

Collision Center

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Collision Center was first printed by O Books, 1994. The O Books edition is out of print.

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COLLISION CENTER

[UNCORRECTED TYPESCRIPT COPY]

1993

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For N.

Self Portrait

A dark row of windows--it's too late.
A river freezes & a shore is made exact.
What can be solved besides ignorance.
As rumored certain sounds are still called silence.
Under the house an orchard smolders like coals.
Huge automobiles are their own angels.
Snow remains in the shade between houses.
What was the question that pleased us so.
I kneel down like a little girl.
Who made these buildings that commemorate something.
As footprints suggest events occurring over time.
As words approximate the dead.
It should be easier this way so seductive.
No more surprise endings no more surprises.
Purple bruises under my eyes quick quick.
A wide avenue like a joke that isn't funny anymore.
Black birds flock the crows flock the black birds.
A dark row of windows--it's too late.
All the newcomers have snuck away.
There is some talk of sleeplessness of subterfuge.
I kneel down like a little girl.

Breakfast is served on the patio everyone smiles.
Like film stars they want their gratitude.
As rumored certain sounds are still called silence.
Most of the pictures aren't worth a thousand words.
If everything were remembered who could be a hero.
Walls billow like sheets in the wind.
This is the power of language.
This is the color white which includes all colors.
This is the color white.
Trees gesticulate wildly or do they.
These flowers have no scent since they are words.
Each petal could be a letter.

Pas de Deux

It's like this he began.
On a day composed of glances
the light says each color twice.
Small blue flowers. A fence cracked
with salt. Why even the sea desires
to be touched. Every story includes
at least one stranger. She said
one dollar no holler. She said crash
& burn. She said pleasure is what keeps
me alive. The promise of pleasure.
They made a form of the day
round & exclusive. But I worry her
like a story that could end anyhow.
A lake fills with birds. We circle it
like the hands of a clock. It was
difficult to tell when the sun moved.
What was meant by slowly. You know
this part by heart. How the only lies
are the ones we tell ourselves. How fire
seems the only element as if everything
were to be passed through. He said
only a liar knows the truth. The rest
wonder. Someone watches so they dance.
I wrestle myself still. Her anguish
this memory. The shade sold for firewood.
The note that read everything still stands.
So it was inevitable one would become
the subject of the other & so blameless.

Just as the longer we wait the less
we have to decide. Who would remind them

on this day unlike all others
of the light & its song of obstacles

who would let the music have its way
& give up what they meant to say.

Illustration

Take the towel out of the freezer, he said
& lay it on my back.

Enough is enough, but it never was.

Trees sag, flower,
dropping seeds as a last resort.

A thin wash of clouds taunting
winds that talk the heat of the land.

This is probably something I shouldn't tell you.

Against her will, her voice
was slight & injured

there was still a face in every window
living there between the glass & the shade.

Against her will,
hills turn away on a muscle like breath.

How is his body spread out like a bird's wing?
how is his body this loneliness & talk?

Like the title of a painting, "The Flower Vendor"
changed to "The Flower Carrier" so exact
this stealing like a wish makes it all possible

these fingers splayed out on the ground
under his kneeling weight

the bundle of flowers choking him (by now
he has collapsed) maybe his neck breaks--

even if we exaggerate
it feels better to have said it--

a girl continues her flat tuneless whistle,
hot as blazes,

the window leans out against the grating
& below, white benches, blue diving boards
oily green water, plump white bathing caps

flip-turns at the end of a lane
expose a long swath of back of bulky shoulders

somewhere between us & the water, secure on a hook
the orange life-jackets hanging like wings.

Medicine Show

The only thing worse than being watched
 Is being talked about.
 In the morning, before names awake
 Gravity is impossible.
 Hair & fingernails grow like grass
 Wild & persistent, maybe there is wind,
 The blood in my hands & lips let me speak
 Only what I remember.
 50 birds & then the sound the words the wings made
 Taking away the delight of my eyes.

How can I hold anything
 Without turning it over in my hands
 Into the shape of a hope or a fear?

I walk far from the house
 Until I find a tree,
 Chosen like a straw
 Throw in my lot with roots & burrowing
 Kiss each nail
 Left random as branches on its trunk
 Tie each nail with a piece of string or hair,
 Swear on them: this dispute is over.
 Perhaps not so remarkable a feat,
 But sap hangs to the hair & strings.
 The ground is sticky with fruit.
 Black with flies.
 Are the trees ready
 To lay down their branches under our feet?

Your voice is like the river, the waves,
 Salmon, eels, starfish,
 & all that lean over it
 Leaves, birds, & the light of each season,
 Water this full I hear
 Along those bones my ribs & shoulderblades.
 What comes next is obvious,
 I am afraid of the riverbed, as I am afraid of my hunger,
 In the heat of summer with nothing to fill it.
 But in the language of cities
 Even hunger has become a boast.

Today, you are a piece of silk
 Pulled through my fist.
 Where you touch me--I am not healed.
 Where you touch me--I am not broken.
 What we say is held between us like a fire.

Sadness is a compromise.
Maybe this is only a guess:
Wind over the snow is the sound of silk,
Whatever kind of glamour as the snow is glazed to ice.
The sky of this world is very blue
With enough clouds to let us believe anything.
I have a dictionary to preserve what we have agreed upon,
Though I have heard that onions & apples
Are indecipherable in taste
Once the eyes & nose are covered.
Whatever are the shapes of fear,
When I am frightened, we run down the street--
Two narrow flames.
If I could save myself, I already would have.

The Splendor of Fear

1.

In the canyon the trail doubles back.
Small birds in the leaves. Dust in
our mouths. A weight at our shoulders.

On a flatness by the river among the
smooth stones at the frayed edge of
the woods we slept. Between the stones
the rattlesnakes slept. Water lulling
us to sleep. These low places the water
fills. Water the color of ink.

1.

We made our fires between the smooth stones. We hung our meat in the river to keep it fresh. One by one we entered the trees and returned. We cut the snakes heads off with a shovel. One by one.

2.

I hold my small body. I tuck my head
under my arm. At my feet they are dying.
Above my head nothing. The canyon deepens
away. There is no bottom. I marry myself
to fall and so disappear. I call them
others. I forget my name. As even the
strongest fail I watchful decline.

I place myself. Where the river opens
itself. Rough guideways. A flimsy
bridge of stones. Lips the water falls
from. Tow of the heat. Algae the water
tugs like hair.

2.

I look to the hills
for I am as unable.

3.

Emporium of trees.

Water story of stone.
Shapes we surface.

Gathering dark.

Some tents pitched.
Some food hung in trees.

A length of blue overhead.

The wind selecting targets.

Might we not mean.

The river not an image.
And the converse also false.

A river that reads right to left.

A voice sounding itself.

Embers among the smooth stones.

A coincidence of color.
A fear of open spaces.

The converse also false.

Strange attractors.
Nothing is left empty.

Water is a door.
Forest is a door.
Wind a window.

We pass through.

Weak campfires.

A cordon of sleep.

4.

Beholding.

4.

Pine nettles blackout

Roots water circles

Rushing naked falls

Splintering blue white

Blue white inlay

Hands reflex

Hands

4.

numb

Lips

Hoop

of

slick

stones

of

pray

fingers

plug

rosy

lapse

beholding

beholding

4.

A dent in the water.

A line unfurrows.

This area of detail.

Incredibly keeps happening.

You feel the wood flex.

Leaves stems hair.

Downward slicing angles.

A shape broken off
At the knees.

Boulevard of sands.

Stones scooped out.

This area of detail.

Fossil fingernail ringlet.

A list words make.

Huge propeller.

Wind pulls my arms.
Wind tears between my legs.

Wind kindling.

Whitely kindling prayers.

Their tongues ablaze.

1.

A word is a wedge.

4.

A flimsy bridge of stones. Two boys
waving their arms like wings. Fiery
blue sky. Their long backs twisting
into the light. Whispers as such
falling. Cipher of stones. Of water
feathered with light.

Water churning downward. An empty
hub. Drawing breath. Wherefore
given up. What to be said. A mouth
filled over. A hand pulled down.
Whiteness as such. Your white hands
sent me to sleep.

He flattens himself into the wind.
His huge shoulders. His wide hands.
His body already blue.

I tuck my head under my arm. I hold
my small body. I count to ten. I count
to ten. Three times. Screaming their
bodies upward. Three time. One two
three four five. One two three four
five six seven eight nine ten.

Asleep.

5.

Nohow in words.

Hands fever.

I draw a blank.

Explicitly buried

Under the leaves.

My wet legs.

I kneel down.

I kneel down.

Their womanly necks.

I lookalike.

I kneel down.

Acorns berries.

Their limber bodies.

White limbs turning.

A blue wind.

Their mouths open.

Water blooming.

6.

Bodies of word.

6.

What once was.

That part wanting.

I know not what.

Falls between.

Is missing.

All the while.

What once was.

All the while.

That part wanting.

All the while.

All the while.

Still later.

Like a tree

Locked in

The wind.

All the while.

Windless.

All the while.

That part waiting.

All the while.

7.

A story of leave-taking.
A book unbound.
A letter carried a great distance.
Red-handed.
A dozen nameless fears.
Shepherding me home.
The sky too wide for thoughts.
Thinking them anyhow.

7.

A house without stairs.
A collection of bones.
A clandestine.
Of the three companions.
Ambush.
A house without stairs.
A black hive in the tree.
Dogs scuffling in the shadows.
The screen door nailed shut.
Figures entering the trees.
Words as desires.
Each word a question.
And ambush.
Of the three companions.
A collection of bones.

Doing what might be.
 A gesture whittled away.
 A clandestine.
 A house without stairs.
 A black hive in the tree.
 Ambush.
 Of the three companions.
 Coming on me from behind.

7.

Lips burnt to the color of lead.
 They have no lips.
 They have no teeth but a bundle of curses.
 They curse me.
 Say my name it is a sin.
 Hold me like air.
 I have held my breath.
 I have taken them inside me.
 They have taught me the shapes of fear.
 (when I fled--I was a bird
 in the water--I was a fish
 buried--I was a root)
 Curse me.
 When I do not know your name
 You are many.
 Your voices are in my hair.
 Not the wind.
 What is a word.
 What is a prayer.
 What is a body.

Can I run run swollen as the river.

III

Point of No Return

There is no point to begin with.
A weight of color hangs over the trees.
This is not a description.
How are we to spend our time.
Some enact their bodies.
Others painstakingly enact a word.
A language can conceal itself as love.
The trees so yellow.
In what age belong these trees.
Many have decided to be right & therefore immortal.
If silence is the first conceit he is alone.
The waves insist something.
There are many correspondences for anger.
There is no point to begin with.
A word begins an avalanche.
He is repeating what he has heard.
Days lengthen but what is revealed.
Time works as a set of analogies.
The waves insist something.
It would be paranoid to speak of collusion.
In what age belong these trees.
He is ambushed by sunlight.
The sentence is over an overturned boat.

Someone is coughing on the back porch.

Buildings are painted to look like buildings.

Ideas of up & down remain splendidly.

Trees resemble other trees though not exactly.

He has an impulse to confess more than is likely.

A Theory Of Endings

By then we had slipped into the third person.

A tablecloth spread out into a field. Maybe
its red stripes converging in the distance.

A sky full of noise & birds. The hum
of powerlines hung down like nets.

Today was all they had of the future.
Her hand like a root that belonged

~~/~~to the ground. The hills set under a yellowing
varnish--too far to reach. In other words

~~/~~in the valley below there was a body
tied to each of those trees

~~/~~Like a cautionary tale "Hunters Attacking
Ostriches with Greek Inscription."

After the finale the sign is removed
letter by letter. As he waited for her to say

~~/~~words she hadn't even thought of.
Who could have known it would take so long.

Like the moon each question
ate itself away & reappeared. This time

~~/~~a figure kneeling to the street
a raised hand flat with ice a single coin

~~/~~locked in its palm like a nail. Someone
explaining time as the mending of a bone.

What she knew of difficulty she couldn't
repeat. The smell of gasoline mixed

~~/~~with the rain. A careful use of words
left them marooned. Much was made of between

~~/~~until it consumed all. Whatever she said
she meant it at the time. The phrase last time

~~Was~~ repeated like a number. And on the last page
~~the~~ moral allowed two colors but no shapes.

Like the story of the motorcyclist
 who pulled off the road & died. A huge oak

~~Wired~~ into the sky & ~~the~~ ground. A sky full
 of noise & birds. Words she hadn't even thought

~~of~~. Her hand like a root that belonged
 locked in his palm like a nail. Someone

~~With~~ the rain. A careful use of words
 until it consumed all. Whatever she said

~~Like~~ a cautionary tale "Hunters Attacking.
 This time a figure kneeling to the street.

Words she hadn't even thought of.
 A tablecloth spread out into a field

~~Wired~~ into the sky & ~~the~~ ground. Today
 was all they had of the future. After the finale

~~Ate~~ itself away & reappeared the sign is
 removed. What she knew of difficulty

~~She~~ couldn't. Explaining time as the mending
 of a bone. He waited for her to say

~~Until~~ it consumed all. Whatever she said
 was repeated like a number. And on the last page

a sheet of ice folded over the stairs.

A Semblance of Place

1.

Birch forest of numbers, branches, mud
stones, leaves, water. We are lowered
into place.

A photo is staged as an alibi of the same
voice listening for itself.

Where the light was thresholds are established.
Window of flames. Echo of water.

A figure walking in water. A voice accompanying
the letter.

Apples, moths, more detail like consecutive
numbers tending toward increase but not value.

To recapitulate, deletions were found and later
deemed necessary.

The abstraction of self, while unable to save us
nevertheless provided shelter from the overwhelming
likeness we fled.

At the juncture of the anterior, the self a series of perforations.

2.

Replicas abound. They are smaller and certified real.
We fall towards them. Fond glossy portals.

In the dream, the dreamer is an illustration, a curve
of bone, a body smeared across.

In this time before the sentence is carried out.
Tantrums. Lag of burning in effigy.

The rattle of leaves for which there is no name.
An illegible sign in the shape of a warning.

Descent of increasing chill. Small mouth of teeth.
Wide black pond.

To be lost, finally only to be tolerated. Ink
hiding an arm, part of a face.

Scatches of light. This ordinary illness, trapping
shadows with our bodies.

A plan that includes failure because it cannot indicate.
A fear of vanishing.

3.

Seasons like a succession of heroes. Garlands like knots.

The real eroded to the seen then later to the familiar
which goes unexamined. But this could be said of anyone.

Houses where we paused. A delight in exteriors that has
more to do with the survival of the fittest.

The same foreboding following us into sleep. The same
paths to daylight assuring us as to what we may describe.

A yellow circle for the sun. A red dot for the heart.
A reply to something we have forgotten about ourselves.

Undoubtedly there will be rumors and rumors to the
contrary: both are true.

The precedent is performance not competence. Thresholds
established by substitution and omission.

As if watching were an index of knowing. One face
blurred by closeness.

Again As Ourselves

1. A counting began at dawn. An enumeration legible in the trees, the windows, the figures beyond them. It was not what the trees ~~could tell us~~ about ourselves. We knew those houses, the roads that led in and away from them.
2. As colors explained more than they had to, over there was living, over there its converse. This is what the color green felt like. It was explicit with light but also survival. A burst of syntax. I was the other, the idiot. This was where we slept. You remember.
3. Rain covering it all as if it could be changed. Which was true and false. Water not descriptive. It was easier to say river or sea, though they also were smooth and hidden. We took turns as the victim. It required nothing but acceptance. It was not obviously wrong.
4. The house broken with light, unsheltered. But darkness was both soothing and speech. Each night it rose up until it covered the sky. Each blue dusk, a reply. Held aloft. Abandoned. How could we not begin to mistrust ourselves. Touching our hands nervously.
5. Along a fold settled an orchard, knowable as fruit, as a body. Again as ourselves, knowable but in the shape of. I believed the first time, the word tree, not because it was descriptive, yet it felt too heavy and at the same time as if something had been left out. It was not fragile, it was not about time.
6. Light followed the roads because it had to. It was easy simply to stare and expect nothing. Huts, decoys, tombs. Who imagined hanging things from the trees. A shape we take into sleep. Swerve to enclose by reaching. A commotion that began somewhere indistinct.

7. Everywhere the landscape bore signs of sabotage. Sometimes named, sometimes implied. Alarums, excursions, delays. The onlookers removing themselves as quietly as possible, as gently as possible, to leave as few traces. Regrets we kept in our mouths. Black pine needles. This was where we slept. You remember.

8. Confetti of blossoms or garbage. White ball of light. Instead of words, everyone hesitates. Polite as afraid. Soon we are fluent, intimate. This is not the color green or even the word for it. Soon we begin to see light in their mouths. Time rather than harmony. Everything disappearing from the house, the dirt road.

9. No one is better than you at conveying such things. A reluctance to noise. A confidence of breath. A counting begun at dawn, away from the shape of place. The body's thin cord. The word tree too heavy and at the same time as if something had been left out. Somehow hovering like smoke amongst the trees we are busy making real.

Canzone

Horizon bloodline reckless
 abandon and the cities
 so flawlessly reckless.
 Reckless
 said through our teeth
 meaning not so reckless
 only God's reckless
 abandon. Bridges
 to cross or what bridges
 convene. Reckless
 night crossing thought.
 You as the thought of the thought.

A river accompanying the thought
 loose billows reckless
 current. You as the thought
 in action as the thought
 of death. Blue hill cities
 tirelessly thought
 out thought
 through. Our teeth
 our mouths, our teeth
 our bodies thought-
 lessly bridges
 nowhere bridges.

The story told as bridges.
 Self constructed thought
 machine. Tall fiery bridges.
 These bridges
 sound so reckless
 crossing and recrossing bridges.
 To jump from these bridges.
 Fire colored ground. Cities
 that are called falling. Cities
 broken bodies bridges
 raised into the air. Teeth
 fingers and teeth.

Wind caught between our teeth
below the bridges
tearing through our teeth
these words, these teeth.
A steadily advancing thought
does not leave our bodies, teeth
and other remains. Teeth
as the object remains, reckless
without us. Reckless
remains fingers and teeth
meaningless scatter. Cities
rooted like sleep sleep cities.

Fire rain. Foreground of cities
wood, paint, woodshavings, teeth.
Tumble down cities.
You as the shambling heap. Cities
and bridges, nowhere bridges.
A river run black. Fury day cities
wide over reach. Cities
roadside bodies of thought
you as the last thought
amidst the burning cities
reckless
abandon. Bright reckless.

A terrain made reckless.
Horizon frozen immaculate. Cities
like clenched teeth.
Scaffolding along the bridges
bridges disguised as thought.

Abandon

"Authority is to representation
as trauma is to dreams"
Barrett Watten

Replicas wooden large
 Low benches made for sleep
 Stilled otherwise or obliterated as you know
Verb--leave hold of unclench quit one's hold foreswear
 Abstain waste no time
 Cataloguing roads alongside the trees
 Thick green stench
 Visible more as wreckage displaying this
 To take our eyes off it
 3. to yield (oneself) completely as to a feeling desire etc.
 Representing acquaintance with belief
 Representing the other argument as in wide empty lawn
 Not specifying color
 SYN.--bliss rapture transport
 Square filling the light
 House compounding the dark
 Everywhere this sense of the present we can't walk through
 2. unrestrained freedom of activity
 The gear turning his hand close^{up}_^
 Syntax revealing it as ourselves
 Time conjugating the gaze for example
 List in monuments enclosures

3. trance

A policy for grass for the watering and trimming of the trees

Verb--let oneself go riot go mad for joy

II

Fear naming names the secret was everywhere
A dark valley as equivalent you were in the foreground
To desire a whisper in color the background
Of any sort smeared being black or white
With our marks residue you were intermittent
Of sails smocks in the foreground but
Thin almost transparent in color the background
Almost desire leaves being black or white
Open in flames a slight indentation
One of us in color what do we do
In the foreground gold violet light burning
While the other is black in the sand what do we
Or white in the background do
To insist as if we were nearer objects often
All young at the same time partially occluding those
Filled not revealed further away
You are the same color spell copper-colored light
As the background at the outskirts
Which is black or white sweet smoke in our mouths
Consider the following by contrast well-meaning
Problem parallel line is a luxury we took to mean
And texture gradients took it for ourselves
Leading away from the observer to mean we were all young
You and I young in the same time
We could admire and the attached shadows
Be admired of objects changing

Ourselfes meant to take with the visual
What we would field wide open spaces
Which was called desire where lines of thought
Thankless green day intersect roads elimination
A stone's throw away of dominated strategies
Waiting could be objects whose true size
A number is known wind finding
Becoming progressively the spaces filling them
Distance watch us mistake to approximate
Some remarks about relative to a still point
The definition perceived filled with belongings
Shapes cannot correspond the desire to fall
Each body alone in the clearing pierced
Of any foreclosing both of us in color
Trees in the foreground radiant
In reaching wind events bluish too slowly
Where lines of thought rubble stairs
Intersect roads what do we do
Light streaming amidst the approximate
From our mouths amidst the rupture
Pollen yellow trees this everyday life
Spell yellow alternating offers and
The smell of it onesided asymmetric information
Wind described as everywhere this
Luminous foresaken body

III

Visualize abandon
Names naming fear
Everywhere the secret
Enormous viewing over range
Change that conditions
As described wind
This everywhere life everyday
Transparent almost here
Stairs rubble smoke
Transparent almost thin
Demands assemblege
Do what we do
Spaces wide open field
Foreground the us of one
Approximate to mistake
Around us turning time
Everywhere the secret
This everywhere life everyday

Pantoum

Completing overlaid each listening
 An unfamiliar map tracing desire
 So your obstruction is somewhere in this region
 Where lines of thought intersect roads

An unfamiliar map tracing desire
 An intervening screen soaked with rain
 Where lines of thought intersect roads
 A yellow dent to the sky

An intervening screen soaked with rain
 Cold equal to the height of that building
 A yellow dent to the sky
 Overthrows sight stunned amazed

Cold equal to the height of that building
 But not intact not able to conceal or hold
 Overthrows sight stunned amazed
 Forced to pass from hand to hand

But not intact unable to conceal or hold
 What we say revealing something we do not believe
 Forced to pass from hand to hand
 How little of the day we occupy

What we say revealing something we do not believe
 Avenues endured arm-in-arm
 How little of the day we occupy
 Choice blocked down dirt roads and cottages

Avenues endured arm-in-arm
 Reading at the same speed a valley clean through us
 Choice blocked down dirt roads and cottages
 But not intact unable to conceal or hold

Reading at the same speed a valley clean through us
 Because the living outnumber the dead
 But not intact unable to conceal or hold
 How little in the day we occupied

Because the living outnumber the dead
 A balcony's weightlessness dream
 How little in the day we occupied
 Pliant intervening remarks--misgivings

A balcony's weightlessness dream
 Anxiety exactly at this point shape drained away
 Pliant intervening remarks--misgivings
 A conspicuous slogan over place replacing it

Anxiety exactly at this point shape drained away
 So your obstruction is somewhere in this region
 A conspicuous slogan over place replacing it
 Making you understand you are making

So your obstruction is somewhere in this region
 Suggests mechanics priceless surface restraints
 Making you understand you are making
 "fully dressed and accessorized"

Suggests mechanics priceless surface restraints
 Eyes rolled upwards beyond the frame
 "fully dressed and accessorized"
 Sun amplified across the shoulders

Eyes rolled upwards beyond the frame
 Trees masts powerlines a thin cord of light
 Sun amplified across the shoulders
 As an interrogator fully aroused

Trees masts powerlines a thin cord of light
 Are registered errors lapses omissions
 As an interrogator fully aroused
 Rioting looting and assaults configured

Are registered errors lapses omissions
 After the emergency silence
 Rioting looting and assaults configured
 The message disengaged adrift full of promise

After the emergency silence
 But not intact unable to conceal or hold
 The message disengaged adrift full of promise
 Against a blue cyclorama snow echoing sun

But not intact unable to conceal or hold
 Large discordant adjacencies
 Against a blue cyclorama snow echoing sun
 As indicated safety or captive as parenthetical

Large discordant adjacencies
 Each place distinct but not exactly a word
 As indicated safety or captive as parenthetical
 Making you understand you are making

Each place distinct but not exactly a word
 Completing overlaid each listening
 Making you understand you are making
 So your obstruction is somewhere in this region

Excerpts From A Finale

1.

Catagory bird or wind

The echo of a name
Emptying out everything

Wrappings folded piled
Tent-like or abandoned

Hurried inland
From room to room

Round ripe fruit
Rusty implements

As an index to this
A chair floating downstream

You as the either
Whispered: don't stay here

Stranded meaning before
Like a catalogue of clouds

Colors teeter dissolve
Whom untrustingly forgave

The he is dead again
Dead at the wheel

The plain surrounding him
Stones grass fences

Wearing down rounding
Smooth white identical

2.

All you have to know

Is the he is dead
Contour wings or flames

Along his shoulderblades
Maximum speed portrait

Trance bluish undercurls
Impersonating a postcard

A chronological weight
Seized to undo

Surname spooling globe
Balled-up naked

Maximum speed portrait
How the flesh dreams

Squinting at the sea
Their backs unadorn

The threat of a sum
Hands wringing wet

Arbor wording sky
Scarred doorways

So disguised worthless
Our terrifying selves

Gouged radiant adrift

3.

Fell into our hands
Baskets trimmed with bells

Images to do harm
Dreams woven into cloth

Skull trees wishing trees
An endless knot

If the dead become birds

Nothing but deeds

They hand over their commodities

They burn their own village

Who can return the gift

Testimonie Skinne

1.

Doors too heavy

Elegancies

Windows too high

Cleere waight

Knot of liables

What remains

Admitteth lost

Midair whirle-

Winde plurall

Entring scared

To death struggling

Neerer trustingly

Admitteth I

Am at a loss

Originall I

Beeing as forraine

Sowre smoake

Lost midair

Smearred

Received

2.

Putting my hands
Where I can see them

Beguil'd
These low places

The water fills
Bell cold blind

Amiss sang so
All rage fled done

Sinnes affliction
Child's feather heart

Long saying flouds

Loose of decay
Delight for they

Touched our feet
As we slept

Fire not eloquence
Red isles

Nails and bread
Go recompense rehurst

By heart
Others express'd

Surely light slashing
Through handsomely

Strong days writ
In so good parts

Thenceforwards
So far despising

Anticipating
An end of reason

Forbidden to avoyd
Rain to compare to

Amidst our bodies

3.

Coale nakednesse

4.

Therupon

To collect
our last impurities

5.

Skull furnance
Slipperie paines

Splints of wood

Smoke, bare trees

5.

Hand that holds me
Perswading

Mightie desart

A remedy against water

A safe path closing

5.

Certain clouds
A boat frozen in the ice

Rockes Devills

Devills Soule

6.

Thicket-thicket
Thicket-thicket

6.

"...let-us-go-down, and-there-confuse-their-language..."

7.

Testimonie Skinne
Testimonie Skinne
Testimonie Skinne

7.

Lowder thinne selfe
Poyson'd thou maist
Honester voyce

8.

Lay hold upon

For my body

Such a house

Thy left hand

Of malediction

Borne slaine

In disorder

Of words

Ripening such

Of discord

Crackling

9.

Shoes filled
with ash

10.

Prepar'd deepe water

10.

Blue tile
Behalfe

Thou not intire
Five steps

Offices of ayre
Of water

Aske of that
Row of boys

White smocks
Eccho sicknesse

A man
Worm givest lacke

Deepe water wages
To his waist

His wide hands
Infirmities evill

Affliction givest
A white cloth

Over my nose
Broken vessels

And my mouth
Not to bee trusted

One hand cradling
Is a foole trusteth

Shoulder
And vanisheth away

Darkened last dayes
Feare hath cleane

Spotlesnesse scarres
Mercie markes

Guiding under
Wee recyve the bloud

As of death wetness
So

10.

"...and-began-to-speak-in-ether-tongues..."

11.
Leaving me
Onward to their destinations
I see the trails of
The light in his mouth
That burns me saying
Plagiary of colors trees desires
So as to inherit
That which was cast forth
The powdery inside of the seed
How the cut slept
Between me
Watchlessly dis-figuring
What remains to be seen

12.

Water: From which I rise.

Trees: To guide me outwards.

Names: Which are roots falling.

Fire: For which I find likenesses.

Height: Of burning ropes.

Water: What I recover.

Picture: Name.

Picture: What is found twice.

Lines: More than a series of points.

Fire: Out of which I am thrown.

Depth: Inevitable agreement.

Sign: What is made a body.

Horizontal: Doors. Arches. Gates. Into
which I am consumed.

Window: Portrait.

Portrait: Self portrait.

Picture: Which are roots.

Light: That which burns.

Road: By which destinations are fixed.

Names: Burning ropes.

Water: To guide me outward.

Land: On which I am spilled.

Child: Which is found twice.

Son: That is given away.

Sky: To call out.

Steps: What could be continued.

View: What is left out.

Vertical: What is meant by loss.

Fear: So to blacken out.

Page: Which is found twice.

Page: Which is consumed.

Page: From which to rise burning

Postscript

Black this mention overlays cancels
 A three bend pose A second story un-
 reachable likened to never-
 the-less as bright as ever overlaps
 our be-half

Comedy returns her shut
 perceived otherwise aroused her
 whiteness enforce(ful) her lips
 her hurried beyond question
 compels turns dis-solves

As the note said As sweet damp
 filtered back backing away how
 her hand a-gain as hurried for-
 bidden lip "lips" "always" "await"
 "her" meant

Avoiding stern its rough contain
 narrowly as to redress
 cover the tracks circle simply
 mis-taken (identity) take
 (my) ((h)and) to make
 allowances (allow) hold dis-
 cover dis- ease

Likewise adding insult saying ex-
 claims kindness/threats fleshing out
 a lunge a-way s-he or-
 deal begs holes tags ruin
 S-he alongside smoothed average noise
 Un-be-known-st trace

Signs/afflictions s-he became
 he-r the wall groans he-r
 cancelled door balcony/barricade to
 affix re-cant rebuttal increasingly
 blurs hooks dangles loopholes dis-
 figuring he-r self barbed draped

Mistaken the be-
 lovèd for the word mis-taking
 the how to write he-r
 as as the word for
 which it stands revealed he-r
 like A words failing touch

Takes no more than a body then
 incarnate then forsaken en-gender-ing
 the one the zero eerie eludes
 the expulsion the 26 letters

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- "Self Portrait" appeared in American Poetry Review.
- "Illustration" appeared in American Poetry Review.
- "Medicine Show" appeared in the Antioch Review.
- "Again As Ourselves" appeared in the Colorado Review.
- "A Semblance of Place" appeared in the Colorado Review.
- "Point of No Return" appeared in the Denver Quarterly.
- "A Theory of Endings" appeared in the Five Fingers Review.
- "Pas de Duex" appeared in the Five Fingers Review.
- "Testimonie Skinne" appeared in the Five Fingers Review.
- "The Splendor of Fear" appeared in the Five Fingers Review.
- "Abandon" appeared in the O Anthology 4: Subliminal Time.

NOTES

The archaically spelled words in "Testimonie Skinne" were individually sampled from the Oxford University Press editions of John Donne's *Sermons* and *Devotions*. The two struck out quotations are both from the *King James Bible*, the books of *Genesis* and *Acts*, respectively.

[back cover]

"In Randall Potts' poems, nature and language collide, and then proceed, each having been transformed by the other. The result is a kind of prayer and a kind of scream, as we witness the newly manifest being carried away on the stark clarities of his lines, "watchlessly dis-figuring / what remains to be seen." There is gratitude and there is terror: here they embrace."

--Ann Lauterbach