

# *Yggdrasil*

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# Introduction

**Patrick White**

## **ANSWERING THE WOLF**

Answering the wolf.  
Its agony, my own.  
Its long howl of irreproachable pain  
enough to silence the mountains  
with trepidation before something holy.  
Desecration. A photo. Two dozen wolf corpses  
pouring over the tail-gate of a pick-up.  
The bounty of two happy hunters  
kneeling beside their rifles  
as if something had been accomplished  
it would be worth telling their children about.  
Hard truth. Here is a human. My species.  
It can do this to anything that lives.  
From blue algae to Auschwitz,  
Uganda, Syria, Wounded Knee.  
Whales, buffalo, Sabra and Shatila, the Amazon,  
twenty-five million famished children a year,  
an avalanche of wolves at the back of a pick-up.  
Beyond wanting to know why  
there's this black spot  
in people's hearts and minds,  
where sentience turns rabid,  
where intelligence seems  
the most inspired enabler of death,

where the wine of empathy turns into an oil slick,  
how do you answer the innocence  
of the wolf, the child, the old growth forest?  
Life gets in the way of our enterprising hatred of it?

You kill a wolf. You kill a whole landscape.  
You kill a wolf. And the moon marks you out  
with an X on your forehead  
for a thousand excruciating transformations.  
You kill a wolf. And the rivers  
will turn against you and bide their time  
until you come down to the water to drink  
from your own blood-stained reflection.  
The sun will begrudge you a shadow.  
The wind feel fouled by your smell  
like dead meat in your own house well.  
Even the maggots who will come  
to your heart one day  
like undertakers and garbage-collectors  
will look upon it not  
as the virtue of a noble enemy  
but as an undertaking that's beneath them.  
They will not stoop to clean your body like a wound.

Wolf-spirit, wolf-heart, wolf-mind, wolf-mother,  
even the white-tailed buck laments  
this atrocity of psychotic caprice  
that slaughters simply because it can.  
I see the moon bare its fangs in proxy for these  
and the stars dip their spears in poison.  
And I will dance around the fire with you  
mad with grief at this wounded eye of life  
and smear my face with the ashes of a deathmask  
to regret everything about me that is  
pathogenetically deranged and inhuman.  
To rid myself of the reek of those who could do this.

Do this to our own. Do this to natives.  
Do this to wolves. Do this to the air and the water  
they breathe and drink from. Do this ultimately  
to themselves when there's no one left to care or notice.  
These kill to eat.  
These eat to kill. You and all like you  
who did and condone this, I ask you,  
what will you do with the bodies of these wolves?  
You never ravened for the meat;  
was it their death that gluttoned your heart?  
Were you compensating for some hidden impotence  
giddy with the knowledge you could  
extinguish life anywhere on the planet on a whim at will?  
Were you urinating on your own wombs,  
the graves of your ancestors because  
you're the illegitimate runt of your own myth of origins?  
Are you angry at life because you were born?  
Do you despise the rose and admire the thorn?  
I see the narrowing in the eyes of the ancient taboos  
you've violated like thresholds with your boots on,  
bruising sacred ground without knowing  
where it is you walk or the risk you take,  
the danger you will encounter,  
because you have been made deaf, dumb, and blind  
robbed of your eyes, ears, tongue, heart, mind  
insensate to what now lifts its nose to the wind  
to find you when you least expect it  
from the least expected quarter.

These you killed. You killed in the concrete,  
and exonerate the act in the abstract.  
These were blood, flesh, fur, bone, each  
with a mystic specificity of its own,  
wild, free, whole, intelligent, and communal  
each the work of some unknown muse of life,  
the spontaneity of some lavish genius,  
the inspiration of the same dark mother

that never creates the same masterpiece twice.  
These had seeing, mind, emotion.  
These had been touched by the mystery of life  
and in the shrines of the trees and the mountains  
offered their delirium up to the moon  
like drunks beneath a vacant window  
singing to their own reflections. These  
accepted their homelessness in this strange place  
without doing it any harm as if  
there were no other place they could belong to.  
These were at peace with themselves and the earth  
in a way you weren't born with the courage to imagine.

These were alert and alive and quick with curiosity.  
These were noble without lording it over anyone.  
Were they executed for their innocence?  
Was there not enough room in your cage  
for their kind of freedom? Did you envy  
an understanding they had among each other  
you haven't enjoyed once in the last twenty years  
you stayed drunk as a gun lobby in a lazy-boy  
staring back at the glass eyes of the animals  
looking down upon you like a decapitated zoo  
with the pity of the unaccusing  
that anything that's ever lived  
could be so full of self-hatred,  
so full of disgust at the inadequacy of themselves  
in the midst of so much spontaneous sufficiency,  
from blue algae on over to blue whales,  
could be so estranged from their inalienable nature,  
could be so vindictively blind  
they'd rather shoot the eyes out of the stars  
and finger the braille of the bullet holes  
they've put in the side of their coffins  
like a mailbox with a return address on it  
than open their own and read the writing on the wall.  
Does Cain still blame God

that his sacrifice was unacceptable?  
The farmer! The farmer! Not the hunter?  
The meat of the hunter not sweet to Her nostrils?

So you murder your brother  
and then you murder the animals  
as if they somehow let you down.  
And in the death shroud of the dark mother  
she sends a crow not a dove,  
not the wolf, nor the eagles of Rome  
to teach you how to bury the dead,  
to teach you how to sow the earth you've salted  
with meat and bullets and how they only bloom  
and come to fruition in you  
like self-inflicted wounds square  
in the third eye of your own infertility.  
There used to be hunters wise enough to know  
the animals they stalked were meant as a gift of a gift  
not something they ripped off like a petty thief.  
Now when they catch a whiff of you coming  
it isn't a hunter they run from but  
that sickly-sweet freakish smell of death  
that clings to the skin of an undertaker  
who moonlights as a serial killer  
in the deathmask of a terminal disease.

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# Michael McAloran

## Of The-

Head of death

The seasons dissipate as if they  
Had never collected tears

A dissolving sky  
Soil sieved through fingers

The silent laughter of the blood

## Lungs-

A carrion call of fallen flowers  
A mirror smeared with excrement

The lungs of death  
Devouring the sunlight

## Naked-

Breath/ filth reckless sun  
Chime thunderous/ untold silences

Splitting the trees/ untold desires  
Drawing the shroud back in to naked teeth

### **Streaming-**

A collapsed room  
Where now my death I piss myself

With tears like gladioli dew  
Yet dead still streaming/ whispers/ echoing

### **Where The-**

Horizon teaming with vulture's span

Break-neck winds violent as  
A butcher's window

Ice of the sun  
Ghost limbs

Locking where the night reigns

### **Of A-**

Annulled memory you are the thunder  
Of the endless origin

Dragging light from out of the skeleton  
Of a corpse's nothing

**Fallacy-**

The laughter of carrion clouds  
Abattoir of false teeth

Here an eye there another eye

Bone fallacy  
Spit of shimmering silences

**Pierce/ Endless-**

Pierce the dead embers with shale  
Of tooth and atrophy

Water-mark of blood to arise  
Mocking the erasing flesh

Locking the pulse to the endless night

# Serena Wilcox

## Remembrance

(for Paul Celan)

*I will surely bless you and make your descendants  
as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on  
the sea shore. Genesis 22:17*

mushroom          clouds  
slowly  
descend

blankets of incisors

shred lungs and pare

flesh

\*\*

\*\*

\*\*

they were mannequins  
placed into a locked box  
nameless cadavers

*names:*

\*\*

\*\*

\*\*

illusions of memory  
blasphemy  
objects of shame  
collages sans artistic merit

\*\*

\*\*

\*\*

we are selves wrapped in our own excreta  
fighting to become what we already are  
recalling what we have forgotten

## Learning How to Fly

I sat cold in the room  
watching you breathe  
at the speed of butterfly wings  
pinned against a petal in Spring  
raindrops on the window  
resembled someone crying  
I imagined you with your angels  
made of matter and ash  
spinning rapidly around you  
before bursting into thin air

## Market Day

“...things of this world are not a reflection of the ideal, but a product of human sweat, blood and hard labor.” Tadeusz Borowski

the sun hung low,  
just over the shoulder of a white sky

that day, people flowed in streams by the thousands,  
their faces dissolving in the heat of the afternoon

everything was gray except her blonde hair  
and blue silk blouse  
it was her first time at the market  
she was a cool breeze passing my eyes  
I watched her get on the truck and wait  
as the other women carried dead babies  
like chickens by their feet,  
tossing them on the same truck headed for the kitchen

a humming inside my gut wanted to step on the song in my throat,  
I remained silent,  
the dead must never know they are dying

# Christopher Barnes

## Mega-Mart Rebellion

The automatons have broken traits.  
A shelf-crammer clicked out light.  
Discrepancies don't shift.

Impersonal manikins tackle the force of argument  
Ineffectually becoming a movement. Earless  
The Bully's entrenched behind contrivances.

Tonight I'll elect to dream - heart-sinking hero  
In nauseous unprofitableness behind racks.

## Lit From The Bottom

Spite is wrangled.  
Immortal is your stress, harpingly distinct.  
No wind-up's in vista. Smalt,  
Incandescence of landlocked pool  
Reveals air's secrets. A Gunshot. Dandelions  
Dumb-show vehemently  
Over ruins.

## Contemplating Suicide Bridge

A churlish, unavoidably sorry-sight,  
Parody of me,  
Shaved before noon. The blunt cloudburst  
Propheisised was pettifogging.  
A few weeding tingles bristle  
Roughened at arms-length. A skirmishanked  
Corrugation of the applicability  
Implicating hand, skill.

## **Offshore Monkey Tricks**

Tom, Dick nor Harry's the missing link,  
Dead reckoned, at cross purposes. (Tip-top shares shaft.)  
Picaroons muscle-grip.

Grudge - no man-o-luck'll scan you  
For faith-pinning by his false witness.  
Anticipated untruths clot in your head,  
A problem of sober provocation.  
'We'll lip-homage our liabilities  
And salt-wit say - you're speaking now.'

## **Riverside Walk**

Contours tumble, shifting - a blain in hordes.  
Peep away. No idiosyncrasy flares here.  
Prowling mist smear is slip-slop;  
Corner reminiscence - a plain-dealing smile.  
The humdrum malevolence?  
We too are curbed.

## **House Arrest Of The Opposition Leader**

The bullet-pocked wall. Gales jingling strains.  
Firm standing, repudiation -  
Viciousness backing dearths. Scupperings.  
What did you bargain for?  
I'm in a fixed foreboding of undertakers,  
Well, so it peeves.  
On...

# Kanchan Chatterjee

## I'm on my bike.....

The wind-kiss on my face  
Sometimes bites, caresses sometimes

Look at all those hills,  
Imposing,  
Distant  
And shiver inside.

It will take some five hours more.  
At the next bend,  
I think of taking a U-turn,  
"No point being a Hero"  
I tell myself  
Several times

But the road – damn the road –  
It just wont let me go  
Back.

## **three old men**

talking among themselves  
in sign language

while  
the sweet voice over the  
public announcement system  
keeps on repeating

the arrivals  
and departures

## **In my dream**

I'm playing against Henri Leconte  
it's French Open quarterfinals  
sometime in late eighties

final set  
I'm ahead  
5-3  
40-30

I'm serving  
for the match

he returns it  
into the net

can hear the ball  
drop into his court  
three times

there's a collective sigh  
from the stands

as I hear the Umpire's voice  
drifting away  
in the  
Paris breeze

jeu, set  
et match...

# Holly Day

## Compost

Across the street, a man is making a bed for his cat out of freshly-raked leaves green, cut grass. The cat is lying on the ground by the pile, unmoving, eyes open, mouth slightly ajar. The man gently piles lawn clippings into a pillow, birch leaves for a comforter, more grass on top. His

eyes look soft and misty, even from here. down the street, a garbage truck lurches down the street, turns the corner. The man brushes his eyes clean with the back of his hand and unfurls a man-sized black garbage bag and stuffs leaves, grass, the dead cat into its mouth. He knots the bag and leaves it with a kiss.

## Dreaming

when I became pregnant  
I spent the first few weeks trying to kill it  
stopped eating, slept  
stomach down against the cold dirt  
beat myself until it hurt. Then

other thoughts began to set in  
of what this child could be if it lived  
how the nightmare of his or her conception  
could unfold into a wonderful dream. Now  
I slept with my stomach to the ground  
to protect the child within  
my body a shield against  
the wolves prowling outside my door.

when he raped me a second time I knew  
he had killed our baby, the way  
one knows that the sun has risen  
even while still deep in sleep. By morning  
I knew I was completely alone.

## Yellow Spider, Little Green Fly

the ancient ancestor of this angling arthropod  
could have crawled across the concrete  
of a palace, or a prison  
could have crept close to a condemned criminal's crippled claw, curious of  
the fumbling of fetid fingernails fighting feebly against  
expected death.

the forefathers of this fly  
maybe befuddled brilliant boys like Bacon  
appearing as if assembled by angry alchemists  
as maggots molting, multiplying, mounting air  
fleeing free from fermenting flesh.

the ancient intimates of these insects  
may have met millennia ago  
suffered the same sort of scrutiny  
I have them under now.

## Broken

voices whisper the warning around  
the room like a hot potato-  
"She's a bleeder"-rubber band sound  
as gloves snap on the hands of those

people who will never touch me  
fear of me and my blood, if I  
could move these arms, wrapped in tape, glued  
in place, suspended from hooks, I

could shake free the needle in my  
neck--powerless, I control the  
entire room

## Breathless

I put the slice of cake before him  
and retreat, thinking  
about how he would look when he  
finally took the first bite.

With each turn of the mixing blade  
each ingredient lovingly folded in  
I thought about that look, what  
he might say. Every stroke of the knife  
spreading chocolate and cream between  
layers of warm cake, I imagined  
it sliding between his lips, covering his tongue

sticking to the corners of his mouth  
the fork coming back out  
completely clean. I hear the clink  
of silverware against china  
look up from the tablecloth just in time to see him put  
his fork deep into the slice.

# Samantha Seto

## Underground Railroad

At midnight, the brown leaves rustle on  
dirt road, the sweat pours down my back.  
Throw heavy wood, hammer into place.

An escape route for Harriet Tubman,  
direct letters from God in secrecy,  
follow the northern star to freedom.

My heart sinks, cold brushes my face,  
promise of new life leads path.  
Voices echo *Moses of Her People*.

Pioneers hidden in swampy lands,  
muffled music of the bell signals  
switch to station on barefoot.

Slaves cling to beaten children,  
covered in dirt and wet tears,  
silent ghosts on dim, gray trail.

Like a wolf spirit, I prowl in darkness,  
gunshots alert danger in destroyed town,  
we race like raindrops in desert wind.

## Worlds Apart

The clock strikes twelve,  
voice soaked in red wine from the ball,  
I walk under a wide-stretched bridge.

Avenues of trees made of diamonds,  
evil spirits haunt me, hidden shadows.  
Halfway through, I step out of my glass slipper.

Forbidden majesty, powerful realm of king and queen.  
Smoke clouds the drawbridge, circling the castle,  
over the moats, light travels sideways.

Tired, I throw myself to the ground.  
Curled up, bent next to a stone under cracking twigs.  
The sky as obdurately black and blank as hate,  
lavish party dress turns into grayish-brown beaten, morbid rags.

Grasp fabric around myself, eyes bewildered,  
magical dust escapes, mirror of dreadful screams.  
*Hysteria* whispers, end of the world.

One story disheartening, under a spell.  
Fooled by an evil stepmother,  
Never discover my true love, star-crossed life.

# Steven F. Klepetar

## A Question

What has the camel got  
to do with me? you say,  
you whose volumes

have been stacked high  
in unsteady piles  
all along this waxed

and endless hall. No  
matter that this  
two-humped, Bactrian

beast rises, an image  
in some lonely child's  
mind, or that it once

came when you clicked  
your tongue against  
the roof of your slightly

open mouth. That's  
forgotten now among  
shell casings and targets

scattered on dirt. What  
a pattern your near-misses  
create, that cluster of holes

a bit too high and wide.  
Better sit on the curb  
tonight, renew

your pledge. Someone  
clicked streetlights  
on while two boys smoke

furiously beyond scraggly trees.

## Apology

Wood and nails.  
How many

splinters could  
we gather, climbing

that rickety  
tower hand over hand?

I'm sorry you  
stood on that hill

alone, watching it sway  
in late summer wind,

that storm-herald  
smelling of pine

and rain. I still  
can't look

down. Nuthatches  
hop along branches,

jays dive and shriek  
and all I remember

is how sorry I was  
to let go, not that I could

help the glassy  
way I felt, not

then while  
milkweed rippled

beneath our  
feet and lake's

birthing breath  
pushed out among reeds.

## January Light, Minnesota

How firm this bandage role of cloud thumbtacked  
to edges of sky —  
cold light seeps through tough nets  
and shriveled leaf

breath  
of frost  
in still air, fingers aching  
as fists unfold.

So empty in this morning's  
cold —  
lone figure trudges past wide snow patches  
bound in her cocoon, hooded and bent  
heavy in earth's hard pull

forced march without a song, steps  
without the joyful flutter of a dance.

January again, this month  
with two faces

blank eyes staring  
back into dead mounds  
of broken time  
and forward to prancing spring, still faraway.

## Morning Song

Someone has ripped me from this  
dream with translucent hands dipped  
in snow and I shiver awake, startled  
in a white room. Become a hawk,  
I leap from this skeletal branch into  
a starving sky, hurtling above the tree  
line until I dive again, shrieking into fur.

## Starting Late

And now you run hard  
to catch up, leaping over  
centuries as you cover ground

but it's never enough:  
your breath burns in lungs  
torn open by cold and a pumping

heart. November dies and then  
December trees fold into  
themselves as preachers spit loud

prophecies into the young year's  
frigid face. Leap past seconds  
and unheralded births, hurtle deaths

recorded in black crepe type.  
Sing your own autumnal hymn  
in the silence of your frenzied brain.





“end of the journey” quantumness, ...  
with quantumness, ...  
]dis[osition

mindstorm reborn,  
probing, flicking, lapping the poem of sweetheatsweat&desire  
her vulva shrieking in the hurricane of tongues  
psychic reverberation  
apocalyptic hiding behind the wor]l[ds  
making sense-less  
life lived to describe an elliptic an other dreams of spring  
mindstorm reborn,

carbon chased life form wriggles ash(oar)e  
archetype projects outward, blinded re: turns  
genetic breath examining an other dreams  
of spring, matrix unleashed forbidden  
light stream. language swirls  
with prana world, ...  
dream transfiguration  
coursing matrix unleashed forbidden light scree  
rampage destiny remade light voice stand, shout, each  
with dream, ...  
indwelling  
dream song, dream light  
peculiar coherency.

radiant comprehension  
regenerate  
elongation within, ...  
elliptic  
psychic reverberation  
night light aurora transfiguration  
road to psychic anarchy bled  
her feet kissed by an erection of heartache  
her mouth surrounds the penile head  
incertainty light sidestorm fled  
genetic breath dream song, dream light  
[ap]point somewhere beyond itself  
caught, lost matrix unleashed  
elongation within, ...  
forbidden billions in light transfiguration  
sustained countenance through love,  
psychic reverberation  
perfection sea-analogies  
being light furthest step one might find  
the point is not to demarcate a line  
rather

transfiguration  
mindstorm reborn,

her skin steaming in the lucidity of passion  
psychic reverberation  
her clitoris smoldering under the hammer of the tongue  
archetype ago now amid light  
chur(n)rings in light transfiguration  
incountenance through love, her pussy aching  
psychic reverberation  
reflected dreamship intercurrent  
radiant comprehension seducing  
psychic reverberation  
night light land light grass lies over passive  
inseminating prana worlds "send light transfiguration countenance through love this this this  
perfection echoes light journey" mentality spanning desolation creased forehead  
apocalyptic hiding behind the wor]l[ds  
making sense-less  
life lived to describe an elliptic an other dreams of spring  
mindstorm reborn  
from gene,  
this holy reincarnate possibility  
awashed psychic starlight in vitro finning  
smelling of ethereal tides, fragranseas in[de]scented oceans  
archetype starlight radiant comprehension  
psychic reverberation  
roan goddess polyvulvular siren singing  
her cunt afire in a lucidity of flowers  
night rampage perfect inseminate  
her desire a waterfall pecking & probing  
rampaging beauty instantiated in dwelling  
her nipples exploding drifting swans  
creamy breasts erupting in melting wax  
destiny mirroring inviolate prana  
worlds mesmeric ago again  
dna entwines carbon  
day springs up  
awakens  
helix  
kiss  
indwelling  
this  
in  
vitro  
labian  
water  
fall  
bliss  
afire

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Submission must be in the body of an email unless otherwise agreed on.