

leaving the solar system

i'm as lost as a planetary

probe its path badly

calculated or totally

uncalculated first your

gravitational attraction drew

me in held me close then

flung me back to her only to

whip round again accelerate

head to the outer regions i'll

end up in inky black the

sun's dim pinprick a billion miles

behind no hope now of entering orbit

around either of you i've reached

escape velocity sounds good but what a nightmare

## help me

i killed again last night  
left her  
in deep woods under dead leaves

my soul feels dry dirty I'm  
empty take-out styrofoam the  
tire-blackened fragments skitter  
inside a midnight parking structure

the Voice shouts **DO IT DO IT DO IT**  
head pounds red pours  
draws me down: drowns me

my hand trembles the one that strangles  
I whimper *stop stop*  
what was once me flutters in a cage but  
this time i dropped my wallet I hope they find it

**THEY'LL KILL YOU KILL YOU KILL YOU**

i'm already dead

## *Escape Velocity*

Memories keep gaining on her,  
roiling in the rear view mirror,  
a swollen boil, a scudding purple squall line.

Knife tip on her throat.  
Muscles like water. Despair,  
then limp submission as he  
drives and drives and drives himself  
into her body.

September's fully ten months back, but  
she can't shake the rape. So her car surges,  
accelerator a comfort underfoot, like a friend's  
supportive arms and listening ear, until  
the car veers on a curve, concrete  
condenses all the pain into a single  
vanishing dot.

## *Death Grip*

Smell yourself, putrefying in buzzing sun. Green-bottle flies walk on your eyeball. Maggots burrow, half-submerged. See them spin and turn, churn skin into slime, a mish-mash, no sort of flesh. Accept that you will never again run, laughing, in a light rain.

Now plunge your hand in! Dig along a leg. Find the shin. Close your fist around that bone. Feel softening flesh squish out between your fingers. Feel bits of your own corpse embed beneath your nails. Grasp! - as you would hold a lover. Let the climax build. Hold it there.

Next, the strict rule for withdrawal. You may shake that wet flesh off your hand, or palm-wipe on your flannel shirt. But no washing. No, let that wet waste dry like paste.

Carry it with you, grit they'll one day bury. As your fingers flex to grasp a wineglass stem, or to shampoo a grandchild's silken hair: Death, scum skin on your skin, spectral despair.

# *naked glare*

(after a. r. ammons)

i dreamt i was walking into a scholarly  
conference but alas i was bare-assed

how very embarrassing i could feel  
the cool air on my nether cheeks the

muscles there twitched in response well  
how well can you cover things up seems

to be the question for our time me i'm  
interested in uncovering just about everything

i've got that's what i'm about wanting to  
root and rout out every bit and barnacle

of rot and itch until i get down  
to the knitty gritty then i'll stop