

**Online chat of the national suicide prevention hot line freezes**

& I am

found scared

& I hear the blood of my brother's shadow

singing,

Screaming, from underneath my fingernails,  
running, for help, down my pant leg

& I wonder if he remembers the day he went 2 the hospital

& I wonder if 2nite, I will, @last b found

½ naked by the river.

& the brook runs, underneath a dulling moon,

I was hoping for anyone 2 catch me at the water's edge &

The computer keys burn to the touch &

The frozen screen glitches my only message

Hi-

Hi-

far away from here, Hi-

So as 2 rob me of a beautiful metaphor. Hi-

2 brothers drowning in the same stream. Hi-

&

I wonder who the dead message when they're tired of the haunt.

There is no one to help me now, &

& that is good enough. whether survival is a  
permanent state,

I was hoping to survive long enough, Or,

For sum1 to save me, If *this* is good enough.

& &

I will. It is.

## Conversations with Ezekiel outside the valley of dry bones

*Tell me what you know of death, and I will tell you a story.*

I know the number of dead things past could bury the world twice over,  
I know if this were the case, i would like to be buried underneath my ancestors

*And what else?*

Death may also be a way of life, a state of being, the only available word in a mouth from which  
all others have been ripped out, a promise, a wish.

*And what else?*

My brother and I don't speak anymore  
I forget what we said before the break, so death may also be a memory, or  
a way to describe one,  
The last steam rising from droughted earth.

*Just now, the sovereign lord stole me from my rest and led me through a valley of  
dry brittle bones and asked,*

*son of man, can these bones live?*

*The lord alone knows, I replied*

*And so he said, prophesize to these bones Ezekiel. Fill them with breath They will come alive. I  
did as my lord commanded*

*I recognized them all as they were, cooks mothers painters faces*

And what else?

*I saw god as he is,*

*A Necromancer*

*Burning his children for sacrifice, and  
bringing them back to life*

A story is a bad habit

is fractured glass tempered to shatter softly into a memory

is the mistaken impress of your mother's voice calling through a crowded room

*Do you hear her voice often?*

Yes.

*Are you lost?*

I am a path yawning along the water's edge.

*And when the drought comes?*

I will lose the water.

*Where does the path lead?*

I suppose towards the valley.

*Will you bring your family with you?*

No, but I hope to meet them there.

I hope to see how we rattle.

I hope to come alive, at last.

*Are you scared?*

No, I've been toying with the dead,

Since I saw my brother split into many selves,

This is how I remember him.

I live with his ghost, but

Dave himself lives amidst the salt and mist of

A dead fishing town.

My brother is a wave.

*I'd like you to come with me.*

*I'd like the breath life into your bones.*

Tell me first of Fracture.

Tell me first why each of my memories

Looks like my grandmother in her casket.

Tell me first why death seems illusory, like

Something discerned when first we saw ghosts.

*Come home.*

Home is a place you die slower.

How do I say sorry without it sounding like a cry for redemption?

Have you ever looked down after climbing too high?

*Come home.*

Home is a handful of dirt from every place I could fall in love.

I want to take my mother to a thousand weddings.

I want my brother beside me each time.

I am home and lost. I am in love, but I remember too much.

*Do you not crave my breath?*

With each act of necromancy, each time I think on the past,

Another death is carved out of my chest.

I think the only way to come alive is to forget

everything.

**A family history in which the mind is a river,**

It is a strange thing to drink from a memory,  
To fill up on what has been emptied, or stolen.

To watch a river forget to drink, to forget her progeny,  
Is to empty myself into the gulf of a foreign ocean .

What we know of disease, is  
a river runs its course and then begins again .  
What we know of a river, is  
It doesn't recognize home, or the dead rock it runs over as family .

What we know of disease, is  
Home forgets how to scream your name through white capped mist as the river bends .  
What we know of a river, is  
My grandmother slowly forgetting that she will die without us by her side,  
Though we will be there,  
Digging our toes into the last living mud by the water's edge,  
Checking her vitals ourselves

What disease knows is that death began a river bed  
What the river knows, but will never tell you, is its past,  
What the river knows, but can never tell you again, is how the Charles River used to smell during  
South Boston summers,

I think my family story lives in the milk ebbing between my grandmother's eyes,                      Once,  
She mentioned there was a statue of my great-great something, or maybe  
There was a composer,                      the final note of every coda lost in the mediterranean,  
                    Turning over piles of smooth stones,

Where is the river that mothered you?

If you still can,

Find her.

## For Brant Rock, Massachusetts

How many ways are there to know a place?  
Is it the ocean which gives its name to the shore? Or,  
Is every new name to an old thing an erasure of entire histories?

I found the rusted nail that gave my brother *staphylococcus*,  
On a nameless stretch of shore,  
Wiped the blood in the sand, and waited for the tide to ask its question.  
Swollen, stretching, ear to the sky and moon, at last,  
A sorry hand belonging to a figure, trapped, and indebted, to swat at the coast on behalf of the  
ocean, reached for the spot on the sand where my offering lay.

Its fingers, clear film wrapped around bone, like a gelatin,  
Let the grains of sacrifice run over its palms. The waves stopped, and  
The water line tried, and out of the water came *a beast*.  
A thing with history is named again and *again*, until it does not remember itself.  
A thing with history takes captives,  
cursed souls doomed to serve what has been too much named.  
The figure spoke,

*I swallow the blood from entire armies,  
I keep them in my throat, to remember their names,  
To speak them aloud to the stars when the water is calm.  
I can take his name from you my friend, so  
He will not be forgotten.*

The street behind us is called Ocean Ave.  
It is an ancient path, called many things by other people,  
And before people, its name was bird song, or silence, or the vacuous popping of a dying throat.  
Just up the road, the first music broadcast interrupted radio transmissions of passing ships,  
the tenuous whimper of a violin, and a young man's shaky mimic of Luke the  
Evangelist.  
I can hear an old ship's radio, bouncing *O, Holy Night* off the water's surface, whenever the  
figure opens its mouth.

My brother walked barefoot over a dying town, and  
Found the hospital we were born in ;  
Maybe that nail once held up the sign for the ice cream shop,  
Or the restaurant that burned down twice, or fell off the siding of my family's first home.

The shops we loved as kids are shuttered up,            their pastel names faded to the color of a  
memory.

If the ocean does not give name to the shore, then at least,  
it offers            *erosion*.

How many ways are there to know a place?

I believe less than there are to forget one:

                 the refraction of light in a bottle            a staph infection            dissolution.

                                 The figure spoke,

*I will keep this name,*

*as I have the names of entire generations lost to the sea,*

*I will keep your brother safe for you,*

*but know the pain stays, and*

*You will not be able to call it anything.*

As the whole world stilled by its hand,

I spoke to that which has been called a thousand things:

memory            ocean            death,

Unname this place for me, but let me keep my brother close,

Take the rust off the nail as the blood of this town,

hemorrhaging,            a swelling infection,

                                 the *jutting rock* that almost killed him.

I want to unknow this home,            and find it again.

I will call it something else.

I will let the ocean name it,    the shore            or the moon,

Whichever will most alleviate its suffering

In the slow spread of disease.

Call it something like bird song, like the space in between a violins notes,

Call it mercy, Call it mercy, or,

                                 Forgotten.

**Riddle:** How far can a dog run into the forest?

**Answer:** Halfway, because after that, it's running out of them

[languid mouth choking out breath,

Stumbling over felled trees, and

The sharp smile of bryars.

I would like to ask why the dog kept running, but

He has only ever been taught commands, so, I say at the edge of the tree line,

*Tell me why you kept running.]*

[I pick thorns from bloody pox on his jowls,

ticks from behind the ears, and

He leads me back through the forest,

Favoring his front left paw, as I ford him through thickets of ivy

And carry him over rocky streams.

The brush clears, the path leads to the side of I-95, and

My question sits in the air, a rotted branch

caught in the ivy swinging from the trees.]

I don't remember why I started running.

I stopped coming home some nights.

My house surrounded by forest, maybe

I didn't want to be the one to find his body, maybe,

I was so often caught in the crossfire,

My love became synonymous with exit wounds, maybe

I wanted to get to school on time,

Without washing the blood off someone's knuckles, and

Do you hear, the makings of a riddle?

**Riddle:** How far can a boy run into the city?

\_\_\_\_\_ : There is no answer.

[Just slow choking breath.

The hot lick of asphalt,

The fraying corner of a train ticket, but

The difference,

The difference between the dog and I,]

The Dog knew to stop at the tree line.