

Pushed

*The world need not waited for Descartes to change thought.
Icarus had found out long ago that wax melts.*

Prisons are carved from time. Eroded
marble entombs father and son, a battered cage
and a barless window to eye the birds
fly over the whispering sea. An eagle's nest blocks
their view. Father and son gaze while the mother
pushes hatchlings out of the nest. Babes murdered
or taught to live. They see birds as freedom,
feathered keys eclipsing the Mediterranean sun.
It calls for them. They'll leap for it though
they can't see the bubble-green foam curdling.

Eagles twitch and scream when plucked. Stained
pride made bald. Starved, Daedalus
mutters *Icarus, save your bread
for new beaks*. He orders *darken
your candle*. Icarus whispers to the flame;
they plan and glue and growl in the dark.
Emotions change like wax, unlike eagles
who always twitch and scream at false promise.
They do not come back when plucked.

Daedalus watches his son drop, searches
his son's shoulder for a wing, a feather,
anything. Icarus fell from the sun.
With time and flight, Daedalus found
that wax melts. If he could land,
he might have known that wax cools
again. He might have never pushed.

The Kilns of Eden

When He pressed us
into existence, was it as a child
free palming? No intention
but to squeeze and extrude
every last bit of muck

through His clenched fist,
not even smiling on a summer's
dusk? Or did He do it
slow, all Demi Moore
not sleeping while that slick
Swayze of a Holy Ghost
comes from behind Him
and saturates His clay
stained hands? Were we

molded on a turntable?
Is our essence motion
and water being folded
into our center, endlessly
turning in on ourselves
until we've nowhere
left to climb but upward
and through the spaces
He so providentially left
open? Did He bake us

when He was done?
The kilns of Eden
firing, our skins coalescing
and caking in the forge.
Burning, burning
until the last of our atoms
stop moving and form
a vessel to pour
and hold and carry
and paint and break
when dropped. We don't
even know if He left

a hole. We
don't know if He
forced His divinity
down Adam's core and
ribbed his insides. But

I do know, at least,
when I'm away
from my child
I can still feel
the ebb of God
pulling His hands
out of me and deciding
to rest. I exhale.

I wail and whine,
begging to have
the hands of my creator
inside my bones again,
to know, though
forming, the kilns
of Eden are warming
to work, begging
the dire winds to die

enough to hear
His feet pattering
at the pedal
and promising me
to never stop spinning,
to always leave a space
between His thumbs
so I can hope
to meet the face
that worked six days
and stopped.

Comunicado

My mom once broke a rolling pin
across my oldest brother's back
when he blamed her for leaving
my dad. And just like that
he was done asking why.
Moved in with my dad that day. He
escaped kitchen based weaponry

but found my dad could hurt too.
And I'm here typing about this
disappointment and always about the
disappointment I am
for my soon to be wife.
This is how I inherited love; I can't help
how it's expressed and
I guess all I want to say
is you can't own
a tongue. Y mientras
pienso sobre todo,
estoy sin ayuda. Lo siento
por todo. Te quiero,
mis ojos. Sin usted mi alma
no respiraría. Te quiero
mi dolor. Sin usted
mi lengua nunca se relajaría.
Te quiero mi todo.
Sin usted sería todo. Nothing
can be owned, especially words
and the sounds they arrive in.
And I also know
that a language is yours to own
if your parents yelled at you in it.
Every tired disappointment
that clicked and lolled
from my dad's tongue
when he looked down
from my brother's eyes
and muttered "mm-que-la",
short for que la chingada,
beginning the inevitable,
translated, what the fuck?
My siblings suffered
and got hit. Our backs tested
by rolling pins and languages alike.
The disciplines of my parents' love.
And I type here to tell you
that I love my fiance anyways.

That in some way I'm only here
to make myself better for her,
because I know she deserves everything
I never was; she deserves always what
I could be, porque estas palabras
son miyas even if they are en español.
Because when I think of the rolling pins
breaking across all our backs,
the violent expressions of love
they feel must be beaten into you, I
think about my mother's strength
and the answers she could never give him
no matter how hard she swung.
I think about the defiance
of my brother's spine,
breaking the rolling pin
and about my dad's disappointment,
and my brother's eyes and ears
lowering with dad's. Unable to meet anything
but the gaze of his feet, I think
about the lessons learned
in the silence of shame,
Dad could hurt too. My brother
shaming Dad by asking the question
Dad could not answer,
why the love he bore failed
to make his children behave
and to make my mom be faithful.
And I think about the word
comunicado and how that word means
communicated as an adjective
and a release as a noun.

Screaming in the Forge

My life has been spent
wondering what to do
with my hands. I fold
them over and turn
my wrists up. Revealing

the scar I etched
trying to cut open a can
of tuna when I was three.
My dad screaming. Me
screaming, all blood,
the little bones peeking
out among pink, and still
no tuna. Older

now, and still raw, I offer
my wrists up to God,
occasionally, in a church
where I have always talked
to Her. Telling myself
She hears me, asking
Her about grandma's thinning
memory and dad's fidelity,
asking Her about why I can't
stop working long enough
to keep a girl, and why it hurts
so bad to see everyone
around me praying. What are they

saying to God? Does their grandmother
have demen-
tia? Do they
use a timesheet to prove their
use? How could they
begin to ask God for things
they know not to ask for,
to ask why parents of parents
forget and why they can't
clock out of being a husband?
Why might they collapse
their hands into a dive
and bow their heads
when all they need is to do
is form a fist? To cease
Godspeak and honor

the voices in their head,
the authors of their own sanity.

I look around the pews
and see the birth of myself.
In the uterine heat
of God's pussy. The walls
shaking me loose. Me
screaming in the forge,
screaming for memory
and authorship of my own
thought and creed, deed
and ring finger, screaming
for grandma doesn't remember
her only child brave enough
to stay through being forgotten,

screaming for being cheated on
and cheating on and desiring
others to wake up with me
to the lack of prayer they've always
had. Me screaming, screaming
for forgetting myself and failing
to trust that through all
else I am somehow
a good man. Me screaming,
sobbing in the placenta,
my neck craning through mucus
and straining for the eternal
embrace of my own hands.