

Lullaby

I am searching for a lullaby.
The kind my mother never
sang to me even though she tried...
you are my sunshine,
my only sunshine-you make me
happy when skies are gray...

The day I left for college
mom squeezed me,
leaned in close and whispered,
don't change.

I am searching for a lullaby.
The kind my mother
never sang to me
because she couldn't see me.
She wanted a good little girl
so she dressed me
in skirts and curls.
On Halloween
I dressed myself
as any kind of boy
I could be.
Once a year,
I dressed as me.

As I got older,
It got worse.
Periods
Prom
Mom still curled my hair,
but I combed it back
when she wasn't looking.
Tucked it away
in my brother's white
Georgetown Hoyas cap.

I am searching for a lullaby.
The kind my mother
doesn't know.
The kind of lullaby
that could wake me up.
Not with the beeping of an alarm
but the rising of a sun.

I am ready for my own son
to slowly rise and
light the inside of my skin
so that I may find the words
that hide there.

For too long,
I have wandered
your alleyway.
For too long,

I have asked for
your permission
to be me.

But not today.
My legs are shaking,
but the dirt holds my feet
and my words lift
my voice so that I
may sing this lullaby
that needed to come
from me.

I am not wrong.
I am a beautiful boy
who bleeds.

And when the bloodshed stops,
the facial hair breaks
through skin.
The sun will still back me up.
The dirt will still hold me up
and I will keep singing myself
awake.

Passing

Don't sit too close.

He might notice

the smallness of your hands,

the shape of your face,

the strain in your voice.

Uncle Dave

When I go home
to Mount Vernon,
Washington.

He is the only man
who really looks
me in the eyes.

His are brown,
deep as the sound
of him playing

Hallelujah
on guitar.

Prior to the Flight Stage

Throughout nature there are fascinating occurrences of many kinds.

- 5...hand shaking
- 4...I fill the syringe with the thick liquid
- 3...replace 18-gage needle with 23-gage
- 2...flip the cap off
- 1...plunge the tip into my thigh and sigh...

This is not natural.

Throughout the larval stage a caterpillar has to shed its skin several times in order to accommodate further growth.

vocal chords stretch
and yawn greet the dawn
with new depth
deep vibration
in my chest

How can you mess with god's design?

Immediately upon shedding its old skin the larva fills with air. This allows the new skin to take on that size giving the caterpillar as much room as possible to grow into this new size.

I run finger
along first freshly
shaven upper lip
all doubt vanishes

What are you?

The caterpillar hangs itself from a branch using silk that it excretes from the end of its body.

I stand in front
of the mirror
awestruck
lines in arms
definition of muscle
where there wasn't
before

You freak.

The caterpillar forms a hard case around itself and turns into a pupa or chrysalis.

stretching arms
in awkward positions
I inch body
into compression

Are you a boy or a girl?

Actually what occurs prior to the flight stage of development is by far more intriguing and captivating.

Your words

your words drive semi trucks
come at me with the full
force of trains they
collide into gray walls
like graffiti gleaming
exploding spray paint cans
into poetry

your words wake up scars
swim inside wounds
dive into these ears
dip into soft spaces
in the back of my mind
tracing stretch marks
of new thoughts they provoke
then they leave me
hanging dangling
from bridges and the
edges of wings fluttering

I'm shuddering
in the breeze
while your words
etch murals in the wind

your words can travel like the wind

knock down telephone poles
and power lines
they sketch out new lines
for communication
they run the marathon
of in-between
build a home there
build windows
in concrete walls
of skin and silence
intensify the salt
taste of difference
then diminish that
difference into dust

your words are serious
smart
they chart a new physics
of resistance
friction rubbing
against the distance
between us