

## AIM HIGHER?

For the sake of my own survival  
trapped in a thinning bluecoat blown away  
I witness wicked frost stalk and prey.  
Gales transform snow into searing sleet  
chimney stacks whisper abject regards  
no reprieve from winter's despondent rage

For the sake of my own survival  
buried betwixt chamomile and clay  
statistics have no name; no more say  
I drink deep! Spirits sting my broken mouth  
fixed hollow in harrowing rebuke  
no respite from the from cerulean tidal waves

For the sake of my own pOw! pOw!  
pOw! Survival is fleeting pOw! pOw!  
Forgive me, America, for I know not  
pOw! what I do. Fear drives mine actions  
shields my cobalt legacy absolves my guilt  
little reason to do what's right

INTIMATE EMBRACE

I pressed my palms on your lower back

Navels whispered salty secrets

Tightly pressed limbs restless and clumsy

Ivory teeth gnashed; clumsy nails gripped and raked

Muted gasps hovered amongst a layer of quiet

Ankles clung against damp sheets

Tethered and tangled, weathered and wrangled

Eclipsing thighs twitched and shuddered

Exhausted, drained, stained

Mirrored elation exhaled

Bone bleached tender recesses

Rigid remorse reluctant and subdued

Admonishment ticked on high tabulating coarse time

Chill air swept over goosed flesh

Empty husks discarded; what have we become?

## Unconditional

The struggle is real. Those horse-hair blankets remind me of a younger year with my father's family. His eager siblings dragging me to flea markets insistent on imprinting their love for antiques and authentics. Glinting crucifix, light and hollow. Is this a fruitless tree? Sturdy, physical matter but to what end? I look at the empty crib and aim the question at me. At you? At us. Are we as useless as an apple tree devoid of cores? Silly copper-faced man am I. I know you are more than a DNA incubator, gene replicator. I am ashamed. Angry that I am unable to unthink unsteady thoughts. But they are my mine and a fundamental part of who I am. Will you still love me if you know more? Well, I cracked my unrequited love's guest toilet with the ointment jar you gave me to treat my eczema. I don't know why I want to be close to that woman. She captivates like you do so I guess that means something. If not, what's that say about us? Not us. Just me, I suppose. Maybe I am only drawn to her in the way of feral beast. I have hunted, slayed, and eaten my fill. All that is left is to pass on my genetic sequence. Pass on my way of life, whatever that may be. Her tree has matured fruit plucked from the thickest of branches. That ointment fell and struck the toilet bowl like a meteor. Hit its mark, intended or otherwise. I retrieved the jar and said nothing.

Hustletown, TX

“You are a product of your environment. So choose the environment that will best develop you toward your objective.” W. Clement Stone

Pure product made in Texas. Houston  
pride swells with each Timmy Chan's Combo  
and saturates my genes like Sta-Flo creases.  
Admiration sharp and stiff like switching lanes on 45  
when I exit state lines  
I take every precious stoned smile and  
think slow Styrofoam laced thoughts  
about bullish Texans rocketing past astronomical comets

what takes my breath away is that skyline upon return  
my lifeline lost at sea away from  
city memories of yesteryear sustain me like Blue Bell

has or Mrs. Baird's or BUC-EE'S or Rudy's Brisket  
produced with that Lonestar state of mind as am I