moved
she was shrinking

between the shoulders
of the bus, knowing the pavement's
direction by heart

saying none of it was hers. from off the fridge she took
a bottle, and pouring, saying it was
"something, that you never seen the dump

or arrowheads, and that
"this far in, the season
only air under the clouds

(aurora)

(14094)

in other words, like promises, a time there was
war was in the street, the whole world
to accomplish

and when, like the pit, always leaving
the candle gone, like morning

after you make dinner. the pit is a clogged drain
this coffee pot's

been sturdy, too little
sink space
the pit is the red of your hair

pounding out
at the plant. the day, how you sleep with it

there'll be children

(the canal)

1.

winter breaks a-go, but patient does for this

CAN-AL

it must get used to

a-gain

so far from fruit still

far from cider

still fresh does the crisp

morning in the mud, leaves

have yet

but not the foam—one can't

just swim this thing, you have to swim this thing

to think

none but a question, needs there

no bullets to

tendrils time

wood earth

stone

slide

like walls

two geese

gosling

moss

and the rust

still

an active choice

not to bring

how we can make nice

compactable ones

more sim

ple pi

le peo

ple bellies

and the runoff, salty the can

al

butts—comings now

merely to puff with the facts of this place

leaving them t—wee

-e-e-ks later, when tractors

and all got it up to our necks—

2.

we began the story each
character here as taste
tasting as I to be sure
how were we, more generous last time
when we were less
the chests get broad, in town is it not
or your typical beer. seldom
has
a role to play, after all
it's something deep, pure
PHYSIC

Al it is
Mothers' Day
just before the commercials
the alming of ourselves
how about that. Confessions
as redeeming, necessities
your Air is for. Call it ego

and it is sweet moon, meant for things
or a wolf—if there's no require
congregation, and I flock
we require simply one
one riot the next
round

3.

edges and the snow fleers
even to a blind man
when the dogwood blossoms
a sign. easy living. how the couch has been
slept Blue

sun rises, in perspective
and I staples
dripping rags
for the mail.

the tree outside

4.

today, to will
to stillness, there'll be no
edges, they'll revolve around. we've been eating
coffee and aspirin for breakfast
Plastican. she creams hers. the fly is on its back
twitching with death to be sure and I am
simply in no position. there's still two more
flies in the room. conciliatory are we
merciful, must life with a shower curtain
being not just a shower curtain. belonging

is labeled on the side
of an empty milk crate, good for carrying
especially those of Signature, things
representing
an easier of what choices. for reason. time
not as soft as we'd like it to be
we think today, distances gauged
distances from me. how edges gravitee

corners, how the flies have gone. no position
will today simply and
tomorrow I'm reading the cats "Female Orgasm
as Proof of God for all
its evolutionary principle. cats, in faith.

5.

o newspaper, street sleeper
out and out goes up up up
windows, closer in terms, how dawn halves the city
glinting, and only sidewalks needed

electricity, eyes and eyes and eyes
dream, pigment, like coral
lighted grid—gray enough
just
street side

walks needed
graffiti
o
some planks of wood

and we shed a breezy pier
picnic grass the song of feet
breaking
from New York out to river

6.

“the indestructible day
blue and green where we movd
for all speech excites
all the purposes of ears
quite passive
soft is the night, rustling, and less

cones of light to walk
how driveways
leafy in the breeze old street
leaning porches, you moon
this here neighborly
we raise from shadows

clean are the stars waltzing
spun and spun on a sucking of things
the crickets sounding

7.

things things not things
today was somehow
something
rage of the living
wastelands, ok, but busy after
even after

a conflation of winds
down garbage can alley
plastic bag
ballerina
invented, old forms
match
a low, steady flame
along the pothole streets

candles, newspaper on the plates
I wear a cat

like a second belly
these are the soft times, approaches
the living 'age
s

(the water tower)

Fresh paint, like a big blue pill, stuck
in the ground, or a titanic silo, fresh paint
squared away in new
chain links, I'm quite removed

from my water. I can't even climb
for fear of slicing my hand. In old stone building

yonder, a man used to
sell candy. Little goldfish. And a wooden box stands
shuttered. Have they thinned the trees since

last season? No. No not really. The swings and merry-go-round
the jungle gym, charcoal grills and picnic tables, left patches
of dirt. Soft wood of the rose garden
ripens at the east end
up a trellis, small iron plaque, bolted to a boulder,

surveys, wreathed and hedged all about. Yellow ribbons. Down the hill
two public diamonds
their fences crisp with freshly raked dirt
padlocked restrooms have no doors on their stalls and across the way
the Little League
football field

must have secured some money
from motor oil. The sign lies flat on the ground.

A dog pees on the fence. Then its owner.

I missed the scoreboard go digital.

(lunch hour)

she was five months on, with her third. her second
had passed. a wind

howled through, passing
for time

of year, most of the year
by March

light, time of day
shadow, eyelid
sleep

of day, of bags the old crone carried, pressed against
and through

the intersection
waiting

streaming cables
stitched the city

quivering, she said

(at the river)

the river “yee-hah” when the boats go by
shin-deep no one falters in pink rubber boot. we knew there’s bagged
big fish from the gorge
so we copped poles and bobber
sinker and line. frozen worms, a special lure today
yellowy dangles it
nine, barbed

later it ruined a sweater. it came with trilingual
praise for instruction there was
a path to the water’s edge where we squat
sipping coffee

from colored foam cups—
it’s Memorial Day and we’re all having fun. reading

smoking, a colored foam cup, learning, or wishing
maybe to sing, of songs
we hear, in other words
plagiary a curious fact that
offers; what clues
gather motion

 sea of light in space
it’s May and blue with a path to the water’s edge where the river
trees move
a passing
warm breeze. Mollie was cooking

for family in grade school
as a way to out of she loves food
and squatting on the bank
preparing the lure asks
 “You think Lucy could take a bumblebee?”
 water drops form

run down the sides of a plastic container. worms are waking
from the warming of their dirt
the sound of the river lapping.

(in the parking lot, church)

Magdala. Maggie. Magda. Isn't there something
to all that glinting

glass; so whine away. Though already dressed to the overcast
Magda, there we could be without dust

but of what—where are you! my tail
is wagging. There

may be true, but there, the ten percent
of a week, and Plus

whatever else we'd want to be—see someone brought raspberries once
reddened lips Magda

sticky fingers. What we will trade
for "Dried Pig Ears." The pamphlet

tells of the desert. Magda.
It tells of love and this leash here. Mostly meant

for an hour from now, before quiet departures
until.

I know faith is most confirmed
at times when it's most confirming.

I know I can hear it Magda. Hymns
the parking lot. Or, "buried bone."

(a tree line)

gray limits, bright mornings
“So the city bought a new Main Street
dusty, back there

past the canal fallen leaves
bone wood

an old house, boarded up. how made
warm fires there, how done what must

saved, or more than saved, busy streets

slush, sinking snow, and parking meters

salted walks and buildings rise
where shadows stretch how many

heads turning
westered

westered what
boarding
bus

(wabi-sabi)

("bonsai")

you tossed the dog a bone and she buried it. it
turned up in baskets of clothes
in couch cushions. depending on the day
like a soft one, pearl or pill, like a tall one. one or two trees in an orchard
low, stunted
predicted more apple

than you'd eat or drink in a year. a ladder and a pile
of stenciled crates, what way did we take
home, home from grandma's and back,
foreseeing mistakes mistakenly

at so many exits pointing, what said
the road, for surely there was
a voice: go there

go there.
a ditch backs up in the country, separating towns.

(the mangroves of Ifaty)

my sun and moon gets reversed
and the place is made by hand
men were moving
barefoot out on the reefs

as cockroaches hissed in the baobab
stick fences
made sandy yards
making firm streets
north of Toliara

the White Tana
where outriggers dozed
passed the zebu
boys and girls pulled crawling nets in
from the beach

the kitchen revolved
all day around a fire
a pot of water boiling
and two baskets in the corner

one of vegetables, one of rice
often they slept there

sometimes a chicken
would stroll in
there were names for each
at one end of the street

was a bar
at the other an old woman's
corner store
and all about
in between
footprints and the spiny husks of lychee

—

I bought passage on a cart
leaving one night. on a bed of straw

we took a dirt road. this is how I found you
by evening, near the mangroves of Ifaty.

—

women were talking with baskets on their heads. "...les marchés de coquille de Toliara. La majorité de l'espèce des coquilles de l'Océan indien sont présente sur ce marché." that's what the brochure said.

was there anything to know round the bonfires
and what do bodies say or hear
I knew nothing

each morning, was there coffee somewhere
its scent its cigarette, our grimy skin

tell away, if home was home. about the windward side of
our dizzy hill
the axis of a tongue
the stars

they were out of place
fugitive, I remember
the Mozambique

it unfolded
liquid silver with the moon
warm rum
leftover

"vintana." Fabrice
he was pointing to the Southern Cross.

