





**Ode
to
Industry**

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Michelle Detorie

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WAYS TO DIE

Building bridges falling into
the ocean. Measuring buildings
scraping smog. Hacking animals
into cellophane-wrapped cutlets.
Pouring plastic into molds: combs
and buckets and handguns. Following
a tractor and catching teeth.
Picking strawberries or harvesting
diamonds or grapes. Mining
coal. Removing the tops
of mountains. Sewing dresses.
Disposing of nuclear waste. Cleaning
hotel rooms. Waiting tables.
Pulling tobacco or trimming tea.
Dragging nets through dangerous
seas. Plucking feathers. Pouring
heat. Painting cameras. Assembling
the tiny parts of things: satellites
and lawnmowers and electronic devices.
Mixing powders. Cooking pills.
Processing cements and fertilizers.
Forging semiconductors and wiring
metals. Packing batteries.
Getting tired. Forgetting to eat.

BLACKWATER

oil-dark, rainbow slit
where ships trowel
drain ditchery umbrellas
undone by the twist-trot
wake. whale sleep
smelling of forgiveness;
the foamed gloss
of milk-rot. it's no wonder
so many wash up dead

OF THE TALLOW TRADE

Slick where pearls no longer
strung, wires for telephones – types
of talking stutter clicked and then
air waves, zig-zagged lines
giddy-upped over graphs. She wanted
bells to scatter fighting doves
for hunting, for lighting walls
where spiders spun the numbers
so trading could continue.

SPINDLETOP

Optimism is a motor
that keeps you
that keeps you from me

in the garden there were hollyhocks, pelts
of colors thrown around
like trash we (you) imagine

burning it in gutters, rushes
of lilac frosted with ash

a mechanical arm keeping roads aligned, maps intact.

fugue
of altars kaleidoscoped and true—
mirror traps bloomed
unlocked and screwed

ON TAPE

crib web of the granite
smoke spool somnambulist
gravel and grenades hung
like boughs of grapes
river water blood red
only milk is what we
called it because
we did not know (no)
water boarded teeth chattered
no it was the shackles
you say, scraping
overhead, claws again
in the ink bin leaving
their prints all over everything

SWEATSHOP

And inside there is humming
dense and thick like bee's litter, hiving
not eggs and honey but automatic
teeth, sewers' women in yellow
with dark hair, the robotic arms
rowing waves of fabric forth
and back between metal and metal
and air threaded with eyes
looking over the smoke
stacks, milk smoke smothering
the limbs, spinning
gusts and body-wheels where
sleep is hemming, living limbs.

PINK TIDE

It began like pins, pursed lips pledged
to pardon. Pursuit became unnecessary.
For every root there is a grub, ground
tunnel turned and funneled like a mouth
opening out. Uncovered dirt filled
with shovels. The twitch-light glinting.
There were teeth, and then there were
entrails. They'll save us the gory details.

I am tired of the dictionary. Of what
it doesn't say. Outside a fog horn
moans and so I imagine fog and in
the dark I imagine snow and then
it is white inside where wind winds
over and over again. I'd look
for the moon but the moon won't
send light through these walls
and if I cry it won't tell me when
the dark marks mark. Even so
the idea of even-ing quivers
me; I don't know how. There is
looking for outsides, for twin
rivers: *for it to work she has
to look like a girl*. Tides
fix a rock, an end. The work
continues with our words or not.

RAPE KIT

without it they schedule
hearings but who knows
if anyone can actually
hear anything because it's
like who can really hear
a needle or a gloved
finger or *see* marks
or a red drink if they
weren't there and it isn't
as if they can just take
your *word* for it (especially
since you seem like
a liar anyway) and aren't
these people *you knew*
so why would they do
something like *this*
and shouldn't *you* have
known better in the first place
why did *you* even *go* there

GUNLIGHT

Where I come from, we don't
talk about it. There are
too many to count. Wings
on the glass, shadows
and then spark-lights
glitter glittering as
a cascade of guns tip
sand-to-glass. The myth
of a center pulls us along.

HOTHOUSE

thorax bleaching rabbits unsettling
the numbers craved by kin, kinds
of wrestling prescribed by secret
members in societies petrified, not
afraid but so stiff in silence that every
bill becomes a whisper, throats
without blossoms, the bones mending
into hearts, infections another form
of order when the devout go straying
and staking up the vine tendril tongues
reaching like syllables, scintillating
withholdings even as millions
expire vertebrae irregularly whole

RESOLUTIONS

I'm not pretending
mending endings that don't glow
that don't benign me; politeness
for teeth; incisors flashed
shimmy flick fish
underneath; tomorrow we'll
go out looking for water
like it's nothing but something
to do; the tape in your sockets
magnets ink; I'm no longer
counting on you
for something to talk about.

FABRICATION

Beginning, endings, would double-
skip step, sketch-hop, modalities
for workers, bee-hives, honey comb.
Dark where there is pain, plastic
lit in plastic lights, polyurethanes
aglow. Scissors underneath
the tight-rope, the greased
machines. All along whose
wondering about the parts, up-
setting the syntax of scraps.
Be careful when you jump
hoop, what you wish through.
All our hands are tied together.

WHORE FORREST

How I want to tear your trees away, your
paper sheets crouching on the unsaid and my
arms not enough my hands
not enough to tie or fray. See:
we were sitting on the side
of the stretch and the car
wouldn't go. You were talking
about forgiveness. See! I wanted
to yell in your face. See! Yellow
line zipping by the mirror
not enough to hold both
my mouth and it. You go on acting
like you wanted broken
things. Mills churning and stripping
as you keep spitting, turning
every word and every switch away.

SAFTENING SHEATHS

I'm witching in, thin
as a claw, coning
furled wings, in-bred
switch swinging
like a bitch in green
grass digging holes
as robots mend
their irons, numbers
grid-rigged, pegged
to blowsy under-torn
documents half-fed
to swans with necks
of lead, fake swans
but happy ones, their
red feet marshed
in mud-tar as real
flies buzz blue
with laziness

UNIONIZED NEEDLES

threaten costly sheets, cotton spinning
cylinders of silence. There is no relief
where batting pins cloth to sheaths
of sweating, a drawn thumping
as women pull gusted yarn
through silver humming. Scissored
wreaths of violent gloss, held tools
for adolescent towers, veneers
of effortlessness – smoke
and coins, myths of clean
water, perfect teeth. As if
to buy a thing is to save
a someone – blessed vests
and consecrated plether.

MINE

domestic push pins
spreading slick as fire
in the river, rainbows
ringing like fish shimmer
underneath minnow
slipped to bullets
greased in barrels
like eyes blinking
the thread slid
through an end wet
with spit sprawled
concrete poured grass
to dead dirt, raw
coal letter smoke
stacks traveled dearly

PHANTOMS (AFTER JULIO CESAR MORALES)

Where there were bodies
concealed in the passenger
seats of cars, or the figures
(outlines) of two girls
lean and long
in the side-boards. It
was “sneaking,” it was
trying to keep living. Border
guards are careful to document
the washing machines, the dolls,
the vehicles that contained
what tried to be hidden.

ODE TO INDUSTRY

Statistics is an eerie tool
blonde and bold and full as bridges
stacked elegantly over mountain
stream-lines, pretending traversers
save their blessing for the peaks, for
the blonde-bone steam that plumes
from steeple wreaths in bourgeois
towns where wheat and meat
grow with benevolent smiles, rays
of sun spun like whorled spools
of gold — “just discovered!” they
laugh over hoof prints that pitter-
patter the lace bibs and their infants
sleep sucking silk fingers, digits
and nodding, nodding $1+1+1\ldots$

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- ❖ *Gunlight* appeared in *Otoliths*.
- ❖ A different version of *Pink Tide* is forthcoming in *EOAGH*.

