

Woods

This will really be about the spoon. The spoon will really be about how it will always hurt. She hits in beauty, storming up to me from the kitchen after I ran. My brother is lying on the sand (smacking his burned (or is it (bleeding)) back) outside. Mother with the chili-red wooden spoon howls, and she swings the weapon as one on a horseback. Horses were foreign to Capitola before the new shipbuilding came. The new grasses came, which will always hurt. The hills, they flee from the sea.

Sweet with spice under my nails, remembering the taste of my brother, I flee from Mary. She cooks OK, and it is the beach, so it is OK. It is also the opposite of waterless Australia, where there are still the poor, red-and-white Aboriginal Dreaming lines.

Back then, I didn't realize I could end the punishment so soon. She reaches me and the green lines of lightning go from my white ass to my eyes, spreading out into the lunch-time sky. Perhaps tomorrow I'll get hit again, or maybe I've killed her, and I will starve, wandering and wandering the edges of the dreaming lines. Will I step to the side. It is OK because she does not have the spoon anymore. I have the spoon, and it burns my hand.

Once, we rode very cleanly on the trails on horses to mass. The height was enormous, and the horses behind us bolted ahead toward the red-bricked chapel, spooking the birds storming and swinging through the redwoods.

To be alive is to be OK. To feel the spoon on your virgin ass is a higher thing. Sean didn't know this, and that's why I had scratched him and left him on the sand. But there wasn't really a reason, when she asked me why I had.

When Sean asked me why I had ripped the spoon from her, he was holding his ribs, still curious. I replied that I needed to know what it was like to *not* sleep, to think of my choice, its consequences, as she had asked me to. Serpent: line on the desert. In the end I woke up the next day, and I read in the news that motherboards can now make their own lands as we sit upright, dreaming.

A Letter of Concern, Written at a Characterless Reading

Niece, I see you, writhing under your
aunt's poetry. Popped into this bookstore by your
parents, you think the world belongs to you.

True, auntie could excuse herself
from the podium instead of
itemizing the hikes she and Uncle Skipper took.
It's like shoveling in too much pie at Thanksgiving,

I know. I see you. And niece, I don't know what this is like,
but by my judgments -- the slumped posture,
the way the father keeps his foot close by --
the aunt and I will more likely put into the world
books: the secret way of erasing the young.

perpetual warfare

saying it

the mouth opens
like the english channel

senseless
lives as marbles

why games with
know not i

the aim

it cycles
set out to do

piece-
shift

what archers used to do
s of gold oiled
lawrence's alliance
with the arabs

absurd shots

on sand

a tower

holds

or does

it

twin

as shadow

yet holds

in our memory
we can trust that

senseless we can say it

Swimmer From Station Island

To them like glass barnacles
are my mistakes. Worthless,
they told me, as I backstroked
in spring between Alcatraz and the shore.

Between the splashes I saw sky.
Heaven is honeycombed with water's arrivals and entries.

As backbones die off and shells keep,
the Bay, the sun watching like a proctor,
glances to the dried oaks and creeps the marshlands
and, finally, slides her hand down from the rocks:
the sea's sweat as solid salt, sharp and chalky.

I know this, and this
is why we must test the Bay again:
is she deficient,
is she homeschooled,
is there somewhere beneath her slack surface
a wave, hardened, and emerging?

Tread these barnacles,
they'll splinter to powder.
Converge, Land, and in your many voices
assess how star-like my glass crust becomes.

You won't notice the rigid hood
of a harbor wave suspended from behind.

After Picking

Jar — mason or china —
who can tell my secret

berry patch, where it is.
I stuffed them in
and forced them, capped them,
forced the whole glass batch into the fridge.

Golden raspberries, how can I
ensure you rot?

Brought out into the open air,
the jar for the berries ossify to porcelain,
silver inlaid, nothing else.
Respect this scene, its form.

But behind the mustard, under the fridge light,
stare in full jaundice the berries,
packed against the jar's thin crystal
like people against the inner skin of a city train.

I picked too much and searched too far.
The question is hiding on my way to the trash.

The words I say will change,
but what they contain will corrode.