

# **Nerve Figures**

**Jake Berry**



## **NERVE FIGURES**

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Some of these poems have appeared in variant versions in the electronic chapbooks *Scratching Face* (Argotist), *Genesis Suicide* (Argotist) and *light in a black scar* (Eratio).



## **Nerve Figures**



## The Outward Gesture

First the bait  
Then the hammer  
Then the man with the knife

The borderlands are saturated  
with criminal theater

Commands from high authority

The scalp tingles  
to hear the old lies  
propped in new rags

A crate of eggshell eyes  
The envelope into which  
she coughed her weight in curses

while in the yard  
insects made war  
to feed the tyrants  
buried in the clouds  
waiting

Moses is crying in the reeds again  
The temple shudders  
at the lynch mob's approach  
He who names things  
by the manner in which they are destroyed

Call the judge to market  
Feed him well  
There's no profit in unspectacular murder

Only the overwhelming pain  
of the ruined mind  
will suffice  
when the butcher  
and his melancholy church arrive





## Jefferson In Hell

Come down to mama  
Come down to mama  
Come on down to your bone sad mama  
and drink the good Lord's tit.

Cough.  
Flagellation.  
Requiem.  
We have seen the process heaving.  
He can't suffer it again,  
another cold alabaster mannequin  
disrobed  
& trailed in gray debris.

Trapped inside her petticoats  
Venus sneezes, barks and wheezes.

Who'd believe if she confessed  
a low rebellion in Storyville.  
The fishmonger sold his grave  
to Marie Laveau  
who rolled the dice to thief  
him grace.  
The feast of crescent  
deadlight Ramadan –  
16 chain gang  
republicans bleached  
in Plato's toilet  
if you can bear the newsprint stench.

Come down to mama  
Come down to mama  
Come on down to your bone sad mama  
and drink the good Lord's tit.

## Drinking Gourds

The land is ripe again  
and full of fists.  
Mouths crash through  
the broadcast trees  
swollen into splinters.

The old trucks  
and scraggly men  
coming down the dead roads  
while their masters reek of gasoline  
and trade them credit for their lives.

The guns have arrived  
to rake the fields clean.

The state is reduced to an aftermath  
delivered to widows leaning  
against each other  
begging for vultures  
and the insurance man  
with a check in his claws.

## At 2

Not until 2 o'clock.

Not until the hammer falls –  
and releases the cattle  
to meat.

A plea rose –  
A deep secret urgent voice  
rose from the people –  
from the heart they had learned to ignore

A storm as silent as  
only the dead can whisper  
visited the aristocracy in their beds  
and made its demands.

Their servants found them  
where the hammer fell  
missing their eyes and pulse.

But not until 2 o'clock  
and the doors are open  
and the house is quiet  
except for the servants' nervous feet.

## **Bridget's Cross**

Light so thick  
no animal sleeps.

We stumble through the glare  
trying to read the shapes.

Roots grow up  
from the medicine ground  
so dark they are  
the only thing that penetrates.

fresh signs of a writhing language,  
bleak salvation in a shining rage.

## **Magdalene Crux**

Sufficient to Charlemagne:  
The trap door in Normandy  
is buried like Jericho.

Three old men  
in homemade chairs  
pass the pipe  
and count ants building nests  
around their crooked feet.

This is history –  
the coils of memory  
when the serpent is spent.

## Afterburn

Many years of trial and error are required.  
If your life is not at risk  
failure is inevitable.

Once the tincture is properly distilled  
it can annihilate the world,  
imagination  
and memory.

It is the only work that matters  
until it is accomplished.  
After that everything is impossible.

You were born with the burden  
of this knowledge.  
It is your birthright.

Death is hidden in sleep  
and you will never sleep again.

## The Neutral Animal

No face  
but memory creatures  
struggling toward the surface,  
losing presence as they rise.

Bodies fade in the tide pools.  
Houses crumble into the canals  
the sea reclaims.

Voids, vanities,  
charades at carnival.

The neutral animal  
tips his hat toward the ladies  
as he steps outside.

Nothing remains.  
Not even the streets.  
Not a clutter of fossils  
floating out of the heat.

## Surplus

Thirsty. And thirsty again.  
Quells.  
Caravan these morbid intangibles.

Ethiopia rising on an ancient sea.

Summon those arriving  
late from other galaxies.  
Your equipment is obsolete.

We slept beneath stone bridges,  
smoked extinct herbs  
in scandalous weather.

She dies, but some aspect of her  
visible and serene  
rises and scatters across the room.

I bear witness and break.

They ask, do you not know  
that nothing is always is?



## **Apparition in Mottled Glass**

Absence interrogates this room  
where bed  
    desk and  
    mirror      revolve

I have often seen  
a woman's face  
warp their interlocked orbits

She may be the hallowing inquiry,  
    a widdershins current  
whose appearance is all vanishing

## Feeding the Alien

seize out

& the distinguishing  
landscape vanishes

A stranger  
appears  
and sings  
in a low voice,  
"Wherever you are  
I am your body"

with horns  
and eloquent dogs  
in her stride

make the lamp shudder  
follow her  
toward the cave  
and stream inside

the splayed roots  
where a star is tangled

increase in blood  
and the blood's machine

light again  
the stranger familiar  
where her legs  
are woven

## Laminae Vita

Hammer out the invisible

mulefield  
& strophe of dead

The leaks  
make a geranium  
left in the frigid waste  
back porch –  
she is a mark on eternity

When we dance  
the planet turns

If escape is possible,  
and it is,  
the embrace  
saves us

Gone for a while  
among the rooted heavens  
Then fallen in the muck  
in your Sunday britches

Eaten –  
become stratified  
& measured,  
the course hair  
of the Italian girl  
that catches  
such splendid light

only a kiss is adequate –  
and after?  
Well, what the fiddler saw  
in the open closet,  
Her hands caught  
behind her back  
His hands  
were everywhere

The river plays at nothing  
and drags a channel

deep enough to  
rob the lichen soul

well, well, well...

## Orbit 1

The stag horn  
ruptured  
Was how they explained it

& dusty egg  
at the center  
where the sun  
ought to be

## Orbit 2

The boundless rock  
pours a raging silence  
in red space

Were they walking  
beneath the hangman's rope  
immaculate?

As stars scorch  
the old cloth

As birth is  
a rupture  
of interstitial breath  
    pulsed  
    minus  
black sparrows weaving  
to speak beyond themselves

to a frozen well  
in blank rapture  
where the halfdead  
wake and mumble  
    kiss and roar  
for the return of water

Only the lesser face  
shines  
while the frenzied  
girls convulse,  
tear at the night fruit  
and faint  
dead away  
    into a bed of thorns  
    absent  
toward a carnival yard

an augment of days  
for a hidden month  
    given to drink  
if the high bastard comes

## Early Spring

...vanishing

inclined

the white door  
and green yard  
toward surrender

atop  
the younger pine  
the morning crow  
gathers herself  
sets  
the day  
clear & gleaming  
out of a racket of frost

The mule that tows  
the sky back to course  
to fire  
the engine in the branches  
almost motionless

no  
one  
this

## **After the Feast**

thistle  
down  
cemetery  
reed

They bark all night  
in the direction of  
the railroad

The guide stars  
running backward  
out of sync  
with the tides

Every bird  
south of Enoch  
is weeping  
the loss of paradise



## White Murder

Thorns for the appetite.

Another wave  
blanched to prayer.

coil  
limit  
rape  
labor

torn  
into an  
underground nest

for the  
crow  
to claw

## Hymn

What the worms will not eat  
or read for cattle  
becomes a willowy mask  
for the muck and the soul  
it weaves from its miracles

An arm for the glance  
of its surface – wrinkled  
in a pale blue light –  
strikes at the moon,  
calls the soldiers forward  
bayonets blazing,  
caught in the scrimshaw for an hour  
beneath Ahab's dark gaze

We cannot find the fault  
in her chambered carcass  
or sing for her disease  
but when the planet swings  
out of her bleakest orbit  
the orchard is a chorus of color  
working the stone in her veins

The curse of a testimony  
The hour of curses  
rains into the ocean  
and leaves a man like a lamb  
in a mask on rippling blue waves

## **Immerge**

Overhead

black rose  
& jawbone

I feel their weight

overhead

dusk  
& venom

stinging the clouds

All this deposit of bodies

bound in thorns  
crawling across my eardrum

Scarlet  
where the junkmen hauled  
calcium  
across the levee

and neuronal slough

overhead

## Remembering the Field

The ribbons of plaster spread across your face  
have erased my eyes  
taken the heat of spring  
and fed it to 1000 beaks  
that make a chorus every morning

I lie awake in my veins  
remembering you walking across the bridge  
toward the old church  
where the minister you loved  
lanced his boils with a pin knife

We were abundant for a moment,  
as prolific as the insects  
and as full of fire and agony  
But how could we hold such treasure  
and not feel its rot,  
not become intoxicated with the pleasure  
of sweet contamination?

They fall forever and leave no trace  
except the dislocation of a fossil

## Original Meat

Light flutters at the periphery  
where a thief gathers  
insects for the feast.

33 in the sublime calculus  
is already nothing  
in the mountains  
but not yet beyond  
her thin red air.

Live with her taste  
in your mouth for centuries  
Alone, hunting  
above the tree line  
armed with nothing more  
than the habits of your cells  
torn on the rocks  
by a creature  
emptied of herself, even,  
and starving for original meat.

## What the Old Man Said

"Light  
has become unbearable.  
I can no longer  
look into it.  
My eyes retain it  
& leave me blind.

"This is not Damascus road,  
but there are voices  
and a glaring silence –  
there are faces  
and a preening sparrow  
and the vision  
    somewhere beyond  
of a hand clutching a branch  
at the edge  
    of darkness."

## **After the Funeral**

“Last year  
is an epoch  
impossible to remember.  
The decades have been  
swept away  
by the solitary crime  
of breathing.”

Occasionally,  
a bird crashes into the door  
in pursuit of an insect  
or another bird -  
The hands of a tyrant  
at play  
beneath a feathered maple tree.

When we are awake  
we encounter a savage delirium  
of nerves and capillaries  
competing for attention,  
but the skin  
is always a widow  
counting her husband's old lovers  
and tossing the coins  
out the window  
as she drives away.

## Remnants of Anarchic Heat

1

I will show you who I am  
by the way I fall.

It tastes like

a coven  
of gray birds  
nestled  
in a barn –

it trickles  
in cool lizard tongues.

The wasps  
dying on their nest

drift to the floor  
where it is always wooden and old  
and dust is a mystic substance.

2

I know their yellow eyes  
well enough to name them – they are made of black fire.  
I invite them in and they are at work again  
beaks and needles tearing at the wires  
and the cats won't let me sleep.



## Between the Rivers

1

The gallows birds & moths released  
in the second hour  
of the lunar angel's room

portrayed in Canaan & north of Sumer  
as the machinery of defilement

2

out of sky, torment  
& that potent thorny flower of immortality  
only a drowned man knows

3

From behind her, hat and cane  
out of some insomniac expanse  
(those terrible chills after the storm  
had done her work for her)  
taps her on the shoulder –  
She knew before she turned  
it would be the alien –  
the ancestor she'd seen in someone else's memories  
What was it?  
Something sinister in his eyes,  
the petroglyphs over the fireplace  
depicting the rape of Isha  
long before the Black Sea breached its banks  
and everything was destroyed  
Now it's done with chemicals she thought  
and at another creature's command

Still, they planted the graves  
minus a time signature

## ECLIPSE : SEIZURE

(homage to Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Eclisse*)

Nothing moves but the world around it.  
The limestone was poor quality and began to fracture.  
You are going to die of a stroke.  
The marksman walks with deliberate steps.  
The deliberate man walks like an assassin.  
The weight of the doppelganger invents machines.

Construction workers drive metal crosses into the floor of a concrete pit.  
A flower is suddenly crushed.  
Its delivery is abducted by a red-faced boy.  
We are quick to leave hammers in the weather.  
We are alive, but do not recognize the tension between its slow dissolution and its precise utility.  
Afterward, a crow lights in the road waiting for the others.

A row of metal poles weave in the wind.  
Cables clang against them.  
They are white in the stark light against the groundless night pitched behind them by the position of the camera.

You were awakened by thunder and followed it with rain back into dreaming.  
They lie where they are shot without complaint.  
The boxes come later, and the wheels no one lives to describe.

If I were patient I would read the edge where grass disappears, or the moss.  
I would drink the drought and humidity that make it possible.  
What is frail leaves its color in the shade.  
We aren't alarmed by them.  
We grow bitter and wait.  
Atoms would know without distance.  
We would not be afraid to ask.

The ploughs have come again.  
Beneath the rot the old men are waiting.  
In the odor, in the hives, a loud red voice.  
Laced in the formula there are leaves that play the formula's demise.  
What else could explain the pleasure of water?  
The wires that gather nostalgia become granulations, become

lice.

They promote a fever of self-deceit.

You are planning a rape in your father's quarry.

Your intent leaves your house abandoned.

Every tree around it feels artificial.

Long rows of street lights that leak into the populace.

Practice these maneuvers until you believe you own your fingers.

Return to the lime pit.

Is it mere sensation or does creation refract?

Holes are gathering.

The shovel men are waiting.

Rain is a chance to break the pattern.

There is where a day leaves you.

In the middle of it, torn.

A woman is singing in the echoing metal.

Often they speak to one another by reciting advertisements.

Cold air washes into the room from panels in the wall.

The heat is unbearable.

Supply lines have been cut.

I remember the mountains.

I remember a thunderstorm before dawn.

The lightning.

The flood and wind.

So many hours are wasted in empty conversation that  
silence frightens us.

The rain again in the middle of the day.

The patios were empty and wet.

I almost fainted.

Nothing moves but the world around it.

He was hired to shave the corpses.

He waited all day, until sunset, so that no one would  
see him enter the morgue.

What is the name of the flower on your dress?

I have seen it once before.

In a photograph.

They were watching her from the balcony.

They stopped talking and sat motionless while their cigarettes  
burned down between their fingers.  
In the room behind them the walls were covered with maps.  
A long red ribbon hangs from the eaves. It attracts  
hummingbirds.  
The sky behind it is lazuli blue.

We sleep on terraces cut into the hillside to take advantage of the  
little rain we receive.  
We are likely to receive nothing at all.

When they bind you will you sleep?  
What will they discover when the lid is removed?  
Can you hear what I'm saying  
or have the birds found another place to nest?  
Requiem for a featherweight.

I don't mean to sound sarcastic.  
I don't sound to mean.  
A bulldog bound to a stake in the yard  
barks at the sun because it will not let him rest.  
Yes, I am speaking, deliberately, carefully.  
However, I am not an assassin.  
I do not assassinate to sound or mean.  
You are coughing in the bedroom.  
It means that your lungs are awake.

They have noticed the smoke, the humidity, the lizard climbing  
along a  
crack in the wall.  
She has found spiders there before, but there is something sullen  
about this day, this particular afternoon.  
A fish plate is a fossil.  
I retraced my steps.  
I found her in the café, asleep with her head on the table.  
I asked the waiter, "Is she sick?"  
He said, "No sir, but I think she may be a little drunk."

The plaster men are waiting.  
I cursed the minister of Antiquities and walked up the  
serpentine stairs.  
An eye, even this one, is where the world is removed.

## Genesis Suicide

1

No ashes.  
We might have expected ashes  
if we had known how to read the twilight

but not blue leaves,  
a low circling red crane,  
musty water and receding sky,  
vermillion, gold and indigo  
made of interpenetrating motion

In the aftertime  
poison is the common tongue

- Did you notice an increase of crows, wild dogs and other predatory species?
- Yes, and several exotic species as well.
- What were the worms doing?
- What worms? doing what?
- Were they acrobats,  
painted in marvelous colors?  
Were they swimming through the earth  
and all the bodies it consumes?
- They were radio frequencies.

An endless stream  
in the transparent body.  
A familiar voice through the screen,  
the rustling of dried corn stalks,  
the clang of tarnished lattice work

All poison –  
the common parlance

Oh happy day!  
Oh happy day!  
When the devil drank  
my empty rage

Who's gonna sing  
the river bottom blues  
when the garbage trucks  
collect our bones?

Gravity comes  
in a wicked  
knot

The air  
tastes of  
meat and  
sweat

A star  
in a box  
cradled  
in cottony  
nebulae

Caught in a backlash  
how can they recall  
their original behavior?

It does not sting.  
It does not bite.  
not even pain is Real

Watch crow  
devour  
a thundering field

Watch crow eat dove  
and order  
fall into place

“To You before the light is done.” \*

Gathered in the mountain’s shadow  
waiting the dragon of Tenochtitlan to pass  
    call it even money –  
Mexico City  
buried beneath  
    five feet of warm snow

All of it carefully arranged  
by Man, that old devil

    float the casino  
with the sweet descent  
    of easy cash

Even the sand was seared  
into polished green glass  
    the color of purgatory’s wing  
buried in the subterranean sky

He said,  
    “T’d never lie to you,  
    but I’ll kill you where you stand.”

And the dead came real

\* Dante – Purgatio – Canto VIII – quoting the Compline Hymn



Who'd castrate Christ  
to preach the sublime?

Who smuggled the holy viscera  
out of country at a profit?

Who reassembled them into  
the rusty hulk of an obsolete machine?

Who made the creature speak  
& ripped it free of all species?

Surely the tongue-tied devil  
has his reward

A man waters his lawn  
so he can cut it down again

Rain is never enough  
but no one can refuse the rain

On the third day  
the stench returned  
like the Son of God  
come for revenge  
on his murderers

Physicians indoctrinated  
by the pharmaceutical clans,  
made swindlers and  
forced into submission  
by insurance cabals  
to rob the populace  
of its small wealth  
and be delivered  
pill by pill  
into the grave

The extension of death  
to please the shareholder

You'll pay to keep breathing  
even if agony is all that remains.  
That's the bet and the odds are good.

So the nations disappeared  
to please old Avarice –  
sin made virtue,  
virtue made law  
and law made death

And if they speak of her at all  
none can bear to see his mouth  
working at the darkness

If the rivers catch fire  
and weeds rust  
    from the pole star out

The maker of Saturn  
swallowing thorns —  
    He's a banker by trade,  
    a rabid dog in his prayer closet,  
    a space made sacred  
    by his daughter's hanging

Sing that old banishing spell  
the one that grandma knew so well

Everything goes out  
    Everything goes  
    Everything

Anyhow, what she said was:

Hector, if you don't quit your grouching  
I'm gonna hit you square in the face with a cleaver

Well, that brought him around.  
A little woman half his size,  
and one of the gentlest people you'd ever meet,  
was threatening an all out assault.  
He knew she meant it too.

So he sat in his easy chair all afternoon  
without saying a word,  
turning the pages of his well worn Bible, not reading, but  
contemplating the sudden turn of events.  
It wasn't until she called him to supper that he got up,  
walked back into the kitchen and took his seat.

She'd laid out a meal of fried chicken, mashed potatoes,  
okra and cornbread.  
He said the prayer, took a long drink of iced tea and dug in.  
She was watching him.  
Waiting for a word.  
The only word she got, after he'd eaten two helpings of  
the spread, was a low "Thank you," as he got up and  
walked out the back door.

He sat on the steps until twilight  
and the crickets came on full fiddle.  
She stood on the other side of the door and talked to him  
through the screen,  
"You comin' in?"  
"Yeah, I guess I will."

That was the end of it.

In those days there was life in people.  
They were made of blood and bone.  
They saw and heard the world. They  
felt it on their skin.

He woke at sunrise,  
went out to the hen house and gathered eggs.  
They were sitting in a bowl by the stove when she got up.

She made breakfast and knew not much had changed.

Icy ferment on Europa  
The frozen seizure - Conbemara Chaos

Beijing slipped beneath coal dust  
and southbound desert

Pluto's fifth moon testifies  
system within system  
as the anthropoid eye  
reads in wheels

Such in the fabrication – Mind:  
electricity wound out luminous  
any beast that earns its wages  
to fall beneath the hammer and be eaten

Everything goes

Take the low channel  
wet from the rock

The animal body  
rises cold  
out of vortices  
beneath the threshold

Shake the elixir  
choke down the toxins,  
praise God and the market  
for every concoction

Breathe into fuselage  
the scuttled wreck  
the blanched eye  
buoyant lithe and rusty  
for a lapsing tide



Tell me mama

7.5 - 2 (in bed)

9 - 12.5 (asleep)

~~(w/ an intervening sweat)~~

enough

to arrive at

zero —

aleph null?

How does horror express itself?

in the appetite?  
 in a soggy mattress  
 falling to pieces on rusty bedsprings

to be alone with Pan  
 in that other earth?

Singing hymns, back and forth  
 while the rocking chair creaks the meter?

"It's coming you know.  
 You know it's coming."

The old washing machine  
 with the hand cranked wringer  
 in a room beside the chicken coop —  
 brown eggs  
 still warm?  
 Is that an accurate account  
 of patterned reflex?

Is that enchantment,  
 to be alone with death calling,  
 a trigger hidden in the brain —

a secret impossible to know  
 beyond the process?  
 not even a whisper  
 buried deep in the ringing silence  
 of the old gal's ear?

Out of cold faith in pain  
 to supply the tones

between a broken plow  
and the open door?

A > B, is she waiting inside,  
wet, gray hair  
combed across her face?

Is that erasure  
too much to drive out?

shimmer orbit  
undertone specious  
malignancy irrigated  
or antlering rhizome

tethered nine, wait  
fuselage comes  
broad until lakes  
raise cicada

Venus swimming close  
easy now, epistrophe  
languor climbs a leafy well

rises at 17  
abundantly  
stroke to barley

so much potioneing

“Usually it begins with water  
and the quickening of electrons  
blown from oblivion.”

“Move that to the back burner, darling.  
You don’t want it to scorch.”

Corn, squash and beans  
ground into a paste,  
boiled in bear fat.

At some indeterminate  
chaos brews into such complexity  
that entropy is overwhelmed  
and supper emerges.

“Here now, eat yourself a plate of that.  
It’ll keep your belly warm  
‘til the frost breaks. Maybe  
we can get a little work done before dark.  
Don’t forget to bring your gun. There’s  
wolves about.”

e chish langon upsilla  
rapps scoer  
    lee lee cantor wale ah-ee  
lycum broal  
    anner cawl orafage  
neacrabbenea gowl  
ohwa shree elumlaihd myxko  
nur insa  
    fuul boc alloo  
        shhh...

Come August, a glucose rain  
                    of various spiders  
each phosphorescent, illuminating the flood  
made the wet grass flicker and crawl

Any reprieve from the tormenting heat  
is a savior

                    Even a destroying savior  
                    consumes agon-y

                    hovers and waits

The graphomaniac at his corner table  
The persistent contraction of body  
                    cast out of the nethers  
                    The gravity well glows superabundant hands  
                    seizing for ...

whatever the forest brings  
is Panic across the inverse screen

Rain and electricity  
little else remains

shards of the Plentitude  
bricabrac  
old teeth strung on a fencepost

“Come play with me  
the best of games...  
sticks pointed at each other  
behind trees, wire and cinder blocks...  
Oh, what death scenes!  
Everyone wanted to be the first to go...”

“Pray for us now and...”

20 years millwork  
and the sacrifice of the innocents  
Old enough to speak  
is old enough to kill

criblock  
The garbage dump on fire

Gehenna



She sang  
the hard nothing  
in a raspy wail  
swaying in her chair  
to a rhythm  
no one felt

The closet barked  
The lantern spat  
The feral cat licked soapy water  
from the bathtub drain

All the deuces and sevens  
drawn from the pack  
and nailed above the door

and whatever else sorrow does

She sang the hard nothing  
and drank the sparrows well

Apopraxis in a kerosene globe  
Call out the guard  
    Radiate their nests  
There are voices in the catacombs  
    summoning the leopard

Can satellites broadcast  
these neolithic frequencies?

What is the ratio of pain to amusement?

Ask the tarnished moon  
while the calends march to orgy  
    to feed  
    to leap from the weeds  
    and castrate  
    Cinema's children

This is the month of seizure  
This is revenge for coma  
    closed by law  
    Fuck the legislators!  
    Raid the market!  
    Torch the stalls!

Come down Cricket Griot  
make the nightmare dance  
    Vaudeville is waiting

The sediment of apparition  
and howling pestilence  
feeds the discharge

the pulsing sun,  
random branches across the field  
twisted by the beat of infinity's wing  
The compound Beast  
slips beneath wave and earth  
to weave, "What is it?"  
"Some absolutely other thing."

The tremendous ache of erosion  
drives out  
born and born and born again

The transformers explode  
node : ruin : fuse

Imagination = critical mass

Who can reap these materials?

Where is the hunter  
who broke his feet in the scree  
and flew womb to star  
in the feeding frenzy?

Animal is light without number  
or what lust demands

Field mice under the floor  
Copperhead tumbling out of the ceiling  
from the attic on fire

Hackberry and jasmine  
up through the parlor floor  
crashing through the window  
at summer's pace

The ghosts have vanished,  
gone as memory and echo

Indifference is merely a human thing,  
minus the gravity  
to shape a body

Who remains to follow the rails  
down into the branches and thorns?  
No. We sit in careful rooms  
with antiseptic fever  
calculate the power bill  
and hope the cool air holds  
until autumn  
caught in the aftertime  
chanting a hymn  
into the drapes  
smothered as she was

while the preacher scolded her  
and the boy behind the pulpit trembled

The crows come every morning  
to feed at these roots

Sweet poison –  
pill bottles crowd the

fruit, vegetables and bread  
for shelf space

Sweet idolatry  
toxins and vanity

Let the crows take whatever they want

“Love for sale...”

Air war, they called it –  
whales drifting over the battlefield –  
gray bloodsmoke  
and the lie of nobility

The pitted earth and poisoned clouds  
cramped with bodiless souls  
screaming the hell Man made  
The vast heaving ribcage  
of that venomous shape  
built souless drones in his anti-image

“Love for sale...”

Death itself  
slaughtered  
and brought to market

He’ll fuck his own children  
before he’ll face who he really is

“Love for sale...”

Keep the engine throbbing  
Keep the malice humming

until numbers run their course  
and the steaming gallows crumbles

Make goddamned sure  
no baby ever born  
would want to suck that tit

Kick the rail lord's skull  
 caught at the switch  
 with the brakeman's lover  
 When the court summons the executioner  
 no one is guilty anymore

It's pleasure, sport and market forces  
 that write the code  
 who'll get bread and who'll be turned out  
 to face the road

Ignis salamander  
 and the half cloaked moon  
 mark the dragon bone  
 and mark it well  
 with clipped accounts of the affairs of court  
 political theater, dramatis personae  
 for an age the myths will never recall  
 Nothing else will be discovered  
 Nothing else will serve the gambler  
 who'll bet his stones for roasted pig

There will be swarms  
 who uncoil language out of the  
 metal fragments of their ancestry  
 Memory fell away, unused  
 long before circuitry was given charge

The object: a spigot = 7  
 23 is damnable and serene

Primes are the fundamental treatise  
 by which blood may return  
 if Saturn is dissolved

She jumps from the swing  
and breaks her leg  
(video documents [here](#) and [here](#))  
soothed and healed  
with poultice and rhyme  
call your mama and the frame dissolves



No one can refuse the rain.

It preceeds and excludes the world  
 – everything that is the case –  
 forever unopened if it can't be spoken  
 or so the story goes  
 (if they are still singing it)

One myth is as good as another –  
     a clap trap vault of dead objects  
 Imagine the fossil remnants of  
 fuses, cigarettes, sheep bladder  
 and Chaplin's stutter step  
     upwind so you can smell the dance

Or so the story goes  
 (for those that missed the matinee)

Poison to poison  
     wash it down  
     wash it clean  
     wash away the film  
         that coats a new born lamb  
 Twins born in a cedarwood fold  
     two days before  
     a hail of gunfire

the baptism  
 the chemical wedding  
     and assorted fornicators

tum de tum tum  
 floo bdree hoor  
 smoke in the balcony  
 blood in the corridor

saturate the halfwit's ejaculated sleep

A man like any other  
wet to the bone  
can't get dry  
can't come awake

Brooding over the face of the deep  
mumbles a wordless song

shhh...  
shhh...

ah lu grus  
hhhhhhhhhhhh

luresh

kwilu kwilx  
mu ah

mmmmmmmmmmmm

le-ahs umrom som

oouuuu  
oya  
ea  
yaihl

hhmmmm  
mmmhhh