

Pentecost

Churches burn in a kind of Kansas
where all have the likeness of sense.

Titus, attendant, utters phrases from a manual
in a language he does not speak.

Titus—the only ghost in his room—
bears witness to the rapture at Wichita.

Does the room where he sits understand
that the roof above it's on fire?

This room, its walls coated in encaustic.
Titus follows cracks wandering down the facture.

Cracks become paths through the sibilant grasses
on the plains fired by imaginary rhymes.

The silhouettes of bison texture the horizon—
they rumble a noise in his head.

Their fifty shaggy bulks form a lexicon
each of whose entries fails a name.

Whom was a picture of drawn by
fire that clothes the prairie in gold?

What spells the land sounds of Sunday
like a shout to the untrained ear.

Quakes Titus, rapt in fits of ecstasy,
speaking in tongues in Kansas in flames.

Indiana

Two shitty taverns,
a Dairy Queen,
and courthouse cannon.

Thirteen blast furnaces
replaced by the
Basic Oxygen Process.

Bright winter day.
Breath casts shadows
traced with asbestos.

FOR RDT

Chinati

Welcome to Texas, Devin Johnston,
a windmill has your name—
stubborn and American at off-rhyme
to the arroyo-creased, angular region.
Bald, redheaded turkey buzzards eat
a rabbit struck by what
it only understood as supernatural.
The birds bring to mind
black grasshoppers that broke clacking
into red-winged and rasping darts.
And even as we drive
secular sunlight polishes aluminum slantwise.

Aphasia

The small thoughts of bees.
The minimal maps they dance.
The bare dark they sleep.
The shape of their encounters
with members of their family.
The taste of their memories.
Their collective will to act.
The nature of their doubts.

Luck

The mendicant ants who plot the sidewalk
pattern their errors with shapes of intent.

These chains of creatures *t* terms long
derive the contour of a message misread.

Like bare grammar mapped to finite frames
they accrue along paths of abstract mistake.

Ants riddle in the dirt a cipher
that rumors noiseless channels down occult warrens.

The Rev. Thomas Bayes models bodily decay
on these ants black and ochre tricked.

Just as hills erupt so we sicken—
cells will track then feed on kin.

The greens and brown of Tom's surroundings
show that joyous accident forms every place.

What did this Mandarin of Chance hide
meaning in the *I Ching* of insects?

There explodes a storm in the atmosphere;
at its edge he makes out rain.

Chaos, miraculous, like a cloud of starlings
scatters through the rivers of his nerves.

Clues of order scar this little Earth
Bayes takes as a blemish from Heaven.

FOR CR & JM