

*DANIEL BORZUTZKY*

BEDTIME  
STORIES *for*  
*the* **END** *of*  
*the* **WORLD!**



## THE PERFORMANCE OF BECOMING HUMAN

Did you hear the one about the female body that was hollowed out and filled with prawns that came out of her eyes after she discovered her husband had only married her so as to demonstrate to his friends that he could enter the upper class?

On the side of the highway a thousand refugees step off a school bus and into a sun that can only be described as “blazing.”

The rabbi points to the line the refugees are stepping over and says: That’s where the country begins.

This reminds me of Uncle Antonio. He would have died had his tortured body not been traded to another country for minerals.

Made that up.

This is a story about diplomatic protections.

The refugees were processed through Austria or Germany or maybe Switzerland.

Somehow they were discovered in some shit village in some shit country by European soldiers and taken to an embassy where they were promptly bathed, injected with vaccines, interrogated, etc. . . .

Their bodies were traded by country A in exchange for some valuable natural resource needed by country B.

There was only one gag, says the rabbi, as he tucks his children into bed. So the soldiers took turns passing the filthy thing back and forth between the mouths of the two prisoners. The mother and son licked each other's slobber off the dirty rag that had been in who knows how many mouths.

You love to write about this, don't you?

I am paid by the word for my transcriptions. Just one more question about the gag.

He wants to know what color the gag was, what it was made of, how many mouths had licked it. Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands?

They used their belts to bind them by the waist to the small cage they were trapped in.

Everything reminds me of a story about an ape captured on a boat by a group of European soldiers who showed him how to become human by teaching him how to spit and belch.

Everything is always about the performance of becoming human.

Observing a newly processed refugee, the rabbi says: I have seen those blue jeans before.

At times like this, he thinks: I can say just about anything right now.

This is, after all, a bedtime story for the end of the world.

I am moving beneath the ground and not sleeping and trying to cross the border from one sick part of the world to another.

But where is the light and why does it not come in through your bloody fingers?

You hold your bloody fingers before my eyes and there is light in them but I cannot see it.

You say: There are countries in my bloody fingers.

I am interested in the borders.

Or:

I am interested in the gas chambers in your collapsible little fingers.

You put them to my face and I see your hands open and in them I see a thick wall and a sky and an ocean and ten years pass and it is still nighttime and I am falling and there are bodies on the ground in your bloody hands.

Think about the problem really hard then let it go and when you least expect it a great solution will appear in your mind.

The broken bodies stand by the river and wait for the radiation to trickle out of the houses and into their skin.

They stand under billboards and sniff paint and they know the eyes that watch them own their bodies.

A more generous interpretation might be that their bodies are shared between the earth, the state, and the bank.

The sentences are collapsing one by one and the bodies are collapsing in your bloody hands and you stitch me up and pray I will sleep and you tell me of the shattered bus stops where the refugees are waiting for the buses to take them to the mall where they are holding us now and there is a man outside our bodies making comments about perspective and scale and light and there is light once more in your bloody fingers.

All I see is the sea and my mother and father falling into it.

Again? That's like the most boring image ever.

The water is frozen and we are sleeping on the rocks and watching the cows on the cliff and you tell me they might fall and break open and that sheep and humans and countries will fall out of them and that this will be the start of the bedtime story you will tell me on this our very last night on earth.

Come closer, you say with your eyes.

Move your bloody face next to mine and rub me with it. We are dying from so many stories. We are not complete in the mind from so many stories of burning houses, missing children, slaughtered animals. Who will put the stories back together and who will restore the bodies? I am working towards the end but first I need a stab, a small slice. The stories they are there but we need a bit more wit. We need something lighter to get us to the end of this story. Did you hear the one about the guy who picked up chicks by quoting the oral testimonies of the illiterate villagers who watched their brothers and sisters get slaughtered?

Or:

Àndale àndale arriba arriba welcome to Tijuana you cannot eat anymore barbecued iguana.

Have you met Speedy Gonzales's cousin?

His name is Slow Poke Rodriguez.

En español se llama Lento Rodriguez.

He's a drunk little fucking mouse.

His predator, the lazy cat baking in the sun, thinks he will taste good with chili peppers but there's something I forgot to tell you. Slow Poke always pack a gun and now he's going to blow your flabbergasted feline face off.

It was 1987 and my friends from junior high trapped me on the floor and mashed bananas in my face and sang: It's no fun being an illegal alien!

~~You know you can die from so many stories.~~

The pudgy cat guards the AJAX cheese factory behind the fence, right across the border.

The wetback mice see the gringo cheese.

They smell the gringo cheese.

Your gringo cheese it smells so good.

They need Speedy Gonzales to get them some ripe, fresh, stinky gringo cheese.

Do you know this Speedy Gonzales, asks one of the starving wetback mice.

I know him, Speedy Gonzales friends with my seester. (The mice laugh.) Speedy Gonzales friends with everybody's seester.

Ha ha ha the little border-crossing, sneak-fucking mouses think it's cute that they're invading our culture to steal our cheese but it don't make a difference because you and I (cue the rhythm and blues) we are taking a stroll on the electrified fence of love cause I feel a little Southern Californian transnational romance coming on right about now.

I feel like Daniel from the Karate Kid because I too once had a Southern Californian experience where I wasn't aware that I was learning ancient Japanese secrets when I was waxing on and waxing off and I am with you Mr. Miyagi in Reseda.

I am with you Mr. Miyagi in Pasadena.

And I am with you Mr. Miyagi at the All Valley Karate tournament.

And I am with you Mr. Miyagi in Okinawa where you went in *Karate Kid II* to meet your long lost girlfriend when you discovered that she wasn't married off when she was just a teenager to your fiercest Okinawan rival.

And I am with you Mr. Miyagi in Tijuana where it's murder and diarrhea and always kinda kinky.

But seriously, friends:

What *do* you think of this darkness that surrounds us?



They chopped up two dozen bodies last night and today I have to pick up my dry cleaning.

In the morning I need to assess student learning outcomes as part of an important administrative initiative to secure the nation's future by providing degrees of economic value to the alienated, urban youth.

So for now hasta luego compadres and don't worry too much about the bucket of murmuring shit that is the UnitedStatesian night.

What does it say? What does it say? What do you want it to say?

## IN THE BLAZING CITIES OF YOUR ROTTEN CARCASS MOUTH

*Too bad we live in a world so uptight that we can't have things  
like the Frito Bandito anymore —Commenter on YouTube*

The children were eating the bushes outside of their former houses that had been crushed by the Bank of America.

There was a boy in a bush singing an improvised song about a bulldozer that obliterates the bureaucratic centers of the earth.

Do you remember cheese, he sang to his friend.

Te acuerdas de la piña?

Do you remember ferries, he sang to his friend.

Te acuerdas de los patos?

Do you remember school bells and cowards and the boys who would come to our yard to eat the scraps of food we threw to them before the city started to blaze?

Bienvenidos a CVS. Si cuenta con tu Extra Care Card please escanea it now.

There really wasn't money anymore or at least there wasn't money for us.

The man with the camera kissed me and took photographs of the blood that dripped from my fingers.

Everyone knew he was CIA.

He knew for example that the blood that dripped from my face tasted like the blood of the workers assassinated by the Fatherland.

Then I found a dying shack and I met a man with a chain and he was snoring and talking in his sleep and he smelled like pee and complained he had lost his pension when they privatized the city in the dying days of the rotten carcass economy.

Looking after the world is a shitty job if you're really not a people-person.

He slept on the floor with a chain tied to him.

It rode over his crotch and for twenty-three dollars he would bless you into heaven so that you would not have to remain in the purgatory of the blazing city.

The further I fall the smaller I become, he chanted.

This poem would be better if it took place in the Saloon of Good Fortune. It would be better if a man jumped off the bar and onto my back as I was reciting it. If I caught him on my back and smashed him into a table. If one of his hoodlum buddies smashed me over the head with a bottle of tequila. This poem would be better with just the right amount of sex, alcohol, violence and 1950s border noir.

The chained man was moaning about how he had gone from office to office to see what the Lord had to offer.

And all I have now, he sang, is a chain and a basket full of fingernails.

An old brown dog was tied by another chain to a rafter.

The dog wouldn't stop yapping and I understood I was being refused absolution.

But I'm Jewish, I told the dog. I am a member of la raza de Moisés.

He barks love, the chained man sang, and he wouldn't stop singing and I needed to rest so that I would be able to find the boat that would help me get away.

I sat on the floor to sleep, woke up in chains and there was no one to tell my story to.

I lay stiff, holding my breath, trying to be anyone but myself.

Imagination challenge #1:

Imagine there is a matzah-ball bandito in your house. You buy lots of matzah balls and mix them with jalapeños and Fritos and light them on fire and then you survive the apocalypse because Fritos can stay lit on fire forever and you don't need to find kindling or any of that other stuff so you finally have time to study Karlito Marx while watching Manchester United's Mexican hero Chicharito Hernández score a poacher's golazo in the waning seconds of the Carling Cup while eating hallucinogenic mushrooms while watching Eric Estrada on *CHiPs* on another screen and listening to a podcast of the book of Leviticus on your iPod Touch while skyping with your mom while sexting with your boyfriend who works for the secret police.

Write a sonnet or a villanelle about this experience and do not use any adjectives.

Then I clutched a man trapped beneath my body.

He refused to stop breathing and so did I.

It was 98 degrees.

There were echoes trapped in the wall and they belonged to the broken bodies waiting for the boat on the river.

And the man in my arms said: Are they ordinary people, these trapped voices?

They are ordinary people, I said. Demolished, relentless, alone.

And we sang:

Once I made \$60,057 a year working for the city.

This was before it blazed.

But then one day I came to work and there was an incinerator outside of the building.

My colleagues were scuttling around, trying to salvage things from their offices.

I told this to my boy and all he could say was: What, Daddy, is an incinerator?

A container for burning refuse, I answered, as they incinerated my desk and a photograph of you that I loved.

I saw them putting my plants and books in it and there was no explanation for why they were doing what they were doing.

There was only an automated voicemail on my cell phone from the incinerating bodies who said that they were serving the city and that soon all of the city would blaze.

I dream of a giant parasite to feed on the infested bones of the rotting citizens.

There are sirens that won't stop blaring and rotten teeth in all of our mouths and when I asked an authoritative body what to do now that my life had been incinerated he told me to go to the river and ask them to put me on a boat.

I went to the river and found a bodybuilder who would not stop running around.

He was enormous, wearing only boxer trunks, and he complained that his lover was overusing the word "cock."

He was frantically running and he couldn't stop running and I was looking for the boat and the bodybuilder was screaming about his lover's overuse of the word "cock" and for a moment he spoke of a Jewish centaur on the bank of the river and he kept running and he wouldn't stop running and his boxing trunks were red and silky and when I asked why he was running he shouted that his life was a symbol for something that doesn't exist.

It was 98 degrees.

The evening star came out.

A limp, stale moon hung over us.

And this is where the story should end.

But bedtime stories for the end of the world don't end where they are supposed to end.

They end awkwardly, in the middle of some mess that was probably not worth making to begin with.

Here's an alternative ending.

Imagination Challenge #2:

It's nighttime. You're decomposing in a cage or a cell. Your father is reading the testimonies of the tortured villagers to you. He is in the middle of a particularly poignant passage about how the military tied up the narrator and made him watch as his children were lit on fire. He has to listen to the screams of his blazing children but he cannot listen to their screams so he himself starts screaming and then the soldiers shove a gag in his mouth so that he will stop screaming but he doesn't stop screaming even with the gag in his mouth. But these are not screams, actually. They are unclassifiable noises that can only be understood as a collaboration between his dying body, the obliterated earth, and the bodies of those already dead.

Write a free-verse poem about the experience. Write it in the second person.

Publish it some place good.

## THE DEVOURING ECONOMY OF NATURE

Let's begin at the end, she says.

The best way to end a sentence is with the word *blank*.

It is midnight and I am lonely and your blank is the blank of my blank.

Don't psychoanalyze me all the time, he says to himself. Just because I can't get it up doesn't mean I have unresolved issues about my parents taking me as a child to an execution on a Sunday afternoon in August.

In fear he trampled over a basket of delicious food that belonged to some neighbors—fellow spectators at the execution—and years later when he is in bed with his wife, having erectile issues, he keeps remembering the basket of food he tripped over.

He ran through the party that was thrown to celebrate the hanging of the other body; he trampled cold chicken and biscuits.

Or:

He ran through the silhouettes of the hanging bodies.

Or:

He possessed the fortitude needed to refuse to begin another act of language.



I refuse to write the middle of the story.

There is water everywhere.

There is a flood on my street and I am sleeping in a body that is much too big for my bed.

In fact I am sleeping in a bed that is much too big for my house.

The flood has changed the proportions (house>bed>body) or at least my perception of the proportions.

I am incapable of thinking outside of scenes.

Which means I am incapable of thinking outside of images.

Did you hear the one about the immigrant laborer who was run over by the tractor? In his pocket was a photograph of his cousin Ewa, a thirteen-year-old in a refugee camp in another country. As the tractor ran him over, he kept shouting to his fellow workers: Please, somebody, marry Ewa. Somebody! Marry! Ewa!

And to mourn the death of the mutilated workers the children sang a song called "Other People's Bodies."

They sang it to the tune of a current popular song.

There was a dance routine that involved hand motions and little hops and the thrusting of booties in and out.

And as the song developed, the progression of the data became increasingly relevant, for as the children sang they slowly began to understand that they would never see their parents again, that they had been taken from their homes and tossed into the pools in order to fulfill the required data specifications outlined by the city, the state, and the country.

Or:

A barbarian and an economist walk into a bar.

The barbarian says:

I dreamt we were in a swimming pool and you were swimming towards me. I was sitting on the wall and when you got to the wall the wall and I dissolved into the water and the pool stretched out endlessly and there were hundreds of children swimming in the pool and they were looking for their parents. There were men in orange wetsuits painting lines throughout the water. Over the water, really. And the lines were different colors and they stuck to the surface of the water and we understood that certain colors meant certain things. And you picked up a drowning child and said: Here is a small piece of data. I won't tell you what this data means in relation to the other data that will determine the relationship between your desire to eat the children and the future prosperity of the nation.

The economist orders two martinis and says to the barbarian:

There is something frozen here. I see you standing in front of the pool and I know that the you who is standing there is the you who has uttered this sentence so many times before. When you spit out the sentence they will say that it did not come from your

mouth, that it came from the mouth of the person who was performing this act of being you.

In other words, linguistic theory opens the door for the possibility that we are not ethically responsible for our actions.

And the barbarian says:

Even if money doesn't exist, there will always be an audience for economists.

And they take the water from the river and put it in the back of several trucks. And from the dried-up river there emerges a country. And in the country there are children who have been invented by people who made money in things that do not actually exist.

And they don't say: Why are you taking the water from the river?

And they don't think: Why are you shaving the fur from the bodies of our dogs?

The children sit on the sofa placed perfectly in a picturesque location on the river. The dogs are arranged so that they rest in front of the sofa. The photographer asks the children to smile so that the rest of the world can see how well we treat the displaced people.

Do you want to see what you look like, the photographer says to the children.

The children look at their image without recognition, stuck as they are in the fantasy life of the economists.

And the barbarian says:

Do we really need these kids? Do I really need this job?

The three dogs guard the two children.

I will write their story but I will not understand it.

The doctor says: Yes, in Iowa we love a war between states, across borders both real and imagined.

Or:

Did you hear the one about the boy who was thrown into the fire?

His charred meat was hacked up with a cleaver and fed to dogs while his parents watched from a cage.

I have awful psoriasis and my skin itches so badly and when I itch I bleed all over our sheets but still I can't keep myself from scratching.

The economist, formerly of the working class, only married so that he could demonstrate that it was possible for a "kid like me" to move into high society.

According to the data, it is impossible for rich people to be friends with poor people.

This, according to the data, is true in all societies.

# BECAUSE I LOVE YOU FATHER I AM AFRAID YOU WILL WALK AWAY FOREVER INTO THE HOLE OF THE UNIVERSE THAT IS BEYOND THE BEYOND OF THE BEYOND

This is a bedtime story about a body that disappeared in the United Statesian night.

The name was a name that you know, father. It was tattooed on your skin and often you dreamt that the name was emblazoned on your eyeballs.

Tattooed on your skin: the name of my mother.

This is a story about a father you once knew, who spawned you but could never live over or with or through or in direct contact with: your body.

This is a story about a body I once met that could do nothing more than beat itself over the head because it did not believe that its blood was indigenous to its veins.

It is bedtime, father, and you are sleeping and there is a man who reminds you of a conquistador at your window and he wants to know if there is some way he can facilitate the removal of your body, to disperse your body across time and through the undergrowth until it emerges on the side of the invisible line where the ghosts are better at being ghosts, where the water is better at being water, where the rocks are better at being rocks.

Father, you tell me that you are not as good as the fathers on the other side of the invisible line.

Dear father, tell me what it is about your body that requires an international commission to investigate the worms in your mouth, the foam in your nose, the dead crusts that fall off your skin and enter the air as you wiggle your body to embrace me.

I can only write this bedtime story with my head down, with my head on my knee.

I can only write this bedtime story if I stick a finger in my mouth and try to make myself vomit.

I'd like to call you right now, father.

I'd like to speak in your mouth right now, father, and tell you how much I love you for refusing to not say everything all at once in one big explosion, father.

Do you remember the day you told me that you were about to explode, father?

You said: Son they have taken my body to a warehouse and they are filling it with materials and minerals and they say everything all at once in one big blast and in one big minute and there is this name in the UnitedStatesian night and it is my name and it is your name and it the name of your rotten carcass mother.

Do you want me to tell you about this name?

I say: I don't want you to tell me about this name.

I want you to tell me about the cacti.

I want you to tell me about the sand and the shit that lives beneath it.

I want to know about the special effects that make possible the relationship between the sand, the sun, and the bodies it absorbs.

I don't know how to say things differently.

Sure you do. Let the words leave your mouth in a different order.

It's all too much and I can't handle it because my body will grow it will bloom it will explode I must go to the store now to buy snacks.

These stories don't ever start in the right place.

This, right now, is the proper beginning to this bedtime story for the end of the world.

Father:

We are in a screening room and you are on the screen.

On screen they are taking apart your body and I am watching this.

There is a man with a white lab coat and a tool in his hand and it is sharp and you are not yet dead.

They have brought me here to watch a live filming of the dissection of your living body.

Really what they plan to do is fill your body with little animals.

And they want me to watch this.

This is all I mean by the frame.

I am outside of it.

You are inside of it.

The men with the white coats are standing over your body.

They hold syringes with liquid and they shoot them into your body and your mouth is open and in the frame I see them chopping something up, a little piece of mouse, and sticking it into your mouth.

You try to close your lips. You try to keep them from sticking the mouse in your mouth.

Is the mouse alive or dead?

It is dead, of course. They would never stick a live mouse in your mouth because right now, at this very moment that they are putting the mouse to your lips, they are concerned about the question of what makes a good enough hole.

What makes a good enough hole and how can the hole expand in such a way that it lets out dead crusts of body without letting in oxygen.

A hole so good it lets in bodies without letting out the noxious gases that cannot stand to be in a body.

I had a body once, father, didn't you?

In this bedtime story they have made me come to watch you, father.

You are on a hospital bed and they are doing experiments with your lips and you are screaming. Why do I have a body?



How far can we stretch these lips, they want to know.

What is the biggest piece of dead animal we can put it in that mouth?

I want to jump through the screen, father, and throw myself on top of your body.

But I am not allowed to move. It is your end of the world, and it is my job to watch your end of the world. In fact they have tied me to a chair and they will unscrew my wooden leg if I do not watch them shove little animals into your mouth, inject little bird bits into your ears, eyes, nose.

Is this dark enough for you, father?

Father, I have a wooden leg in this story. This is not the story of how I got the wooden leg. The story of how I got the wooden leg is in a different book. You can find it, in fact, inside the wooden leg, written along the walls of the inside of the wooden leg. But that's a different bedtime story. I won't tell it to you now. I have a wooden leg. I've had it since the explosion. I really love my wooden leg. I pray to it in silence when no one else is around but now that they have brought me here, now that they have brought me to the screening room to watch what they are doing to your body on this your final night on earth, they have decided to remove the wooden leg.

It's not that I felt castrated when they removed the wooden leg.

It's not that I know what it's like to be castrated. But father, you don't know this: I thought I was impotent for most of my adolescent and early adult life.

The other boys were going around bragging about their sexual escapades and father I thought that I could not get an erection.

It is awkward to tell you this. You are on the screen and I am watching you. You are having your body explored by scientists who are sticking animal life into your blood, your mouth, your veins. They are trying to make you into a hybrid beast, father. And all I want to do is confess things to you: I thought I was impotent, father. Did you not know this? One day, I found a doctor who was going to slice open my penis and inject a little device into it to make it work at the proper moments. This was in the days before Viagra. And who would ever give Viagra to a seventeen-year-old boy? This will make no sense to you, father. But I am glad that I have the opportunity to tell you this. Because you never know what will define you to yourself, father.

They are taking a bit of horsehair, father, and encrusting it to the inside of your skin.

Father, this is the bedtime story where they try to turn you into a horse by filling your body with horsehair.

Look, father, they go further.

They are taking a kidney from a horse and inserting it into your body.

Father, you are sleeping, but when you wake up you will have horse organs inside of you.

No one will publish this story, father. Don't worry. And also, this story will never end.

Because I'm not sure if it is about you or if it is about me, I will have to keep rehearsing our accident, father, so that they know it was not me who made you what you are.

By which I mean to say: I didn't kill you, father.

The explosion was not my explosion, father.

The explosion, the one that blew off my leg, was mother's bedtime story for the end of the world.

For so many years, mother and you and I, father, would talk about how great it would be to not be alive.

It wouldn't be so bad to die, mother would say at breakfast, sipping coffee, eating english muffins, combing back my hair.

And we both knew what she was talking about.

And when she made the explosion go off, we were not surprised that it was her body that was destroyed first.

But we were also not surprised, father, when we discovered that mother's body was destroyed not by her own hand, but by the hand of the state that had given her the materials from which to build the detonating device.

Do you follow, father?

Father, do you know what they are doing to you on the screen?

It is like the old days, father. When I couldn't get an erection. It had nothing to do with the wooden leg. It had to do with my fear of being happy, father.

I tried to stay home, to hide in the various body parts you built for us, father.

This was the bedtime story you had constructed for me.

Do you remember, father, how one year for Hanukkah you built a giant tracheostomy tube for me to sleep inside? You put it in my room, which was shaped like a giant mouth connected to a giant larynx and my bed was in the tracheostomy tube.

This is a funny story, father.

And it ends the moment you wake up, the moment they put so many horse parts into your body that you will no longer know if you are human or equine.

For in the days of my impotence I was loved by many girls.

It is hard to understand this.

They loved me and I could get an erection even though I didn't believe it.

It is possible to convince yourself that you are unable to do what is happening right in your very own body.

I saw you, father.

You told mother: When the state explodes your body, make sure that you have covered it in the names of those you love.

And it's true, father, that before mother exploded her body, we wrote our names all over her.

This is the last thing I remember of mother: She is in her bed, which is in the shape of a giant liver. That liver-bed you built her that the two of you so innocently loved.

Father, you are in bed next to her. I am ten years old. The two of you are naked and I am too old to be in bed with my naked parents. But you do not ask me to leave the room. Instead, you give me a paint brush and dip it in electric blue paint and you ask me to write my name on her belly.

I start to write my name on her belly, and you scream that I should write it bigger.

I start to cover her belly with the first few letters of my name but it's not enough for you, father.

It's not enough for you, father. You want me to put the first letter of my name on her face.

You want me to paint my name all over her body and the paint is getting all over your sheets and I am crying because you will not stop screaming at me.

This is all I can think about tonight, father.

It's a lonely trip to the end of the universe, father.

I want you to be there, alone, and in your solitude I don't want you to allow for this story to end and to end in the blazing catastrophe of the skin that is my dying skin, in the blazing catastrophe of this mouth that is my dying mouth.

I am swimming, father, towards the beginning of another evening in which I occupy your body with fear and pain and love.

And it will only come, father, if you seal your lips on me. If you kiss me, father. If you suck on my head with your lips, father.

If you allow me to sleep and cry inside you.

## THE MOUNTAIN AT THE END OF THIS BOOK

The politics of the mountain renders invisible the paths of dog shit and horse shit and human shit that crisscross the mountain.

To leave the mountain, you need a good reason to not want to be dead.

This mountain appears in every book I have written. Sorry if you were expecting something new.

But you are also not the city, sing the sinking bodies to the police officers who bury them.

We live in one of the deadliest cities in the world: a boring observation.

The self in the story is equivalent to the period at the end of this sentence, which is equivalent to the dying bodies who refuse to fall off the top of the mountain.

They dump the bodies at the base of City Hall and the administrators from the Board of Education dig through their dead pockets and steal coins, identification cards, pencils, notebooks, and blood.

And they drill the body of a sunken child into the side of the wooden mountain.

And they take a fallen bird and nail it to the wooden wall they have drilled through the body of a sunken child.

Their hands are covered in the milk they dump on us as we starve.

There is a helicopter overhead and it dumps onto our bodies thousands of loaves of bread so crushed up we can barely eat them.

Last night on the mountain at 1:41 a.m., body A shot body B and then body C shot body B and bodies D and E dumped the bodies of A and B and C at the foot of the mountain and then 350,00 displaced children came to sing them songs of beauty, glory, and love.

There is a beat that runs through the mountain and the boarded-up walls of the broken building where they used to send us when we were wards of the state and they loved us.

And they chain us to the barbed wire fence and command us to keep our eyes open so that we can see the bodies falling from the mountain.

Feel the barbed wires slicing into our bodies.

This mountain is the last breath of this bedtime story for the end of the world.

And the bureaucrats allocate \$643,000 so that in the next narrative we will become other than what we are, other than what we think we are, other than what they think we are, other than what they know us to be.

We want you to become other than what you are, chant the bureaucrats.

IMAGINE YOU ARE NOT WHAT YOU ARE!

We are convinced that you will be most like yourselves when you become other than what you are, chant the bureaucrats.



And they pay us and they love us and they beat us.

And they pay us and they love us and they beat us until we stop climbing this insufferable mountain.

The mountain is collapsing.

Feel the mountain closing in on us.

Feel the mud of the mountain enveloping us.

Feel our bodies disappearing into the mud of the mountain.

Feel the mud filling our mouths with sludge and worms and bubbling foam.

Feel the mountain destroying the bodies that loved it.

Stop and feel the nothing you now stand in.

Stop and feel the absence of this sentence.

Stop, now, in the middle of this sentence and pretend it's not here.

It's not here.

You're not here.

You're in the middle of another mountain, the middle of another narrative, the middle of another love, the middle of another sentence.

And you say: I will love you, and never again.

And I say: I will love you, and never again.

I'm sorry to disappoint you, dear reader. The end of this mountain is love.

Dear author, I am disappointed in your decision to end this mountain with love.

Dear reader, it is hard to conclude without love.

We do not know how to read the mountain without love yet nevertheless we transpose a city on top of it and fill it with our dreams and fears.

Children with fluorescent lights in their bodies, children with worms in their mouths and ears sink into the tar pits in the mountain in this bedtime story for the end of the world.

There are body bags and 350,000 children in the streets leading up to this mountain.

I hear the suffocated cries of a falling body sinking into the middle of the street and shouting: This is not my city, these are not my streets. This is not my mountain.

They shove a paper bag over the body who screams these are not my streets, and they play tickle his organs with a feather, with a pen, with a scalpel, with a razor, with a beautiful, electrified wire.

They put the body on top of an electric fence and say: Sleep here, old man. Sleep your cream-filled sleep until you bleed into the rocks of the underworld.

The dead bodies of the children slaughtered in the neighborhoods are collected and tossed onto the base of the mountain that has emerged out of the sinking flatness.

Ramon, Marcus, Sammy, David, Gilberto (we are with you in your rock lands).

The boys are in the mountain and there is something foaming around them.

There are brick stairs surrounding the mountain and over the bricks are barbed wires and over the barbed wires there is ivy.

The barbed wires are to prevent people from climbing onto the mountain to commune with the bodies they love.

Thousands of slain bodies piled at the base of the mountain that the administrators have constructed in order for us to believe in the possibility of our bodies.

Do you want to hear a story?

Once upon a time there was a starving father who carried his baby in a backpack as he tried to climb up the mountain.

Feel the barbed wire cutting into his shoes. Feel the barbed wire slicing into his feet. Feel the barbed wire slicing into his thighs. Feel the barbed wires slicing into his back and belly. Feel the barbed wire slicing through his backpack, slicing through the soft skin of the baby.

The blood of the father and the blood of the baby pour out of the mountain and drip into buckets placed at the base of the mountain to collect the blood of those who dare to climb.

There are scavengers who stand at the base of the mountain and wait for things to fall from it.

Still, this one is personal.

It's about my desire to sleep, forever, in the sinking commune of your rotten carcass mouth.

Mountain, I love how you are an incredible combination of molecules, an indissoluble aggregate of matter, a chain of sonorous bodies bouncing infinitely through tunnels at the bottom of the biggest poem there ever was.

On the mountain, my body looks better when it is filled with other bodies.

And my mouth looks better when it is filled with other mouths.

And the valleys look better when they are filled with other valleys.

On the mountain, the poets lunge and growl and snort and belch.

They spit natural selection poems out of their eyes. Ethnic avant-garde poems drop out of their prickly anuses.

On the mountain, the free-market poems absorb themselves and regenerate into billions of the blankest verses there ever were.

A dead pharmaceutical heiress shits out her own body and gives us six million dollars to spend on poetry.

The night sky is enjambed with rotten assets.

The poets on the mountain have barricaded my body and I will spend eternity trying to pry the wood from my flesh.

The abandoned children carve beautiful epitaphs on stolen slabs of meat.

I look down into this mountain of gyrating bodies and sing a peaceful song about austerity and the privatization of our form and content.

At the base of the mountain there are frugal bureaucrat-poets making love in mud houses that float in sewers.

There are abandoned girls in the windows of these houses.

Come find us, they write on the sweaty glass, as they disappear into the bubbling mud.



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