

Arcadia with Metronome

My head's shadow falls on this page
So much larger than my head with the light on
Behind it. All the words fit in
This easy dark so easy to carry it
Behind my eyes where darkness is portable
Is foldable as even now I fold my hands
In my head to crumple the page to make the dark
Darker. All that's left is the grain
Of the wood on the desk.
Is this illusion's pious fraud?—the long grass
Blown over as if to forget and where in the wheat
The departed deer slept they left a shape
Pressed down that looks like an eye
The deer slept in an eye
And wandered away before light
Ruined the trick with the gasp that follows
Recognition: not the empty socket but similar facts:
How one's shadow seems to offer relief
But no one, but I can't
From the brute sun's merciless heat
Step down and in my own absence—
As the lamb does in the ewe's shadow—
Sleep. It points

West at dawn and at dusk points east
At noon it stands beneath the feet
A shadow just another form that points away
Away from what creates it, prophecy
Just keeping time: the day ends here and here
The day begins.
It can dance but it cannot sing
A riddle beneath the clouds and their music
The clouds so much larger than the sun
Behind them, throwing absence down
As a widow drops her mourning shawl—
Or is that too dramatic?—
As a child cutting shadows from black
Felt grows bored or thinking
So much about clouds makes her want
A glass of water and the dark remains
Sky remnants on the floor.
Is this illusion's pious faith?—
Often I am permitted to return to a mind

As if it were a scene made-up by a meadow
And the meadow gathers within it
Omens like birds spiraling by the thousands
Down from the sky lured
By the bittern's shadow, the made-thing
Of the bittern's shadow marking
Time
Can dance but cannot sing the shadow
On either side of the decoy so what
May in the meadow sing may
In the meadow sing don't mind

The bittern's missing glass eye
Bead or splinters
The chorus of opened doors in the throats
Of the cranes still unlock and
A 2x4 planted in the dirt would also work
As only what's unreal invites the real in
To stay a 2x4 in the dirt would also
Invite eternity's minor chord
The first taut string of the lyre is this one
Strand of wheat around which all other grain
Takes root the hour well spent
Balancing a pencil on its unsharpened tip

Poem

Won't practice terror, today won't
Demonstrate fear; won't heed
The war-horn's blast warning the air
Be calm, find shelter; the bomb that is
Isn't there. Let me mind the minim:
Lyric shard of blood shared in epic's
Ever-wider, ever-opening wound.
I won't close my eyes to see today
What don't exist: spent shells catch
The sun's glare, gold in the dirt
At the target range, such hollow gold bits;
The threat is just a paper silhouette.

There is so much—all of whiteness,
All of whiteness: the intimate mundane.
It remembers me for me, self
I cannot work myself, work by myself,
Keeps me lonely so I'm not alone
In the soundless glare. Those far-off
Heights fill themselves with singing.
Down here there's some water in a white bowl
And memory, concentric rings—they try
But cannot—overtake the limit they pursue.
Out to the very edge they fail
To knock the dishes over so they ring.

The parsley in the garden shades the thyme
And both grow. I think they seem to grow.
I'm reading backward the evidence, index

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That predicts all that already has come:
So much of whiteness, like a blizzard
With a number beneath the snow, or
Is it the cottonwood fluff blown in
From the margin that makes the child
Wheeze. She tells me she's afraid
Of the dark. "Me, too," I say. Sometimes
Dark grows so deep it turns time white.

"I know," she says. "I know. The water
In the ditch is gone, but it will come back.
We'll make boats out of sticks and drop
From the bridge those boats. It will snow
Again we'll be cold. That ant will find
Its mommy. That moth will eat up hope.
A butterfly chased my monsters away.
That crack in the dirt doesn't make me cry.
It doesn't hurt." What am I thinking?
I'm thinking it shouldn't be so hard to think.
What am I feeling? It shouldn't be so hard—
To suffer imprecisions. Iris in the light.