

## The Apocalypse

Then did senators in their might hold each other  
in the final embrace as if nothing would be left,  
looked one another in the eye and low swore *fidelitas*  
under the debt ceiling as the chamber's chandelier  
crashed like handrail icicles around the armed  
services committee, a jabbering merry-go-round  
of wedding-banded hands grasping lapels, *hail*  
for the war in Iraqistan, *please don't tell I asked*  
about who was gay as their flag pins burned  
like Fourth of July sparklers in a masquerade,  
*I salute thee* they moaned as lobbyists were crushed  
under oaken tables adorned with feathered quills  
and hand-lathed legs broken at the knees, *sir, my oath*  
we didn't pass the bill, filibustered over tee-time deals,  
last one then two then three uncapped their pens  
and signed each other with love, *I raise you, so help me*  
*god, I raise you*, as the nave cracked from bow to stern  
the conclave turned as moths to a light to cross their bodies  
in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti, so nakedly  
were they descended upon by raptors and it was done.

## **Drawing the Dog**

I'd start with a bear and pare down  
a massive kingdom surrounded by gardens of piked heads  
surfs on their knees scrubbing the paths of stone  
trumpets carved from tusks announcing the arrival of great personage  
the king rolling and fucking in his silky concubine  
slaves carrying gurneys of fruit and cakes and wine  
enemies a thousand strong poised in the forest  
blood stained blades gutting the sacrifice

I'd start with an obscenity  
a fat man in boils pointing to the battle on a map  
the queen secreting away her only son disguised as a beggar  
a labyrinth of sewers spilling into the sea  
an old man's rowboat and a week's rations  
a storm of men panting from the tree line  
fletchers tearing asunder birds for arrows  
the strain of winches locking down the catapults  
the bones of philosophers tossed in dungeons as deep as the earth's core

I'd start with the truncheon clinched in the blackened hands of lusty guards  
siege engines and torture and lynching and bayonets and blazing villages  
baskets of chum tossed from impregnable towers to the plague below  
the earth spinning off its axis into the abyss from which it came

I'd start with a war

## Winter Storm Warning

There are times when nothing arrives,  
the post, a comet they promised,  
news like troop withdrawal, news  
like talk of peace at peace talks for peace,  
the Pope, if we can count him in, apologies,  
the signifiers of love or the fight for it,  
Petrarchan sonnets--if that's your thing,  
a blackout across Punxsutawney--for once,  
the fat carcass of that ritualized scaredy cat rat,  
a little abatement of treachery & icy conditions,  
cessation of emergency broadcast EKG hum,  
a real blood moon, something in the apocrypha  
we can sleep through, make love to or eggs...  
anything but counting down what remains in effect.

## Ophelia

Through madness  
we assume, no one ever sees her,

her descent,  
the creepy willow, obsidian brook,

the dirigent's  
sliver conducting her inculpable lyric

dowered unto  
that auditorium of weeping stones.

To be clear,  
drown'd, yes, drown'd. Alas, was she drown'd.

I'm glad  
for the clowns who follow

in the scene  
just after, their graven argal

of logic  
& Newtonian grasp of the fall

of things,  
their grubby hands & bony baubles;

such darkness  
in the lunny alignment of tragedy

one desires  
the humor cut from the throat.

## Double Dose

So there I was, talking to myself,  
stopped in the middle of the crosswalk,  
all the cabs and dump trucks and hybrids  
and hotdog venders and limousines blocked  
in all directions...miles from my position,  
a center of gravity, a center of vituperations,  
shits and giggles, a center of attention undoing all the yoga  
and meditations and breathing exercises  
necessary for just making it through the day,  
these days, oh, a source of ruin, ground zero,  
a source of contention, a human X, an eternity,  
a center of the universe as it was unfolding  
around me, unfolding and undoing itself,  
no planetary alignment, no chakra, no origin,  
a "get out of the road," a "fuck you," a "Jesus Christ,"  
Walt Whitman's assumption, a sinkhole, asshole,  
fuckhead, dickface, obstruction, accident waiting to happen,  
an impediment to progress, a stop doing stupid shit,  
a finale of honking, cabbages and tomatoes, bad reviews,  
the sadness of an empty theatre, the sadness of empty phone booths,  
one-room apartments, an eviction, an incident,  
second place, a Pluto, failed literary movement,  
not enough bus tokens, an out of order, a closed for lunch,  
an umbrella opened under a ladder in front of a black cat  
beneath a falling piano, an extra, spilled drink, a pain in the ass,  
a never heard from again, a not again, an over and over,  
a conundrum, singularity, last straw, rained out, rained in,  
and, you know, caught way off guard