

On The Bestial Floor



# On The Bestial Floor

by  
**Saij**

Alterside Publishing

On The Bestial Floor.

© Copyright 2007 by Saij.

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States of America by Alterside Publishing.

Printed in the United States of America. No Part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without clear reference to the author.

For more information, contact Alterside Publishing at

[info@alterside.com](mailto:info@alterside.com)

For my Grandparents  
the  
Rev. James Watters, and his loving wife  
Darleen Watters,  
for introducing me to a world of books,  
and a life of learning.



"Sie welkten hin, ich muß erleben,  
Daß man die frechen Mörder lobt."  
--Goethe



**The Poems**

Villanelle, or: Study of Terza Rima

East of sleep and dreams,  
the dim coming times,  
like a sea that brooks no means.

Carve'n dreamer fell,  
hung like sweating leaves,  
drip down the garden well.

The peddles feast and descend,  
they walk a show and tell,  
where the sand and sea have hardened.

Of these, and of the age,  
I'm here to play the warden,  
where bursting tears splay the cage.

And on a silent singing thread  
we shadowed 'cross the stage,  
where sea-born fingers bled.

I stood in wait like marbled beast,  
and woke here in my bed,  
leaving dreams that wander east  
and sink in salted ocean feast

**A Study of Tundra**

Some will give birth within days  
and I will cut open their bellies and let it run  
over the table like a draining glacier in the desert

And others alone will do as well with their wombs  
and let the offspring wander  
ever deeper into the dark-white

And the sound sucked back  
like the inhale of some beast preempting its' roar  
will be left rattling in the air forever

Silence

Hiding in a raincoat, crooked face  
scarred like cane-handle

half standing, leaning street sign, water  
dropped like sky-dragons, over hat and eyes,

June and pregnant lips, or sun,  
walking with white shoes,

woman, knees with gray wool legs and skirt,  
eyeing his coat, stopped and peaked.

His left hand, setting then right,  
cane to body,

pack of cigarettes, her hands, her lighter,  
reached his mouth, to end in flame.

**Cedar Unbroken**

Dear Jean,

Their drop  
    it flamed the way ahead of me  
lasted half a minute  
    a century  
I finally got a Taube  
    not like the black spin  
my plane  
    in the wing  
they went down,  
    and two nude bodies  
hit by a bullet  
    their skin  
grilled and twisted  
    I went to see the fragments  
so did I  
    only I did it under my own power  
still bleeding.

**Frock**

Fuchsia desert  
worn like chains 'round necks half to mid chest  
bobbing in dead sinking air

Finally I see them and through shifting image  
feet in rocky-spring tap-dance floor  
spiked heels and rain-cloud eyes like flashlights

How it looks I don't much care  
like blown out shrapnel from dripping stomach  
the ancient kiss stink still burning in our eyes

Towns driven by and covered and stalked through  
clapping to be polite or not  
perversion whatever

Pink cashmere and cigarettes and coke  
shoved up strong noses  
colored enough to look as not

Home for the Holidays

I crawled my way back from the streets that opened like long  
 whispering waterways, and the voices  
 Spread the way of oil on hardwood have fused together  
 In defiance of this gravity. And with laughter, and that sort of thing,  
 from the memory of old windows and shadowy solace,  
 the wind, held echoes, and echoes,  
 outside the walls.

The cooking-kitchen smelled of a desert  
 whose raining winters  
 drown in the garden. My clothes, wet  
 on the floor in a heap next to the foot of the bed and  
 I withered back  
 launched with painted face,  
 and my Cossack-hands, alone  
 found peace in stone-faced swimming  
 pounding the waves that crashed through my bed  
 like white headed beasts growling into the sky,  
 thumping as though I was in an empty cave  
 with nothing but those echoes to provide me company.

The feast began with a prayer, of course, and we drank  
 pink sparkled non-alcohol  
 with yams and marsh-mellow, potato, pies, and turkey  
 begging us to eat again and again, with mouth-full jokes  
 and the TV played a football no-one was willing to watch –  
 I stood, walked away  
 piss, flush, wash, dry



**Isabelle in the Bedroom**

she left me for the next room,  
and I am chained to the wall to listen  
to doors opening with new voices and  
to room service and wine bottles, corked,  
to glasses clinked and laughter—louder and louder

to shake my chains and hips  
and I fear they'll hear me—  
I listen to forks on plates and chewing,  
to broken-English and chimp-mumbles.  
Fingers press on my eyes-shut, spoonfuls of crème,

smells like an abandoned brewery,  
mold lining the teeth,  
and giggling over and again,

the mouths stop.  
Ear press—left a bruise.  
They move into their 'We-ain't-done-nothin's',  
like kids poking at the belly,  
tongues on the wall, sliding down,

a pretty rash that spreads like bells  
tolling in the tower, pink bumps, puckering lips,  
and the coiling of veins.

And up on that wall, in blood,  
carving my Stele of Merneptah,

I hang as from the wrathful tree.  
The bed in that room, the creek and bounce,  
that quakes the dead from the soil,  
the brisk swell of skin,  
and the soft-taste of crystal drops.

the flail of his hand,  
the bursting into flame,  
Isabelle, under grassy sheets,  
throwing in the nude,  
serpentine mountains of flesh, feeding.

He went away at 3:00 in the morning,  
and I fell just before,  
sliding out on floor boards, licking the dust  
and growing in flatulence and dripping  
from bathroom-robos, puke in the white-god,

and down—tight like lips—  
squeeze me and drag out the air,  
pissing myself to lie in urine,  
and down here  
my bones are gone.

**Job**

When my eyes opened I saw Megumi's hair on a ceramic pillow,  
Her head on the neck of a 47 year old woman.

"My wife," I said,  
"it is the morning." And from sleep we moved with iron foot steps

to hunger and a meal. They sat, my children, Makoto, Sojiro, and the young  
daughter, Aiko. Today I walked out of my sliding doors

to press my legs into the field, and stained fingers on the blade.  
and fear of gunshots, and sound of the crash,

but we have unraveled the fabric, and  
we suffer like fools, stuck in the arms of our skin, under the old clock

rung through a tower. And from the corners, my eyes glimpse  
a slow stranger, oiled and flower dressed, thin faced, and all in shadow.

The siren burst.

Soldiers walking picked up speed and darted toward the men,  
screaming,

"they are coming, they are coming!" We knew who they were, and we knew  
how they were. We knew of arms being ripped from the joint, broken  
bone

burned face, gasoline on the layers, tearing the way it does when lit,  
high keys of the piano streaming from the mouths of the under-aged,

forced to dance on crippled-limbs, then cracked in half with

machine-gun fire, pale skulls shining through the grass for centuries,  
dug up and drowned under boot. Our choices had been made.  
Between the reddening clouds and the encroaching sea,  
women flung themselves from cliff walls onto the rocks below,  
throwing their children first—men killed their families and a wave of  
death  
rose like a tsunami—slammed, and engulfed the whole of our lives  
in a green twilight—We could not be allowed to be captured—To  
be the subjects of torture—to allow the wives and children  
to fall to rape would be a shame the depths of which we could only  
dream.

I ran home as if swimming in mud. My tears dragged  
my eyes to the ends of my face, I ran past soldiers and we waltzed to  
the drums that drove our blood to boil. As my home approached,  
the guns rang through the sky, and hit the clouds to pieces,  
neighbors dropped from their doors in a blaze of fire, no longer  
able to scream for help, lying in a pile, and twitching by rote.  
“YOU!!” screamed one of our boys of the gun, “you must not be captured—  
you  
nor your family.”

And with that I went into the house. “Wife . . . come.”  
We and our children dredged the mud to find shelter in the forest.  
Over

sticks and leaves still twitching from the fall. And then the pit.

I saw it with glazed eye, a beautiful sunken pit, full of nothingness

and God. In we fled, “follow . . . in here!”

Aiko began to cry. “Don’t cry,” I said, “it is a good day. Today we will rise

With the sun.” I slowly bent, my hand brushed the ground in search of a rock.

I held it in hand and it rose like a flower.

I started with the oldest child.

BAM

I hit his head and blood splattered the face of my wife—but she did not cry.

The young boy hit the floor, falling like a feather—he laid the ground

with his breath, and sank out of my mind. Then the next boy, and the girl.

I thought they would struggle more.

When I raised the rock to my wife she said, “Here,” and pointed

to the back of her head, “I want you to be able to kiss me after death,” she said.

The rock came down like a knife, burrowing into her skull, and we fell together.

Her lips crumbled under mine. I had to end myself. It was now my turn.

I raised the rock and . . .

I fell—But I didn’t hit myself—I had been shot, in the chest.

I found myself surrounded by American Soldiers. “What the hell happened here?”

they said in the language of my future . . .

I spent the next two years in a prison camp, and was then released—I was never tortured—I now have a new wife and new children.

**Lay Your Hands**

I felt the rush  
down to that honey belly  
a field of watery tongues  
that crept into those tunnels  
and burned my skin with sweat

And into the circle  
my face behind a darkness  
that rattled in the open  
I licked the salt in her liquids  
and all her shadows pulled me

Hands held tight  
pressed into bruised positions  
fingers in tangled hair  
lips wet then wetter  
the pools that swayed the tides  
from kiss to kiss.

**Look**

the shadow in  
a folded leaf  
holding wine

red burgundy  
blood  
sparrow made

centuries in the making  
bastard child  
the forest

crumpling in time  
under pressure  
of chainsaws

mud pits  
grass growing  
reeds

in concrete cracks  
i can see them  
and they mock me

gusts of wind  
i watch  
carrying mist

sever and rob  
blowing dust  
in my face

Study for a Portrait of Van Gogh

I found him walking, muddled and hidden  
underneath a straw-yellow hat, his hand

on a black cane. Stone crosses, sun dried skin,  
colors in a violent wave, danced him under

the dark-red of oil lamps, where language  
is voiced like music, and the avenues crawl

like jesters in the garden.  
Trees and birds and Brick walls

all of them stained from sweat. And a breath  
that breaths slowly over cobble stone roads,

decomposed and washed him away  
in an undercurrent to his own private nowhere.

**Study of a line I**

If I laid you on the bow  
of that ship, with the mist  
of the sea on our bodies,  
rocking in time with death,  
blood crawling out

of wounds, lavender in  
the moonlight, gasping  
for air, we might swim  
through skies,  
hovering low among men,

toward a heaven, damp  
with the cries of soldiers,  
who tired too quickly, sent  
to waste away

**Study of a Line II**

Weigh me down, and not a day  
standing like grass on beds of river,  
with veins pumping on rocks and waves,  
to tantalize with heavens thunder

no earthen shakes or rolling fire  
to breach the mountains stabbing cold  
for no regrets of what transpired  
will Zeus relieve my endless hold.

**Study of a Line III**

Fists hammering through watery dark  
only to dirt and sharks and bones  
But who could reach them in such a sea  
far from above, out of breath alone.

Meeting God

“We ignore him at our peril.”

*(Martin Luther King, jr. on Mahatma Gandhi),*

I walk into the grove

Darshan

Separated only by hanging branches

and leaves at eye level

cherry blossoms in bloom the pink

on my shoulders – I shower in it

kneeling onto rocky ground in dirt

and short grass

I close my eyes and

Count

**Two Figures on a Bed**

morning, I awoke in a chalk line box  
under a sky so red I saw blood  
in the clouds pouring over every  
inch of the landscape, a walled cemetery,  
a bed in the middle of a desert, orange

and red velvet, sheets of silk  
sleeping beside me, his head  
nestled in my chest,  
sweating away the evening,  
his hand on my thighs,

my back an arching bow,  
I sprang forward greeting his  
tongue with mine, tearing  
flesh with manicured nails,  
my teeth pulling, wrestling

his lip, some times eight hours,  
at least three, before falling  
to the pillow, staring up  
at the painting, Gilded Gutter  
Life, hung crooked on our wall.

The Waiting Barrow

Lost in shrouds of white, looking through a tunnel  
away down the coastal road, toward the dark beach

beyond the seawall,  
at a world of locusts and disease,

like the underside of a volcano  
sifting rocks in slow motion,

through deadly fumes and fragrant catch,  
selling-men with new rugs saving the sick,

a woven snake in twisted gold, lying limp  
in the turn of the hill, waving his hand

like a flaming sword, howling against the orange light of the desert,  
that's come to steal our women,

and we chant love songs and prayers like school girls,  
wrapped in those heavy shrouds of white.

## Yellow Whale Fin

An Obelisk in pursuit  
Ocean of yellow heat feathery pedals that could swallow the earth  
They pinch and slow from surface to core  
Toward a bucketful of nuclear hydrogen that could be our breadwinner  
Flares ejecting what they can't eat, spewing themselves out into the blackness  
Particles deflected by our invisible armor

And make it all that we can see  
A shadow sweeps across the earth it is our white death  
Her rings forged in the fires of time  
The birth was in our dust collapsing on itself  
Beyond swirls and middle age he released my brother Titan from his sleep  
And with a puff, ended in a smoke ring

And we lie here in this blackness  
Floating limp heading toward a gas-giants riverbank  
Brushing shoulders with deadened worlds and rock satellites  
The moon wet with ice and cracked falling into our way  
We smack down in a crash landing hard and stirring up a white dust  
Without his heat the flow underneath will be stopped soon

Noel

he became                      the Samaritan calf  
who drained the cup  
cut-tongue gouged  
   all white pranced the body!

all these things loe I sawe  
when fyer did enflame . . .  
four years and four days the new Adam  
   chanting wild goats

kisses-empty                      like sicken'd lips  
Wine-red under village rocks  
along walls stained  
   Catholic-candles

the sinewy mare with draping mane  
perched in fire in black bag  
*peasant knee's* cut in half  
   height dragged

from tree tops                      right arm  
missing ax  
medium rare dusting of ribs  
   rose-mouse in sanctuary whispering choir

still rattle                              yo! ho! ho!  
lips sliced off and cooked

up front on

*the ship of souls!*

like sleeves                      of the old man

ringing the beard-bell

England an hour before morning

18 Nov.

Maynard and                      his ship

Pirate parties drunken knife hands

in channels and rivers anaconda skin

hanging the bow the stern the port

no more than my                      eighteen there

the sea gone red in dead patrol

under rain swept battle-shrapnel tearing away his throat

yo! ho! ho! and a bottle of rum!

Once Under Yellow Light

A Raccoon was on the lawn and I  
asked the roses and lilies in the yard  
to hold him down with out-stretched branches,

to wrap their thorns around the house, like a barracks  
or a prison. She was like a beast whose hoofs  
taunt men on the side walk, her breath

in the cold, warmed the air from double barreled  
nose, head swaying back and forth, grunted  
at pavement walkers, her front legs rising

up to eight feet—more. I mow my lawn  
every Saturday. I groom my plants and dig  
ponds and go for the “natural” look. I edge

my paved side walk to prevent the grass from  
intruding. I wonder if the raccoon is aware that  
it is on my lawn, my side walk, swaying like a white

polar bear, sniffing at my shiny trash, looking  
for rotten smells. Peering like a thief through  
windows in my kitchen walls, built by men

hired by contractors to infiltrate the land, like  
navy seals of the building industry, killing in  
the name of society and cement, shipping

grass and ground cover by truck to fill the spaces.  
And Raccoons, not quite aware of rules,  
still migrate onto my lawn, and sniff for dog

treats and cigarette butts left by party people and friends.  
They walk on the fence and interest my cats – what  
are those silly animals with black eyes – interest my

dog more. I tried photographing them to prove  
how destructive they are, but never catch them in  
the act, only smiling pictures of raccoons on my lawn.

Over

That was our last fuck  
screamed my name so loud  
up her ass but my cock wouldn't stay hard enough  
too much coming exhaustion

she say's she has someone else some polo shirt from church  
plays guitar if your willing to call it that  
believes jesus was god and I thought god was god  
now she won't let me lick her cunt

chest and stomach hurt under a wash of sweat  
up late with him and cold phone calls no interest I ball for hours  
quit my job where she is she doesn't beg me to stay  
how do you fuck and yell and want and then cold

how do you beg for my dick tell me to cum to lick your snatch  
look in your eyes sing and kiss at the same time rumba naked  
how do you put your head on me in that dark submarine office  
and kiss my chest nipples "I can't live without you" "peel my orange"

now nothing winter frostbite touches "have your feelings changed"  
"yes"  
"today"  
"yes"

"I'm sorry I slept with you today"  
"how do you get sorry"  
"but today my feelings changed, being with him just feels right"  
"that's what you told me"

Shishak

“I’ve got the gun,” fought the voice  
     through the pile of men,  
 scraping its way over the heads and hats  
 and blue uniforms and badges and scorpion eyes  
     and this mass of breath.  
 It became the *Night of the long knives*,  
 we submerged broken by the ice,  
 grabbed at one-another  
     and were depth-charged to the surface.  
 Though he did not survive  
     the war, they assembled in Gibraltar,  
 Seventeen ships and an aircraft carrier,  
     escorts and sunk  
 at 3 in the morning, sunk by fighters  
 preying on the iron whales – sunk as they caught breath  
     in black flower dress, peeking over CIA shoulders  
 at hills of grass,  
 visit to Newark in a stolen taxi,  
 car crash and head in three pieces, eaten by worms  
     and sheriff, gone out of print – ashen skin, seat covers,  
 lost fingers,  
 metal doors like oyster mushrooms, abandoned  
     woolen bag, hot blue sun-bra, plastic teeth dug out of the grave,  
 offshore convoy torpedoed July 1941 100,000 tons of oil,  
 Crossbows to the brow, low like a man  
     on the ground bleeding,  
 lobotomy commission,  
 paper trail burn pile – they have my pockets  
     and sweaty-rotten-Bangkok-cigarettes in a wooden-box,

sticking it to lovers on the park-bench,  
and all the young brown companions thrown to the pillow,  
    rolled like hedgehogs, scattered,  
all the admirals sons and sons-in-law trapped in the back  
in steel bunks under 5000 tons of ocean  
on fire, arms pulled to help,  
    so hot – skin slides off like a tee shirt –  
“We didn’t see nothin’,”  
red beam from the street-light cameras,  
passing empty apartments with posters of the Camelot Brothers  
    at the desk –  
acid rain,      left to refuel,  
sit for 20 minutes.

**Study for a Portrait Of Art**

I prefer to show two men fucking  
I prefer to show buttons bursting from the breast,  
to show the void that spreads across the face  
like a shadow of tongues  
washing out the white of the waves  
that boards the ships, creaks like timber creaks, and

pours in the rain and bottle broken,  
the rivers of blood pumping through my neck  
bitten and dripping from the cheek  
crush me naked feel the grind  
I prefer to hang from a tree branch  
drunk, I prefer to paint slices of lemon,

glasses stained with fingerprints, draining  
I prefer to heap hills upon hills  
and lay in the brides-bed,  
that grassy mattress, and swim  
in the dark sweat of the evening  
I prefer to show two men fucking

**The Dim Grey Sands**

She lay between the mist and the wind  
where the old fingers of leaf  
crawl along the dim gray sands  
dragging the dew of the morning  
across the skin of her face  
and down her cheeks  
and east of sleep and dreams

leaving her eyes bejeweled  
and glimmering.  
Drops, like lucid pearls,  
pool to form rivers that drink  
with ever thirsty tongue  
and drain over her lips  
that lay silent among the rushes.

The Sargasso

The ocean was covered in the weed of the sea  
like a mat that let no light,  
where masts and chimney,  
from all the ships of time, hang still – the Sargasso,  
the waters of the dead where I have come  
to let out the souls I have gathered.

I was Michael, the Arch angel  
with a bag of limbs, eyes peeking  
at where I would take them.  
We rode a merchant vessel,  
the Captain is old, the gray gone  
to his face, a labyrinth of skin,

that sucks away at eyes that stare.

And through floating forests  
that squeezed our little boat  
with dense shoals of sardines and swordfish,  
a battery of fins, whales forty feat long,  
sharks like dragons on ice,

we used our sails to glide like a fat manta ray  
sweeping water into our mouths  
and bailing it over the sides. I ate little,  
had fallen thin, feeding on  
deep vodka fishing.

There was a time we had

turtles to eat, but now

not even the blood.

We had snapped our jaws,

and our prey gathered into a ball,

a mass of men huddled and flowing. Our backs

lit up blue and green and shone bright in the dark.

The men were drug into the nomadic life

that is the fate of all sea creatures.

We erupted from sea floor, taking heads,

forming islands of bones and debris,

bodies swept by currents

in orbit around the smell, rotting for a meal.

So thick, I could walk on it,

feet over heads and hands.

They spoke to me with stone teeth,

moaning shells of flesh.

I have returned here over and again

and am under the rock.

My legs landed

with a soft crash onto weeds.

“And what of this?”

My hand raised and waved,

and he said,

“we must get going, there is work to be done . . .

Another round, another bag of bodies.”

But, my legs acted ahead of me,  
rooting in the muck, tendons  
melted back, joints filled with sand,  
tore out the muscles  
and wove into the kelp.

I was alone, and the green of my flesh  
drained into a smooth liquid,  
the only fluid my lungs could breath – here,  
sunk into cold, in an eternal century –  
away from light, faces, slime, wood, sky,  
and Captain.

**The White Russian**

I drank one off quickly with a soft  
unsheathed pistol in my mouth.  
We had spent the last two months under the bricks,  
in the holes dug to avoid the spray.  
We lived about chipped table tops  
and shells on the floor, table dancers, and rock fireplaces,  
flames high and rusted iron handles.  
The doors were always open,  
satchels full of work untouched,  
unclean goblets, deer skin rugs, shotguns,  
and an ocean of rain. “I learned to dance  
while being punctured from behind,” he told me,

“with the door closed in the three-walled bedroom  
of mothers house. And now I am trapped on this cracked stool  
dragging my hand over a counter covered in vodka,  
and it is the only liquid for miles.”

He was nineteen, happy from a cruel past not to remember  
the ghosts on the ranch, the dirt blowing spirals  
onto the surface of his forehead.  
The floor had no springs, but his moves worked.  
I stayed up all night  
with a dark Russian in my glass,  
whispering to my self  
about the white slide-shows,  
they moved like wings alone  
and begged me to weigh them down.

And It wasn't the window blowing open  
that caught me, but the terrible neighbor girl.

After the months in mud,  
limbs tossed into bushes, rivers bloodied  
and grown over, we had fallen in love  
with our battles. And it was  
the 'come in and get warm' she brought,  
that was her fault. She was no longer tuning up,  
nor painting her faces in the bathtub.  
"What else is there?" she asked,  
knowing where the daggers are,  
And I don't know what she meant,  
But, burrowing under my skin,  
she began making promises  
like an Orthodox doctor,  
navigating through my pores to reach the veins.

And my young Russian,  
not standing a chance, came quickly down.  
And the steel  
cried out like a sparrow  
in my mouth.

With Shears and Sponge

but a sort of wooden molding  
and not too many latitudes  
and overfed countryside  
and four tires and red cross  
and a dirt road lined in half-ass gravel  
laying its hand down on the land  
and too much to drink absinthe green  
how strange faces burn like beacon  
and fade back to half-speed  
sparkling along with the sheep  
pissing their milk into buckets  
and hands rotted onto the leather-head  
bursting into laughter-tears

at the Odyssey of that other book  
and it's cold here in the heat  
in the black-box metal cage  
syringes cyanide Phenobarbital  
little wicker basket little whiskey bottle  
and made its' way  
but half-empty  
and because we're here  
and shotguns and high-powered rifles  
grenade-launchers flame-throwers anti-anti-missiles  
and Land mines thrown into the road for tanks  
and pain and more pain

and left to find our four tires  
and now only two

the cold metal red and it smells like dinner  
and it's noon and black-dark  
and cough like a fire engine  
and pain in my legs and stare ahead and see nothing  
and hear only muted moans and "*Nearer My God to Thee*"  
and light if only a little crack  
and pain and more pain  
and drag myself to the sun like a plant in exile  
and fall to the ground with a crash  
and pain and more pain  
and lift up and stare

and lift up and stare  
but only one leg left  
but only one foot shin knee skin hair shoe  
and only piles of melted flesh and tendon  
grabbing like Judas to the last remnant of my right knee  
begging me to take them back  
but only the smell remains  
that smell of burning flesh and plastic  
and polyester and rubber and carpet  
and boiling blood  
and no shear nor sponge  
and no eyes fixed  
and no ancient hands  
can

**Painted Face**

I hit the sand today and it hit back  
with the fury of sea bile.  
would I could cast a sail  
    She told me

and the hole drained like tears  
    through half-closed eyelids  
through layers of flooded canyon,  
    down trembling fingers, where

whale-like trolls  
    countless ships,  
sailors and sharks,  
gnaw at limbs, and crawl

up ladders to Edo  
to walk the cross-legged man,  
along one of many roads  
fanning the way they do

and calling for seasons gone light green  
in June, then darker and musty  
and white for the rest of the year,  
    year after year,

the shadows  
    of night press on my thoughts –  
on dirt,  
mushroomed-bamboo,

rain  
purpled like  
cactus water, naked,  
    climbing tornadoes,

biting with diesel,  
racing vultures on lizard tracks,  
painting colored sand,  
blown clear, wind,

snickering genocide  
    with nose barrel  
puking, "*you drag on me,*  
    *you on my breasts.*"

And the day felled us  
    like sea shells,  
past mirrors of sparkling waterfalls  
repeating the shattered image,

we, puppets on dark cliff walls,  
    mourning  
invisible paths  
    singing

Uno avulso non deficit alter  
    through dream shadows,  
fumbling like god at the gates  
of an abandoned heaven.

**Bathing with the Dead**

We came in through lips that mouthed 'hello',  
lighting incense and singing, arms taking it back, like a ship  
returning to the bottle.  
We cut it down with a stone grasp – those years  
we had dropped in the well.

We sent smoke between the moon and those trees,  
we shone the shadowy wall – on it darkness,  
with hands pressing the light into shapes,  
we made for angles fallen to play,  
to dance in this botched house,

with gutter overflows and ransomed tomorrow.  
And talking of bombings and escapades, drenched in our cold shadow,  
we ran fingers over eyes and neck, mine and yours,  
mindful of our breathing, chests thumping, your head on my lap, small smiles,  
stomachs wrenched,

arms like bare hills, the shells of which I crack open with my eyes  
and a lashing flutter. We groan without a sound  
and torture-condense the days into one,  
drowning in a series of mental thumb sketches.  
But in those days we did sketch;

in those days we sang at full volume

out car windows from car doors too old to close completely;  
we hit the gym and hit the bottle and hit each other  
and rolled on the floor behind the couch, and tickled, and poked, and played;  
we smoked weed and tried to dance,

falling into each other, grabbing at my waste, and me at yours.  
In those days we did sleep on the bottom bunk huddled and whispering,  
hiding in the shadow of our separation, ever lingering  
just under the light, reflected like a world  
diving into the chasm of its' own quakes.

Two English Sisters

Everything buzzed  
the door was made of bamboo, and it opened into darkness

I moved in  
the lights were built like mirrors, and they landed on me in a round

There was the smell of sushi  
the rice vinegar I felt in my bones, and I could hear it draining

I slid onto a stool  
the table shined with lacquer, and like water it seeped upward

The crowd moved like leaves  
they walked along the veins, and floated toward the dance floor

Two women came to me  
they were Julian and Josephine, and their shape was English

We played at conversation  
my marrow beating forward, and bending my face to smile

Into my pocket went my hand  
out with cash, and handed to them

They joined me at my table  
we sat like Daibutsu, and they hummed my name

At every invitation to bow my head  
I kept a watchful eye, and saw a mass of spirits

they brought beggars and church doors  
they faded quietly into distance, and were wrapped in cloaks

The shadows fled into the corners  
then back out, and we kept up the conversation

Their songs began to shake the ground  
the wax of things went into liquid, and I braced myself

The doors opened  
we rose to our feet, and walked through them

I was dragged without being touched  
they drew me like a carriage, and I was in their arms

the nature was green  
the sky blue, and all of it dead

sunlight feathered down  
The girls giggling at me, and it stamped out the words

The bamboo grew hard  
it slammed behind us, and we were locked in

**Prelude to a Prayer**

Liquor stained  
brown on white  
carpets

under my feet,  
bamboo shoots  
on window sills

sun  
blocking

sipping the morning  
    through a cup  
of coffee

reading people  
on grey paper  
lines rushing by

without notice

I meditate in the morning  
take care

    my mind  
whisper—  
    one, two,  
one breath in  
another in

So it is Evening

Like a dulled crystal mountain  
over under all that dirt  
piled into a mound  
and it is the same way there

Car after car sunk to settle  
like oily sardines on a black board  
and where they appear I have been  
the forest with grinding teeth

Today a tall man and  
tomorrow in the dark the rain  
and gold chanterelle go up  
while I sleep

Looking well  
among the vanished  
in an apartment with a window watching  
the blackness walk down

And bounce like an echo  
in a cluttered canyon  
onto men and bridle bucket seat,  
brisk on their nimble feet.

**Study for a Stone Room**

She was eaten by the rack,  
in stones of torture imprisoned by the wall,  
broken in a dark room,  
pillar, manacles, Iron bars, and a rope,  
instruments heated in fire,  
limbs stretched till pulled apart,  
to the depths of white tower,  
drying wet gunpowder by the ember,  
burnt to lay the woman.

**The Progeny**

and we became the Eumenides  
 wrapped in bales of hay,  
     that dwell in the bowels of the earth,  
 by way of the sword, blonde born  
 against AD 980  
     swimming in Paris blood  
 descended from Stout  
 picking wild vines in snow  
 whitened, clear of time and history,  
 dragged back to Ida and Juno,  
     by ways of outlaw father,  
 and the cranes came, overhead in droves,  
 and I hid in my bed  
     until dragged out  
 by knife and rope,  
 arms like wagon wheels in the mud,  
 dredging the ground.

And then It began. At a thousand yards,  
 fangs split the fog, "Fire!"  
 he yelled, that Trojan King,  
 with eyes in steel-mask  
 cut to look like death bed,  
 dripping from the ankles,  
 soldiers pulled their bows and opened fingers,  
 driving the arrows into sky,  
 they filled the dark with light,  
     and landed in meat,  
 and clusters fell, and the wave rolled forward.

When they reached 500 yards,

his men increased the barrage,  
the sticks, landed harder and harder,  
our shields cracked in half, our  
    dreary stomachs, laced with open wounds,  
        hung from our bodies,  
grabbing at the ground, and pulling out the grass.

    Fire and smoke  
bellowed in light-less sky, painting the waters  
and us in a submerged valley,  
    dripping veins.

They advanced, severing limbs, tearing us in two, every  
bow and sword finding it's way  
to necks and spines, Over and again,  
closer,  
so close

I could smell the green breath of their breast,  
scratching my eyes and throat,  
bleeding me to my knees,

    And then it was over.

**Scene from the Poets Childhood**

And on the walk, past the bird shop,  
 under heavy bamboo gating, littering  
 the oversized side walk, I'd stop in to hear the parrots  
 speak Japanese, then past parks (where I learned  
 to ride a bicycle into a tree), and a construction site  
 forever building in my mind, where an older boy  
 found himself so lost in play – in and out  
 of cement piping – that he got stuck inside of one . . .

BOY – Moshi-Moshi! Moshi-Moshi!

POET – E? Nan no go-yo desu ka?

BOY – E? Watashi wa Furansu-go ga watarimasen.

POET – Watashi wa Nippon-go de hanashite imasu ga . . .

BOY – E?

POET – O-genki desu ka?

BOY – A . . . Arigato, genki desu. Anata wa Furansu-jin desu ka?

POET – French?! No! Watashi wa Amerika-jin desu.

BOY – A . . . I speak English little bit . . . no French.

POET – Same here.

BOY – Last guy who come . . . he left me here.

POET – Did he put you in there?

BOY – No, he left, I stuck myself.

POET – Good job.

BOY – Hai. I don't like French. There is a Frenchman living with us.  
 He tries to teach me. It sounds like spitting.

POET – I don't think I've ever heard French.

BOY – Don't, it's horrible . . . Allo, au revoir, groseille, marsouin . . .  
 horrible.

We talked and waited, I tried to pull him out,  
but I was young,  
and when the grown ups came,  
as they always do,  
we said good bye, never to see him again.

But now, a grown up myself (if only slightly),  
I'm trying hard to like the sound of French.

**Study of a Long God-King**

And snakes crawled into and out of our skulls. And down under this rock,  
 wet with our flesh, we met in shade, guided by the arms  
 of Eucharus. He made us bread and wine, and before we ate, we prayed –  
 walked out into the desert and slept among the graves.

Drowning whole forests and trees, spawning huge floating villages, we became  
 Khmer on a lake of Nile proportion. We licked lingums carved on the walls  
 of red rock streams. Up stairs to the heart of Angkor, sacred water pissing  
 down

the cobble stones, burning from the long God-king,

we hid in Nero's shadow, and became shadow, slinking off to the dock  
 onto ships, into stowage, sailing out like an army of stained glass children  
 scolded to the point of breakage, and bowing to anything under the sun.  
 Among huge temples and reservoir, we sent young old sick peasant

out into the mud, forced to grow rice, those two million dying under thin hands,  
 stumbling to soggy grave, sprouting from bodies in wet panties. 215 stone  
 faces, with

lips in shadow staring down, have been over-looking on all sides our every step.  
 Rocks

of woman giving birth, men removing lice, and I have been named

cooking pot, pig, dog, to discourage the spirits from inhabiting my body.

I swept the streets and raised the dust roots became vast pushing aside  
 great rock buildings – the temples held in the strangle hold of trees,  
 all silent, like petrified gunfighters, stopped suddenly in the heat of battle.

And by the palace, rises a golden tower, housing a woman with serpent heads,  
 dancing topless, hands in a slow chant, like water locked in Ice,

pouring ointment over severed limbs, still bleeding  
from the sword.

**The Republic**

Storm clouds had fallen hard  
misty and dark on the mountains

a confetti of beech leaves drifted down  
from the canopy and splashed the path

frost warmed sunlight liquefied red  
leaving grass and animal bejeweled

leaves littered the land  
and we had drowned in it

walked along the mud and sand of the bridge  
that poked its' head into the lake like the neck

of a giant turtle water breaking  
the edges and dragging broken

home to the bottom and then into the forests  
and became crooked branches like crones finger



## The Haiku

Chess with Brandy

silent

pawn takes rook

Dripping forward  
off the white pedals –  
sparks of light  
on morning rain.

New room      always awake

Sleeping in what is left standing  
in the desert  
rocks, and  
dirt  
swallowed by sunlight



Wires strung to private  
generators, tangled  
with clotheslines

Blowing leaves.  
Sitting on a park bench  
rooted in concrete.

After a shower  
lying in bed  
refracting light

Color recommendations:

All shades of red

Opening from the inside.

I cannot see  
as Taro sees;  
I cannot speak.

Playing with legos  
on a hard wood floor.  
Sunlight through the window

In the making of a god, he had made a man.  
It was in his face, carved with the tools of a jeweler.

Today,  
I am the man with the umbrella  
under the carcass

Cracking hammers outside my  
window: 8:30 in the morning,  
Taro barking at sounds, back hoes,  
tractors and flatbeds, my front lawn  
a hole lined with dirt and orange hats.

Large evergreen  
shadows the yard.  
Soon subdivided

Raindrops singing      lying in silence

Three-hundred year old tree,  
breathing in the air of the revolution  
that shaped it's demise.

where red light covers  
colors painted on the room  
through bamboo slats on the window

Boiled with salt and drained of lead,  
banks and misers, merchants and thieves.

Desert caravan painted  
on the wall –  
raining through the sun light.

Late morning                      woke up  
to an appraisers' measuring tape

Sand, blown by  
desert winds, spanking  
the saviors ass.

Three o'clock jazz on the radio  
blaring in my ears Afro-Cuban  
beats breathing in time

Winter            rainy season  
Two weeks        dry weather





