

CURRENTS

Think of the way blood is.
A host, listening. Roiled under the tide—.

A windowsill cat's making a new language
For birds, cracks his whisper into chittering. Day breaks like silver levered
Trays once cracked opaque cubes to scattered white sheering, skittered. The secret to beats
A shattering—the world is cold. I could have been a better host to love.
But look there. Under the creek bank's tangled branches

A delicate line of ice blossoms—made, swayed by the freezing brook bump . . .

WATCH

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

—*Psalm 141: 3*

They cannot tell me
what to see—: I understand
the heart—: in
the eye—: a hand placed over
the mouth—: to blow a kiss
a kind of peek-a-boo—: ghost-
writing whispered—: touching
light a host—:
a woman might—: come to
Understand—: between lines

to say them—: unsaid unfortunate
un\\ \\ \\ \\ forgiven given a maddening
whistle to blow doubtless
would wring \\ \\ \\ \\

from grace
a tremor

SPINE

*That is when, and only when
We come to it.*

—*Maya Angelou*

when it came down to it nothing
had been good enough i stood
therein the *let me had been* laughing
her head off with no person beside me
in the weeks after waves meant to drive
me beside myself wave after wave
goodbye i let my beloveds go abandoned
to laughter crushed

my spine shapes now a question as of
interiors this temporality of no

privacy—: *when\had\therein\her\in\me\goodbye\to* | | |
intimacy might as well crumpled

like earth folded a hand claw-
hammering against friendless evening score—: \\\|\|
nail scrape thumb drops i am still

herein in love with Jesus has the
hidden violence of this passion escaped
all notice beloveds unspoken pardon
my always so a sudden gloaming flurries
swirling cloud through gold light toward
my doorstep my doorstep where someone has laid every doctrine
with the dead

BOP: PURCHASE

Plastic toy—a little blue man—a man once dropped
into the cupholder of my car: an anchor
had been until then metal weight. Holding
a ship—[&]still[?], what I know about a ship?
I can't drink all that water, I'd told my mama as
a girl, meaning the Atlantic and, for me, *No cruises*.

] *Cause all I ever have*
Redemption songs [

..... *I didn't think you* [*were afraid of anything* . . . ,
Mama said. (Hoist anchor here from the bottom
of a pond. Longing—take up. Leap into the gap
between *you were* as though her silence were
a body of water. All vessels weighted hulls) hush
no jingle lifts, in 1984—*in the morning, in the evening*—
refusing the tv host dancing someone's idea
of luxury. Other melodies) holding me.

] *Cause all I ever have*
Redemption songs [

What mass—did that man want me to drag
wherever I traveled? Someone else's playlist
seeping insidious through my drives until
I unpair the device—*if they could see me now* . . . but
a roller's advertisement—ghosting again. { I
wait the holy name to which my soul welling belongs,

] *Cause all I ever have*
Redemption songs [

MORTIFY

3 July 2023

When a black fly arrives
in the kitchen, rubs
front legs together on
the bright sink ledge
like a fiend, search your heart.
Pounded from within,

I fainted, bruised meat,
my face against ceramic
tiles. The unpleasant scene
I'd landed in, swiped,
swept away. Death.
No! Lean. Clean.

.....

Bring your body near

to death. Let them touch.
They have been always
intimates. Where privacy is
lost, everything personal is
public. Roasted

fish, a honeycomb, a menu
for living. Taste this, I want
to say. After: life, lives,
live gathering.

Inmates know, to live is labor.
The nation travails.
Each day lingering

in a warm bath like a woman
who would give

birth. On the street
someone starves.
The prone person
on the grate

strains to rise.

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What pulse keeps
time in the stomachs
of the tender-hearted?