

ALGOR

The ambient temperature of the universe is only exceeded by our understanding of nothingness. Water settles to its lowest point and for the body, this means anywhere left abandoned by the soul's collapse. I made a mistake trying to plan an escape route, thinking no one could trace their fingers along the map the way I do. But the contraflow of this traffic that I have become is not indicated in the equalization of pressure, two halves of the heart attempting to sing to one another so as to keep all the notes of the key contained. If there were a moment before this one, before the building tension caused the rupture of all systems designed to hold when even the river comes over its banks, I might have reconsidered the pulse I was left to search for under my own skin. Ideation cannot factor for the weight of one body on top of another.

RIGOR

Zephyrs raze mountains, one atom
at a time. Our hands look old before we do:
on the edge of our universe, time must travel
greater distance. In mythos, death becomes
an absence of function, but dying is process
upon process— diacritical marks in the margins
of a book we've been writing. The blank pages
are either for notes or a matter of material,
a number divisible by four to make us
whole again. The calcium of our bodies
betray us, invades the groundplasm,
hardening in arteries and, in time,
the limbs of an absent, occluded
eye. We cold shorten to make the flesh
of one another palatable: take this
the sabbath day. Or how we define
quiet as the presence of echoes from within
the body, the ambient resonance in our ears
of the universe itself. The silence in
the marrow of our bones rings tuned
to the frequencies we've been dreaming in.

LIVOR

Speak in exhaustions. Every film
is about doomed lovers on a doomed
planet. In blue hazes, the chance
to understand how the body settles:
in a valley the earth oscillates, comes
a'tumblin' down. It is not unusual to
have a tenebrous dream of never awaking.
How do we come to know if the heart's limit
on beats has been reached? I trace a finger
through the palm of your hand and wait
for your reflexive grip. Reside back only
in the dark edge of the painting, where light
cannot escape onto the faces of subjects forlorn.
This new era is known by its awareness of the way
we separate ourselves from the air, and how the organs
of our body return themselves to the soil. Speak in a tongue
to avoid the abstraction of not knowing
why the heart's beat rests against the skin. Or in the moment
before this one, the soul escapes and we measure its weight
against the grains of sand we keep
from forming into glass.