

## *Bestiary*

Each letter has an animal self, a dreamscape's sound surge  
of scale and claw purged in a moment's bright breath  
of hiss or thunder. Its flutter borne from umber and burnt

sienna, bone crush and manganese blown around a hand  
on a rock face, just where the voice reverberates its  
syllabic dance in wrist flick and moan, urging forth the herd

or causing rain to cross the plain in a purpling bruise. This,  
the opening in the monoglot of tongue, something to listen for  
something to lock in, lift and remember. This faint blue

hued by light across an expectant eye, a crimson  
whisper in a breath where each detail of nuthatch or katydid,  
skink or smoke haze begins its slow fade towards extinction.

This is what's frayed here found among strung beads of jasper,  
tourmaline, a Nassarius shell smudged in red ochre,  
a final act spoken; a totem dreamed forth in cut amber

caught, microbe by microbe, in silence becoming mind.

## *Lazarus Rising*

Past the light, the stretch of trees that leads  
to his house, past the doorway to the room his sisters  
keep alive with their incense of tears, he comes  
like a crow eyeing these shiny emblems of his life.

In shadows three days, he watches  
his sisters drifting in rooms as if upon water  
till on that third day they are almost transparent, flat,  
something he can put his hand through.

By the fourth day, it is uninhabitable:  
he cannot remember why he has come or why  
light hurts his skin so, or what the settling of  
dark birds mean.

Motes move through him but not God. Evening bleeds  
to the horizon, women's voices move around him—  
an insistent sirocco that will not cease.

A man wearing white comes then leaves again—  
his hand burns, the light burns... something he has known,  
a distant whisper... passing the branches  
the stone by the tomb's door... a luminescence.

When he awakens from that second sleep bandaged  
in what he could remember, a dream of falling  
in which the air itself had become a seam of light,  
an insect humming close that would not  
leave,

he first heard the voice of God  
an indecipherable whisper,  
over and over in his ear.

## *Burrowing*

What burrows becomes us. The mole, the mouse, the worm  
digging into this moist obscurity of body  
turning  
deeper and away  
by what the light reveals.

Sun-cast shadow  
beneath the fray of roots or fear  
of adder's fang,  
I reach what's buried there, white and fertile  
from this rock-clotted earth

where what's dark brings forth  
scent or feel or the thing itself.

Each meaning is  
a harbinger of what's to come. This bulb,

perhaps, is how the past's exposed  
in the understory of a crumbling dark, a bitter  
taste on the tongue,  
illuminating the body  
nuanced and particular, something felt forward  
and unencumbered in its blooming.

This is what we might remember of dying  
or what the dying might finally taste of living  
a scent remembered though invisible  
from what's given up in a darkened room.