

SUTURE

Simone Muench
Dean Rader



Black
Lawrence
Press

Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist in
creating out of void but out of chaos.
—*Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley

Collaboration on a book is the ultimate unnatural act.
—Tom Clancy

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I. Incantations:

Let me start where voices end

Hearing your words, and not a word among them

Hearing your words, and not a word among them,
just birds that have flown beyond the realm of human
acquisition, disappearing with your body
(in smoke rings of evaporative beauty)

that neither rises nor rescinds, that both
bleeds and burns. Light the match of my mouth
with everything you have to say. Light this long
distance with your darkness. Strike up your song.

Let the animals come as the forest burns
blackness back into gold foil filigree, turn
down the deathbed. In the inside of being,
our bodies green with leafstain, you still sing

in me. Muted muse, dormant and
deleted muse, let me start where voices end.

Nothing to track but the dark drift of myself

Nothing to track but the dark drift of myself
into the past: I find I am nostalgic
for a boat that's never been built. Nothing takes
up more space than absence, nothing buoys us
as we sputter in our own widening wake.
We're already fabled like a forbidden
room ghosted with lost travelers, or a ship
exhumed with a mummified crew, their faces

face off against the gloom. Once there was
a skiff on a lake and in that skiff
a boy. It was night. The moon cinched in its cage
hissed its sickness across the shore. When the boy
awoke there was no lake, no moon, no boat.
Nothing but stars salting the steady dark.

How on earth did it happen, I used to wonder

How on earth did it happen, I used to wonder:
neon poppy cropping up in an ashen field—
bright icon as foil to the blues' coming hunger,
the brain's ancient machinery cranking its wheel.
Nothing works harder than the heavy cog
of this world. What makes the gears surge, the
chains pull long after the skin unclicks and logs
out, has little to do with you or me

or myths or politicians. Seasons surge
through us like the rotation of a blues
chorus. Something electric emerges
from the circuit—a spark, a spool of light,
a petal of liquid fire, a god's fuse,
a president's fane, the voltage of this night—

The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush

The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush:
like an arrow of blue blown back, blown through,
like a black of blue, a blear, a bleed, a crush
of blue: now you: bend the bow, make it true
into the blackest bull's-eye: midnight dipped
into pitch: this darkening iris, glossy
and filled with augury like a black tipped
fin cutting the sea into blue foam frenzy:
to fall through to flux: to dive deep into
the hive, the honey of blood's blue buzz, wave
upon wave, wing upon wing: to live
lost in the swim and soar of love's last blue:
the final blue line cannot be deferred:
o to swan dive into the drowse and blur:

She will not ask of aliens, but of friends

She will not ask of aliens, but of friends

to prove that she is not alone. How often
have we all begged the sidereal to bend
to our will? All we want is to begin.
To follow the red fox into the forest,
into the dizzy faultless wilderness
where animals welcome us as their guest
and the stars become our only dress.

We wear what the dead discard, if not this
day then the next. Time is the one garment
we never grow out of. If the abyss
is feral company, then what of ascent?
Can we yoke our flesh to celestial splendor
and still save our beautiful bestial nature?

Now I see them sitting me before a mirror

Now I see them sitting me before a mirror.

Whispers. A sound like grinding. Candles. Soap.

Black lines on the skin over my heart. Someone's

god in the air above my head. A cup

next to an ax. The night's bridal chamber

shuts me in. Seizure of wind. An entropy

within these walls. I cast spells on the copy

of myself— marionette for a stranger

stage, string and retraction of string. Spotlight

and trapdoor. Hooks and rope. Pain is a mask

we all wear; regret, a gun we've all shot.

Collared in loneliness, an odalisque

on display. They douse me in rosewater,

burn my writings, doll me up for slaughter.

You thought I was the kind of animal

You thought I was the kind of animal
who would first purr, splay my belly before
I bite. I am not feline or femme fatale,
despite your desire for me to be your
feral other. But, this is no cartoon.
You're not in some fairy tale. You're in line
seven, and my claws are sharp. Here, feel. Soon,
it will be time to eat, and you look divine.

Succumb to my wolf face, your own savage
sweet tooth. Lick my fur until there's nothing
but flesh, no more facade, no camouflage,
only revelation—the heart's reddest
rifle. Let's be honest: you love hiding
but I love hunting. Let's see who's the best.

You will get your full measure

You will get your full measure.

After shadow voyage, an empty
house, coming snow—a displeasure
grows between the walls, slippery

as the turn between this life and the next.

What awaits you is neither whisper nor
bang. There is no answer, no sacred text
for you to decipher, merely a door

with a plaque announcing your departure.
Flowers line the porch lighting up the dusk
while a horse clicks its hooves in the pasture.
But no carriage awaits you, just a rusted

chain of starspur and the long black hook of your
own loss. Time to hoist up your saddle and ride.

In dark accidents the mind's sufficient grace

In dark accidents the mind's sufficient grace

is like the moment in a song when
the cello rows in on its tiny boat
of light. We need a word for survival
in nerve time, in cell time, before the world
limps off with our belongings, before our
lips are sewn shut, and we are sentenced for
pulling back the black curtains of history.

The past has rinsed off the apophantic
and slipped into the *to-be-able-to-be*.
Its nails are painted, its knives are oiled
as it warriors up for the apocalyptic
release of dissonant notes through icy
gallows, crafting hymns for the newly condemned.

We tunnel through your noonday out to you

We tunnel through your noonday out to you.

The world shivers with flashing wings and rain.

The body's acidic music breaks through

asking who will be anointed to mourn

for those who have for the first time folded

back that black petal of despair. We wait

every day for someone we have been told

will carry a key that unlocks the gate.

We wait for transparency in darkened

geographies, a strange dawn glinting, sewn

with odor of apricots. A postponed

departure does not mean there will be no

journey. Who cares if the metaphors are

endless? We'll keep digging. We're beyond stars.