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The Waters I Saw Drank Me In

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The Waters I Saw Drank Me In

Senior Project Submitted to
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by
Wilberforce Strand

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To friends

To the sun

To the trees

To the nighttime

To the library

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*As certain as color
Passes from the petal,
Irrevocable as flesh,
The gazing eye falls through the world.*

—The Poetess Ono No Komachi

Open forever outward instead of drawing to a close

My story is a contradiction. I am feeling my way down a beach to the sea. A wave is delusion. I dream of my snakebit friends and my ten fingers flailing. I dance flat on the mattress. I am sitting at a table, drink in hand. I can prove my world to myself. Compassion is a lilac flower when I am hungover: purple and headache-inducing. I am stumbling home in the warmth of the mocking sun. I wake up on the left side of the bed. I am curled in a ball at the bottom of a mountain.

light & dark

3 Experiments

1

In this experiment, we investigate the light-spider. Our frog gorges himself on these ethereal orb spinners. Soon the frog breaks up into his component colors, as of a rainbow. The spiders return to the iridescent body at dawn.

2

In this experiment, we are tracking the chrysalid caves of innervated galaxy clusters. A new cocoon of clouded glass breaks open each century, and a continuation is born.

3

In this experiment, the discharge of a whipscorpion blinds us. They feed in our dark.

And On And On

In the land of statues, there is no room for a warm body. I wore it well but now it is time to give it up. The others will lead it away with respect. They will cut it into blocks, pack it into crates, ship it out. Before, I was a tiny particle born on the surface of the sun. Now, finally, my parallel lines can meet at infinity.

Skipping Rocks

Rocks skipping across the sky form ripples of sunlight. They greet you, then disappear into the deep blue. One huge stone never stops howling. 'Don't you remember the earth?' it wails. 'Don't you remember the ground beneath your feet? You were a chasm, a window to a soul!' But it is getting dark. Geological night is come. This time is for stones, not for you.

Family in the Dark

And Erebus drinks for his sister's sin. She raised him, then milked him. She stands between the girls and the boys, who wrestle cleanly. And Erebus cannot stop laughing. His son stretches and rolls over. They run back to their orchard of light, his girls, laughing and golden and glowing. And Erebus is the shade of a thousand others. And Erebus is caught in a drunken thought.

Father and Son

He'd been thinking about paintings of horses, about building a pithy phrase, letting it sit quietly, then suddenly whipping it into something grand. Inside this idea, at the base of an avalanche, were the remains of a foot. He'd been thinking about birdhouses, about listening, when Charlie started to cry. Those sounds are words, he thinks, listening.

Art and Chess

One is a game, an indeterminate, interrelated field of awareness, which the mind cannot possibly comprehend alone, and here is someone looking at it and laughing.

Prism

Can we orient someone in the limitless space of another mind? The refracting crystal counts the cycles of the signal. Bottled in the veins of a quartz clock. Abstract reality translates into light texture in a refraction of a splintered refraction. Then the light grows dull.

Structured Olfaction

The fragrance chemist still cannot tell when or what others are smelling. No single odor gives the full picture of the fruit. In designing pseudo-natural chemicals, this chemist is a conduit, in that, when things get almondy, he retreats into himself, whereas, in recreating a peach note, he almost feels the presence of another. Cucumber is cold, and something about rosy molecules gnaws at his heart.

He prays for anosmia. After work, he opens a jug of household ammonia and inhales deeply.

Never

Leaving the store with a dozen eggs, Never finds herself falling into pieces with the grocery bags. Her body oscillates between edge and osculate, teeth and tongue. The tip flies to the roof on the hard consonant, then the word is swallowed. The swallow makes the sound of a maze built from peat, growing a millimeter every year. This swell is movement nonetheless. Everyone else disappears into the inevitable fault, but Never stays carefully balanced between sky and sky. What is she made of?

Not A Truck

Lying beside a curb in a truck stop parking lot in Kentucky, I am not a truck driver. Body parked at the gate of this fuel pump whorehouse, skin-and-bone machine shining under nauseating fluorescents. The woman's back shines, too, as it rises and falls. I stalled out while crawling over the Horse Heaven Hills. She calls out into the night. I am the figure-eight of bad driving. She takes the wheel. Bare back on the asphalt,

I watch the stars from the passenger window. My body sinks into the upholstery. She shifts gears and my ears thicken and pop. We are reaching the top of the hill, but suddenly

abstractions harden into concrete. She slows. The dawn of the sun comes, too, and I cannot find my keys. She is gone into the dawn end of paradise.

Look

Looking at the floor / Looking at the floor at an angle /
Looking lonely at the floor / At an angel / Looking at an
angel or a floor and you'll see her looking like she's
looking at the floor / Looking at her harp and the floor /
An angel lying diagonally on the floor / You'll see

the nectar of the light dripping down to her navel, a
twisted zipper of a scar twisting it further still.

Can a broken thing remember its former
face?

A mind unmade / moves like a vacant
room / or a hole in the floor / throwing a
plate against the wall / smashing a glass /
unmaking / remembering to make / the bed
too late / sunlight stabbing / through the
holes / in your excuses.

The Moon

The moon shines through the little hole in my ceiling.
She reminds me that everything is out of place.

The sink is full of silverware. No water can escape the
house.

☾

In the abandoned building on the bank of the river my
head rests in her hands and she rests in the dark.

The water is a congeries of her rhythmic gestures.

Shadows

a winged dog mauling the mundane canine in the figurative sense by defecating in mid-air

the possibility of a peace bomb underlining shadows in a similar way

Always Now

The surface resists interpretation. It curves back on itself, taking the form of a 6. The end of the foot reaches for the body, feeling around for an ending. The ending is now, always now, never-ending. Counting on from here, everything is 0. Grey, grey, the world opens into darkness.

begin & end

My Family and the Future

When she hears the fire alarm, my little sister runs out of her school in fear. She is grabbed by the line of riot police who triggered the alarm. 'This is a riot now!' they say. 'Better start taking prisoners!'

Here echoes a New World Symphony for airhorn. Here echoes something new.

Ambulance

They wanted to computerize me. No one had yet gone the way of the baboon. I was an ambulance driver. She lay in the back, on the gurney. I said, 'Thank you for remembering dogs with me.' 'Whirr,' she wailed, so upset, for she had already forgotten. She tried to tell me something else. 'Whirr.' At first, the sound was tolerable. 'Whirr.' But soon I hated it. 'Whirr.' I shouted, 'Stop that!' but a different sound came out. It was just another 'Whirr.' I was an ambulance.

Some People

Some people don't want to know how hot it is inside the building. They pretend the house is dancing. But they will fall from that paradise. All will be uprooted by and by.

The Dream

You lie awake until you can find the dream. It is the dream in which awakening is forgotten, the dream that light can't cut through. You wake only when you can find the awakening that can consume the dream. You lie awake until you can find the dream.

(soon to be) Dead Language

Tracking air as it shapes itself into irregular verbs. They reflect each other's forms in their roots, which grow into stems in the river of breath. The sentences sound more obvious than they are, trickling from an arbitrary pattern of resonances. In extralinguistics we find the true language and thoughts can emerge unbroken.

My Argument

When it is ending, finding time is all that needs. The cold leaping through the air like a wave. Cresting, cresting, and then when you are grown you forget. Forgetting takes place on a curve falling here and around. There is never going. When is placed, curving around pine trees and drinking tea. There is evergreen and dry. When is the way to curve around the tree, over with to feel glass. Glass is sense. Straight from the point of returning with a round face. With a cold. With taste and the tongue and black. And the back coming around tongue with all that. And there is not any place lost.

Over blooms colder snow if anything. Sitting in lotus, the flower blooms and browns all at once. The colors have gone up and will come down in five. Minute to minute, then some. Counting up, counting through. When is cold to when understood to when under blood is too thin. To when giving blood is too much, to the cost of a meal. These are meals under. Teeth to give back. Teeth to give. In the back with the answers are the questions. With the and plus one to give, only one is not there. And repeat. Only one is not there. Never mind, just come around back and see.

Just come around back and sit upside down. Sit with down the way and too much. Too much and the wave crests. It is warmer now, sometimes, to and with the temperature, and cling, and without aim. Sent chair outside back to dust. Dusting just to see. Seeing to believe with everyone. With and without nothing to see. And there is the colder snow. There is the loading point. Toying with the back end of black dust whether or not one can see. And finding seeing with and for and back. With and back and too wide. Taking a vacation eating rust. Travel to streets over bridges with and for me. Could bridge the river if the river. If the river. If the rider crawls over. Over with crawling idol. Down with up and riding. When you write this down, don't change a word.

Fog

off the way we used to do / the way we used the way we
do / lending the way we do / to strength / to holding
everything we own / mending a line for two thousand
dollars and leading a mind / and through the lines we see
them / and to be them we are then never / with the
mind of a man never / in the land of the blinking lights /
taking the light while reading on the table / reading on
the light with the table / reading the table / reading the
sound of opening on a face / flat is the way to which we
climb / over the side of the new fine place / and around
the block each step is a find / with the mind now / we
know what happens at the end / a filthy new finding
end / but with a diamond in its mouth / it'll stretch /
and grow / and lo, we find the root of mouth / we pull
up the root of the book / walking is knowing and we
crawl / up and to the left we crawl / and fall and fall
when we come / and to the left we crawl / and follow on
on and up to feel / really coming in late now / really
thudding late and bowing under / under it with the dog /
under, below the fog / when we are the door / open to
fall / open too with the end of closing / fall and take
flight

Savior

A new answer of the tv science money as savior jesus as saved the savior relives and savors death as in a beginning as in the forced imbibing of isopropyl scrubbing history clean scrubbing until nothing's there.

All Great Cities Die

I was taken away in the spirit to a deserted lake. At first I hid myself in the rocks but the waters I saw drank me in. The waters whispered: 'Come here.' I saw a giant woman with a golden cup in her hand. She sat upon the waters and drank. Her hand shook just as every mountain and island was shaken from its place. On her forehead a name was written but I was too far away to read it. Her powerful legs were called Tigris and Euphrates. She saw me in the rocks and held her cup out to me. Taking it, I wondered, seeing her, with a great wonder. I was made drunk on her wine. 'The great day of anger has come.' When she spoke the sky shrank upon itself and the stars of the sky dropped upon the earth. I covered my head and she fell upon me and protected me. The ocean of her purple and scarlet robes smothered me. When she almost crushed me between her thighs, I was made drunk on lechery. There then came a great earthquake. Seven thunders spoke in seven tongues, none of which I could understand. Naked and full of abomination, I peered out from between her legs. She stood, abruptly, and I clung to her robes to keep from falling to my death as she began to walk. The great hills, toward which we made our way, glittered with fire.

Dress Code

some things you can never dress appropriately for

the chaos advances

the music crescendoes

The Shadow Universe

Into the same rivers we step and do not step, we are and are not. —Heraclitus

Newton thought / that this earth / was six thousand
years old. / Ten million years later, / the universe allows
us no more / than a garden / of fossils. / Fossil: trace of
an animal / on an earth. / The course of things was not
determined.

Our borders will deteriorate. / This earth will be one
enormous swamp. Consciousness / will find its fulfillment
/ in eternity. / The end of times / is not / the end of
time.

Children are alive. / Children say of reality: 'You are
that.' / Children play in Newton's garden. / 'You can be
a hero of an earth forever.'

watching ants devour a hairless infant squirrel

distorted reflection in the dark river

life & earth

The Fruit of Empire

Pizarro is sour. He despises Incan fruit. From his palace, he forbids dragon fruit and guava. 'Citrus trees are evergreen. Their thick leaves put the clouds to shame!' Walking in his groves, the men sink to their shins in sand and the ladies lovingly pelt him with fruit. Pizarro is the first of the great orange barons.

Windstorms damage his oranges. Sinkholes steal whole harvests. Pizarro is stabbed in the throat. He paints a cross with orange juice and cries out, 'O, fruit of emperors!' The flesh remains sweet.

Food

Six hundred chickens in a warehouse in Marin County, California can't make a decision. Stiff bodies cannot leave this room. Their meals do not teach them anything. Living death makes an amazing mess in a single day. They have impaled themselves on dietary salvation. Their pecking order is forever.

Changes

In this town, five bears move among the houses. They congregate in front of the small candy shop, driven wild by the scent of the finely wrought licorice wreaths that adorn the surrounding trees. Instantly the beasts devour them, and soon they keel over in a drugged stupor. The storekeeper emerges with his son. In the light of the afternoon, the bears look like pillows arranged haphazardly around the yard. The boy is afraid, but the man taps on the biggest bear's skull. 'They aren't that scary, kid. Help me take these around back. I think you're finally old enough.' With the help of a forklift, they get the first bear into the back of the red pickup. They follow a little dirt road into the woods behind the house. After fifteen minutes of driving, the man stops the truck at the edge of a great pit. The boy gets out, and is shocked into silence. The pit is full of bears. Some of them roar at the sight of the two humans. Some of them whimper. They claw at the sides of the pit, trying to climb out. The boy shakes. He can hardly breathe. The man chuckles. 'Don't look so surprised. I ate black bear once in Montana. Maybe I'll get a hankerin' for it again.' The bears move together. They are a single breathing mass. But can change ever come?

In the Jungle

The explorer hasn't eaten in several days. She could not bring herself to eat the monkeys she had caught and killed. Stretched over a fire, they looked so horribly human. The explorer went to school to become an explorer. Now she's stuck in the mud, pants filling with water as she listens to the frogs. Her legs sink into the ground. Two serpents, long as trees, emerge from the bushes. Their elastic jaw muscles can swallow a deer whole, but they open now to hiss. 'Honey flows in our land,' they say. 'It is a devil's paradise.' The streaks of blood on her skin begin to twist and she struggles to escape the mud as she asks, 'Where is the honey, then?' The snakes shake with laughter. 'We will display your skull to other visitors,' they say. 'You will not be forgotten.' They turn and slither back into the undergrowth. Vulture bees circle, waiting to enter her eyes.

In the Forest

Three hundred and sixty-eight miles from the nearest highway, a hunter follows game trails through the deep underbrush. He comes to a river made of salmon. Bending over, he tries to snatch one out of the swollen river, but the gravel is loose at the water's edge. He falls with a splash into the freezing cold. His head hits a rock, and the salmon carry his body downstream.

The hunter awakens in the shallows of an eerily silent tarn. Shivering, he drags himself to the bank and looks around. His head aches. Suddenly, across the water, an enormous grizzly emerges from the trees, gazing directly at him. Full of fear, the hunter is frozen. The grizzly's teeth make a sound that carries like the ringing of an axe and it roars with a terrible roar. As it rears onto its back legs, the hunter realizes that it has a human face. The roar has become words, but he cannot understand them. The bear with the face of a woman stares at the hunter, speaking quickly now. He is frozen again, this time in a trance. When she eventually turns and disappears silently into the riverine fringes of spruce and cottonwood, his mind feels cloudy and the pain of his head has become unbearable. He reaches up to massage it and feels something unexpected. Looking into the water, he is shocked to see that huge antlers have sprouted from his head. His panicked shouts echo around the little valley, doubling back on themselves and mocking him. Wind whispers through the trees in the gathering dusk.

In the Dunes

Near a place called Hog Swallow, a sailor stops at a house to ask for water. A man with a raw onion in one hand and a skull in the other appears at the door. He gestures toward the cranberry boxes on the porch and the sailor sits. The man walks back inside and then reappears with a clay pitcher and cup. 'The 90 proof laureate liquid of the land. Drink up.' Rattlesnakes pour from the pitcher. The man gestures down the road. 'Went to school by that swamp. Once a year, when the dog turned into the moon, the kids ran out into the mud. It's a privilege to live here. The sand is burned black and the sky is blanketed with smoke.' The sailor drinks and is silent. Suddenly, a rabbit jumps through a front window. The man starts at the sound of shattered glass. When he turns back the sailor has vanished. Bewildered, the man shakes his head. He places his skull in his lap. The old house creaks.

Dirt

When I was younger, I stopped breathing to hear the silence of the morning out on the porch. Then I dove into a box of mulch and dissolved. I became mud just as the clouds cleared. Swimming around in my new home, I soon found my dirt brain. And everything was easier.

Now I'm digging a coffin-sized pit and lying down in it. I've brought my wife this time. While she sings, I drag the pile of dug-up mud back over the two of us so that just our heads are above ground.

I mean, I *will* find my mind again. And everything *will* be easier.

Rock

My first face is a block of granite. I see it once before I am reformed. The hammer slices. The chisel responds. A new shape. Inside, I crumble. Remember me? I was a rock jutting out over a lake barely seen. Now I smile someone else's smile.

A woman smiles back at me from behind a velvet rope. Her hair falls over her eyes as her head moves from side to side. She steps over the rope and walks to me. I want to tell her that none of this is mine and that I have never been alive. She reaches up to caress my cold face.

unrequited love:

weeping willows

weep

reach for

the wind in despair

Chlorophyll

Nature is prodigal. Of a hundred seedlings only one or two would survive; of a hundred species only one or two. Not, however, man. —Thomas M. Disch

Trash thrown away in this forest takes root and grows into trees. Their fruit is a multitude of combs, which bare their teeth but never dare speak in the shade.

A human body grows pinecones from its eyes and mouth. Woodpeckers ignore the combs. The body provides the appropriate echo.

The Wildflowers Walk to the City

They are one hundred feet tall. Their bare roots scrape the ground. Their swaying leaves knock down ancient trees. Faceless flowers, vengeful, angry.

The horde makes its way to the edge of the city. It pushes over the buildings. People scream, are crushed under root and rubble.

Finally the city is flattened and the flowers satisfied. Their roots reach deep into the wreckage and their blossoms turn up to the sun once again. The air is overtaken by silent fragrance.

The World of the Book

A plague of locusts destroys just about everything that grows. Only human bodies remain after the trees are gone. But these bodies are not the most hostile environment that the earth provides. Their husks still stand whole. You could drill through their bark and note the insect larvae inside.

The last book printed on paper gives an old tree voice in a storm. It shouts, 'Trees, come, look!' In the book, pines shake and rain falls. In the world, useless bodies dissolve into paper.

The Dance

/ shied away / a group shade inside / sheep grouped in
the shade / a bag of gathered leaves / it is a tree, it is
growing / it is caught in a box / carried by men / case in
point / the shack is on fire / blanket of rusty metal /
errors made are on the fence / number 70 on a green
sign / if there is a book, stealing it / if there is a god,
talking around it / mailbox okay baseball bat / a sweet
rose in the back / slow bus / yellow lines stumped /
reformed as a new word / cold round and soft tripled
back to lose / spit in an envelope / get fixed over it now /
exit for now / not again / a pattern on seat cushions / a
patter of torture, drip, drip / it can break even when it
breaks / and this will be a break / number 80 / three are
hedges / the breasts are tender / soft green hills / the
shape of a cloud / follow the road are on / fall on the
road am on / fade to radon /

Flat

Still, how I nearly felt. In the midst of all that looking —David Markson

The remains are preserved in the pink and white rock of the alpine mountains of salt. But here, the flats reflect only my own carcass.

In my own eyes I find the eye of the earth.

Ever away from the source

I walk along the canal

listen to the other sinking ships

catch him pissing into the water

we jump and become the space between

mind & water

Down Deep

It is difficult to think about men without thinking about the deep. Past the zones of green and blue twilight, in the utter darkness below, we like to separate the wild into good and evil. But perception lies free under the floodlight. A lamprey's rasping teeth drain the blood entirely.

So much for fossils and embryos.

The New Machine

The new machine at a certain speed /
Memorizing its time signature, permitting
itself / the repetition of never repeating /
Permitting itself the pattern / of never
repeating itself / to make twenty self-
destructing machines / The obsession over
chaos / The unfinished painting / The drive
to set mechanization to the speed of art / A
boat full of explosives floating in the bay.

Delusion

It is lying beside the door in ambush. It's always there, always waiting. A huge, many legged, quivering deformity, coated in translucent skin with pine trees and mosses growing from its back. It was decapitated for fighting against the gods, but through the keenness of the six eyes in its chest it triumphs and destroys. The creature is everywhere at home. It can come and go through mirrors. This Un-man is trying to tame you. It uses the wind as sticks to beat a drum and recites an incantation: 'The blessed will come back to life in the form of spheres.'

Mannequin in a crimson vest stares at me

Looking smirking aryan face I want to
punch him in his smug mouth *you are not alive*
he is cold plastic wearing khakis not listening
to my thoughts he is smirking at me saying
you are garbage you are rotten he is true garbage I
am livid he is not living I am shaking yelling
you are plastic he is smirking people are staring
I am trying to walk away smug mouth
punching me inside khakis smirking garbage
on display yelling into department store
depths I am falling apart

The Plan

A bandage around the night / the wound
aching / a bandage around the back of the
neck / back to life and it remembering / the
pieces must out / the pieces must out / teeth
pulling / teeth pulling the skin from the
hand / finding more fear / fear, routine,
point of flat future / permanent future / a
backup plan becoming death / this room /
the place where it emerges / this bandage /
unwinding it / letting the fester fall away.

(not my) Death Poem

The joke never gets old because the perspective of the end is always a new perspective. And perhaps you will spontaneously speak a verse before you plunge into the cold water.

Can I even think down here?

When I jump the sky is waving and the water is the sky. Each cloudy wave forms a beginning. The surf spreads to accept me, accordion-mouthed, then chokes and swirls me below. Everything suddenly quiet. The seaweed grabs at my ankles. Deeper and deeper and the water just beginning. Deeper and deeper beginning to spread the water and swirl me gently. Ultramarine quiet clouds the sky. Accordion-mouthed seaweed just quiet. Everything is kelp and spears of light and periphery.

Not Now, Now

I believe in the power of the word to come sweep me away and place me gently on top of my problems. Each one bashes me with its elbow. My elbow is making a hole in the drywall next to the bed. On the lawn, a bird is pecking away at the membrane between our voices...and if you are what you eat...but there is more to a bird... there is more to a...could you be misunderstanding me? Because mixed messages are a true coming together. They are the loudest words I write to my family.

What does it mean to be a paradox? My form is soft in the light of a blank face. Then buds emerge, little white flowers branching out like a spider web from the nostrils, calling out to the weak that there is something new between its stems.

Language as Narrative

...move around move can that machine of meaning link the memorizing be simply mind with learning to see objects in different hues and people must simply be memorizing must memorizing be simply people and hues different in objects see to learning is mind we will have to evacuate thought as dependent on words as evacuate to have will we will have to evacuate it at least so far as thought is dependent on that verbal meaning into devices of gathering the impression of competence into words a converting page on the printed page to convert a verbal meaning giving the impression of competence at your convenience your at competence of impressing the meaning to form your words on dependent is thought the link of sound to the meaning words have depended on thought as far as we must be memorizing people to link sound of meaning to sound on printed page to convert the page printed on to see learning with mind we will have to evacuate simply be memorizing the link of the sound to the meaning of a mind that can learn to see objects in different hues move around move can that machine...

Cliffs

Cliff I

On a hill, a hotel trembling over a cliff. A boy, naked, sitting alone. A dark-haired girl enters the room and takes off her clothes. They do not speak to each other. She sits, and in the half light of the room they play a game of cards and do not look out the window. The cliffs look in at them. 'How could we let this happen?' they whisper. The sun goes down and the night is black.

The morning is a different color. The boy's sleepless eyes flit over the walls and his chest rises as he breathes. The girl's legs dangle over the edge of the bed. The sky is grey and the lake below reflects. Her closed eyes are one with it all.

Cliff II

Trembling through the past at the bottom of the lake, surrounded by the cliffs that form the boundary of the mind, the boy was born. In his mind the boy had a heart, but no one can know what will come over the highest bluff. He is formed naked in a ruin, in line with the naked skin of bodies made from shame. The girl is not form, does not form words to speak. She forms words to bathe in their stained light and in their stained light the girl is god. She speaks, but not in the language of her parents. She speaks of being here before in the memory. In his invasion, climbing her walls, she cannot break down, the walls cannot break down. Still, she bleeds. She bleeds from inside. They both bleed, slowly, in anamnesis. But they don't change. They can't forget, they don't forget, to look again, and look again. They hold it in, and look again. They let their mirrors crawl to contortion. And trapped in nightmare reflection, this memory can never go away. The past happens then, now, forever.

Cliff III

There is no way to tie ourselves to our thoughts. In the sleepless city of dreams, echoes permeate the hallways and unseen eyes ogle a taboo. The blood behind the lens clouds the frozen lake. Screams trapped under the ice are audible only to us, who dream of a future in which we can run from memory. The mind closed again. Nothing escapes. The eye left open to reflect the moon as it moves into view just beyond the cliffs.

A practice of 'Becoming With.'

*But are not the dreams of poets and the tales of travelers
notoriously false?* —H.P Lovecraft

I call my body 'creature of the mud.' O
bullet-proof bloodsucker wrapped in red
plastic, where is the creature now? Learn to
love me, gargoyle, please. Call my body
'escalation.' Wrap me in glittering quietus,
please. Set me among the scorpions to
dream

World Beater

There is a line here that we can cross if we march to a drum woven from hands swimming under water. But the sound of the limestone crawl, stalagmites jumping, stamping in the dance with the head open, marches first.

Afterword

It is perhaps an understatement to say that it has been a rough year, and on so many levels. The darkness drips or gushes from every possible faucet and crack in the ceiling so constantly that it seems almost futile to fight against it at all. So, I didn't. I hopped into my little boat and set out for an adventure on the waters of doubt and dismay. These waters became such an intrinsic driver of my poetry that I cannot even imagine what this project would be if it had been written under any other circumstances. The dark kept me going, for a while.

In the middle of the river, though, a new understanding came to light. The things that humans regard as dark, things covered in the poems above: death, apocalypse, etc., are not just dark. True, from our perspective, our own death is the ultimate night. But inherent in night is the sunlight that will destroy it. Nothing is forever; not this dark year, nor the human race, nor the planet we are in the process of destroying so recklessly. This year *will* end, our lives *will* end, our language *will* end, humanity *will* end, the planet *will* end. Change never stops coming, and at the risk of sounding cliché, it is the only constant. I find that comforting. If we cannot realize the impermanence of the people and things we interact with and the emotions we feel, we can never truly appreciate what we have.

These poems are certainly not meant to be unchanging or permanent. They are a tiny piece of my consciousness' extremely limited understanding of transient existence, a paper boat borne away by a mighty river. They are a miniscule squeak in a limitless universe that never stops. And so it goes.