

back when you used to be living

i am playing super mario bros
in granny's living room & can never
best the lizard at the end of the castle
he awaits upon a bridge bellowing fire
& soaring across the tv in pixelated colors
you tell me to dive over the serpent's
horns & sever the ropes of the bridge
with a glowing axe that i never
noticed before the dragon wiggles his toes
in thinned air plummets to an offscreen demise
& then you take that final shot
& then your heart collapses upon itself
& then into deep rivulets of time's blood
you stretch wide pink clean toes

back when you used to be living

i am laying diagonally across the foot
of your bed watching tv the commish
i think some cheesy sitcom where michael
chiklis is more gut than muscle & more
joke than grimace he plays drums
one episode another a suspect deceives
a lie detector test by inserting a thumbtack
into the tip of his shoe & pressing it when he
needs to lie chiklis discovers this & makes
this suspect walk up & down the labyrinthine
stairways of his precinct forcing this man to keep
stepping on the tack i ask if that is what labor

back when you used to be living (continued i)

is like & you tell me sort of only you never
stop walking the cancer in your neck i'm told
size of a softball your skin color
of paper yellowed by too few days i touch
your right foot & pour tears onto your left
in a room filled with too much stillness

back when you used to be living

i am riding shotgun in your chevy blazer
glass water bong you hold one-handed
steering column with one knee ignite bowl
conjuring tiny cyclones of pot smoke
we pass this burning chamber tie-dyed
& stamped with ceramic south park characters
all summer long driving around our suburb
telling jokes getting high to santana
after the blast a trail of smoke tracing
a chord of grayness through air between
your lips & iron barrel this final smolder
engulfing you in cordite & loneliness

back when you used to be living

we play rush louder than every war
our air guitars & drums silent orchestras
our hair grows longer longer longer your arm
hypodermic tattoo tapestry i once even
hold the belt for you as you search for prod
cowering veins with poison saying stupidly

back when you used to be living (continued ii)

i'm so sorry i'm so sorry to your family your
wife your kids your brothers sister mother
& father & so many others left just left
our tears soaking into this drowning earth

back when you used to be living

i am reading poems to your mother's
womb you placental hopeful never
to be realized i a light wave forgetting
to glow when i find out you are
expected i get sober for the first time
in years grabbing a ball of heroin size
of a ping pong ball & hurl it into
the toilet in my parent's pink tennessee
house she wakes me up crying umbilical
string already lost the kite of you
woven in branches of unseen trees

**after mark turcotte /for michael beckham, sandra harris, franklin hefflinger, jeremy baker, jason lyons*

my nike commercial

the camera opens on a third-world child

his fingers	a quilt of scars
pale stitchwork	a raised lattice
floating memory	atop his skin

the camera next pans left or right as

pregnant women	hem their wombs
rusting shears	dismember infant feet
ankles bound	in umbilical servitude

the camera zooms in on a sewing machine needle

mechanized proboscis	stitching poverty
sadness seaming	together crimson
dehiscence of	tears blood years

screen goes black as white logo fades in then out

ättestupa

breathing / hurts / bone

grinds bone / steps over

wind / air / gales

nothing then / falls / releases

limbs stretch / becoming lines

segments / pieces of runes

fleshy ideogram / arm

buckles / into a letter / *wunjo*

joy / then opens / arcs

like a breath / or a wound / *laguz*

growth / finally / rocks

splinter / arms & legs / into sharp

tight / angles / *eihwas*

enlightenment / feeding / earth

my / too salty / blood

bobbit sonnet

i want to be the blade severing the manhood from all sexist aggression / i want to be the jagged fist for the word / *no* / i want to be the car lorena drove / i want to be the field she flung her husband's dismembered phallus into only i want to be forever burning / i want the drying blood on her hands to transform into cardinals or scarlet tanagers or ibises that might fly her into a world where nothing is ever taken / or that his severed limb would bleed & mix with seafoam summoning a goddess that would step out of an enormous oyster / i want to be a pipe bomb flinging myself against the walls of misogynistic oppression / i want the frozen tears of each violated mother & sister & daughter to be my shrapnel / i want my fuse to be braids of their torn skirts & hair / i want my casing to be their broken fingernails & chipped teeth / i want every brick of male-chauvinism to crumble from the force of my percussion / i want to be sure my son doesn't inherit a world filled with rapists yet / sometimes feel as if even writing poems is just like throwing rocks into a vast & empty void

canada douche poem

we are a function-first company / & authenticity is everything to us
coyote corpses / lined & readied for skinning then photographed

since 1957 / we have focused on making best-in-class products by using
faces / tucked in obscene angles / under amputated paws

the highest quality / materials & craftsmanship / to deliver a product
of blood / droplets congealing into fat rubies / in snow beside stiffening fur

that performs when & where it's needed most / in making those products
some coyotes / have blood on their muzzles from gnawing at their ensnared leg as

we are committed / to being transparent about where & how we make / our products
some coyotes' / lips are dry & smooth / eyes filled with pain & fear

including the ethical sourcing / & responsible use / of animal products
i see / one tail broken / probably in panic / probably just more suffering before death

we believe / all animals are entitled to humane treatment / in life & death
at least eighty percent / of the hide must be intact / so it may be flayed

& we are deeply committed / to the ethical sourcing & responsible use
of meat / wet / under the cold knife / fur removed & sewn to a hood

of all animal / materials / in our products
sold / for a thousand dollars / & touted by idiot actors & hypocrite hipsters

we / do not condone any willful mistreatment / neglect / or acts
as their lives / become written in the scars of lost constellations

that maliciously / cause animals undue suffering / our standards for the sourcing / & use
no more / scents to prey / or stories to warn our children

of fur / down / & wool reflect our commitment that materials / are sourced
no more / silvering moons to chase or nights to howl or snow to worship or fear

from animals / that are not subject to willful mistreatment / or undue harm
with their last breath / the biggest piece of america dies