

Five Poems from *Idem* for *Tupelo Quarterly*

Until We Found

—after “Artine” by René Char

a poisoned fish, a bag of vowels, a twelve-tone lullaby, a bouquet of blades, a sea of conscience

blinded by having

(Veritas at large)

a sea of stories, a silent scream, a bouquet of waste, a winged chair, a crushed intention

whittled by distance

a crushed blossom, a song of clouds, a rusty bed, a dead intention, a floating bough

weighted with names

(Veritas stalled)

a floating stone, a sea of dreams, a crushed hero, a fawning wolf, a book of masks

unable to retrieve

a book of demons, a diving mouth, a tidal gem, a suckling rat, a bowl of thorns

spinning phantom ink

(Veritas adrift)

a bowl of feathers, a crystal mask, a gentle intention, a fluid future

light warning the grass

Curve (I)

*This is a curve
and this its thirst*

—Michael Palmer, “The Village of Reason”

this is the city of imitation
& this its inward path

this is expectation
& the pilgrimage of flutter

this is the emergence
& these the final waters

this is the song of the petal
& this is what was stolen

this is a forecast
& this a body count

you are the animal
& the appetite that smolders

that was the accusation
& this is your forgiveness

that was any today
in the current of the possible

this is the second yesterday
& this a third tomorrow

this is the stunted image
& this the inclination

the vanishing point
& lost lake of origin

that is the hungry eye
& this its consequence

this is the lifeblood
& the swelling belly rent

this a last attempt
or the last of many surrenders

you are the satellite
& the brittle twig

you are the open door
& the memory of sunlight

the eye of the survivor
& memory of rain

this is the egg
& this the fury furled

this is the lip
& this the fury furled

this is a lifetime
or the last of many breaths

this is a lifetime
& this its fading wake

Curve (II)

—after Michael Palmer

there was listening
& a cry from silent mouths

there was the fear of worse to come
& the bright parade of evidence

there were daisy chains of guilt
& the cold drone of industry

the drone of tooth & claw
& the salt flint of loss

the contraband of dreams
plucked from orphan soil

a stampede of vanity
hollowing the wind

seducing our doubt
with a blanket of silence

as someone strummed a lost song
& bathed our cheeks with sand

& braced the young to face
another rising tide

Courage or Cowardice (I)

—after Thomas Bernhard

Having dreaded the encounter he expected would expose his trepidation, he avoided any mention of the bravery he displayed, difficult as it was to believe.

Courage or Cowardice (II)

—after Thomas Bernhard

He took pride in choosing a mate whose compatibility was as substantive as it was obscure. But sometimes he wondered if his unconventional tastes masked a reluctance to deny his lover's desires to risk disappointing his own.