

let there be green

Let there be green.
Let there be thickened trees and unshorn grass,
choking weeds and hand-tearing brambles.
Let there be honey-venom flowers and
sap sticky vines that will not break.
Let there be Kudzu with
suffocating canopy,
light swallowing gorges:
the dark places where sunlight
goes to be cinders--
let them rupture and extrude.
Let them come roaring forth
bursting timber and cornerstone
proving that we have built
nothing of permanence here.

Winter chain them to old locust trees
let them be food for the dark,
wet tongue of the shifting mountain.
Let them scream as fissures
grind their black scabs
together and become blood brothers
with the god of fire and soot
that they have worshipped
with pay stubs like altars,
families as burnt offerings.
Let them split their throats crying:
“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”
and receive only silence in return.

Let us finally admit we were
digging graves this whole time.
That what we were burning
was the daylight promised
to those who we called
precious and baby and little man.
Let us confess that tomorrow
has never mattered to us,
that promises were enough,
that it was good enough for you
will be good enough for them

even when there is no good left.

Enough.

Let us throw sizzling sticks of dynamite
down howling black shafts; let the place
Where knees truly learned to bend
char and blacken and ripple like the sea floor.
Let the monstrous stone throats
finally choke, let these temples fall
because their god is dead,
had been dying for decades
let us mourn him properly now.

They do not need our darkness to burn anymore
So let us end this.

Let there be green.
great looming swathes
of endless breathing mouths
let them sing of our absence
let the cities go dark for
the lack of our smolder
let the stars find these mountains
as they were made:
whole
green
and blessedly
empty.

Ingrate

The earth, she feeds us.

Generations of firedamp
bituminous and volatile
black breath, burning or burial
We belong to her all the same.

Respirator and headlamp,
overalls and steel toes:
Dress rehearsal for
a last Sunday shift.

We do not speak ill of her that
sustains and consumes us.
Wrap ourselves in her
womb--smothered in
promised security.
We all know that
the only light
in the deep dark
is a paycheck.

So hush.

Count your blessings boy:

roof over your head,
food on the table,
diesel and grease,
workboots on the porch;
crippled back,
crumbling joints
and silence--
company and even union

tuck you in,
shut you up,
leave you to rot
and goddamnit

you'd better be grateful.

and behold (Revelations 12)

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven:
a woman
who was secretly a mountain
clothed with the sun,
and legions of men inside her
and upon her head a crown of black lungs.

And she being with child cried,
travailing in birth,
and pained to be delivered
so they bound her:
backbone kept straight
by centuries of settlement
and sentiment that sings silent
hymns through a sandstone jawbone
two decades from crumbling to
dust under the weight of a bad bite.

Gutted and rotting
in the mouth of a beast
that cannot afford seven crowns
to cover the holes in its seven heads
Ten horns sound the end of the workday
and one third of the stars in heaven
return from the inner dark--
just in time for supper and
Wednesday night prayer meeting.

An autopsy of faith
A congregation of corpses
A murder of faithful crows
gathered in humble rites of
cadaverous sanctity
claiming nothing more than the air that
they rattle through the dessicated
wood sheds of their bodies;
singing softly that this
is not our home.