

tell 5pm it's god somewhere

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poems Barton Smock

cover image Noah Michael Smock

ANGEL TANTRUM

As forever's divine infant, god inherited
permanence. Think about that for a second. I
cross my legs in front of light bulbs. Our food
catches up to us. Shape is just rain wanting a
past. A room is a line break a film is a room. I
can't move. Bring the deer inside. The horse
is so small that nothing but a moth fits in its
mouth. The deer is washing the feet of a doll.
Bring me the doll it is crying. Bring me the
crying of the doll. Turn something on. Turn
on toothaches in the wild. Start a car made of
toothaches. I don't know what poems look
like. Don't die in poems.

IN BEAUTY, EXIT

My uncle
Lost god
In a bet
Came home
Asking
Had we seen
A man
Or a woman
Taking
His clothes
Half of us
Said man
The other half
Started drinking
And got
Naked
Longer
Each time
This poem
Wrote itself
Death
Is a radio
What was it
Before

IN THE VALLEY OF THE PAINTED-OVER
FLY, AN ANT PUTS A HOLE IN A WORM

House,
A light socket finds the first tooth of god.

Church, I am too old to imagine the waking
hours.

Sleep,
Being in the water
when the song
is heard.

DEATH SCENE, BEFORE MUSIC

I don't have an opening line.
The godless
Snow eaten
By a red
Dog was close.
Of the things my sadness
Notices,
Your suicide
Is second
To your second
Suicide.
My blue
Jokes
Deepen
Hair.
What I mean is
The undead
Lack
Sorrow.
Wait, ghost.
Wait, Sylvie Mix.
A guy I knew in high-school
Was shot
By his son. I don't think
It's great
That I know

He had a son.
Go, ghost. A cut
On a thousand
Bods.

WAXAHATCHEE

Sleep's house is a debt that denies three
dawns. I changed my mind about ghosts.
They are the tombstones of angels. My mind
seduced a star that was alive. Sound can't
kill its brother if I am sucking on my cuts in a
cornfield. Today I wrote a resignation letter in
invisible blood and the wind slut-shamed
touch. Sound has a shy daughter. Two
sisters named Cain asked me to dream.

ALL THE TOYS I TAKE TO HEAVEN

A neighbor points me in the direction of himself as an amputee. Information isn't my strong suit. Excess of angels, tyranny of nostalgia. I dug into a tree a grave for a rabbit's foot. Talked year after year in an echo that had my children tapping out of televised fight events. Violence is a language that rewards godlike pronunciation. Everyone knows where they were when nothing encrypted the pathway to racism in the shell of finding its mother. My drinking keeps changing the age I started drinking. Jesus gets crucified so many times that a one-of-one pop-up book of god using for a pillow a doll based on death doesn't arrive in time for the book burning. I am late to my life and the television longs to be frostbitten. The toys have no memory. Even less when they explode.

gesture 1

The white crow of lost memory warns the
wrong past. A baseball shrugs into my
brother's ribs. I fear Jesus, and weep for
Adam. Make my knee in the ghost gold sea.

gesture 2

It's too easy to have what you're born with.
Touch implicates itself in the theft of
miracle's diary. I keep the idea long enough
for beauty to interrupt. Asked by three people
at once have I ever been drunk, I answer to
something lower. An eye is a cigarette made
of tears. If I miss a shot, or if a brother steals
the ball, an uncle's ankle explodes in two
hells. No teeth, but we lost bitemarks on the
reg. Our bruises had five thousand people
turning in their own blood to hear the devil.
Lord take my child while he is pretending to
be the child of someone else. God, blink so
often that image has nothing to stare at.
Whatever creatures walk out of Eden we'll
leave them out.

ADDICTION, FOR SCALE

A squirrel eating a star in the mouth of god

CIRCLE, WITH EXODUS

No newborn can reach existence.

Sleep knows memory

cannot fix
an eggshell.

(into a field
fled water
from the spine
of the lord)

Erections turn the stomach to salt.

I WROTE THIS POEM THAT YOU MIGHT
READ THE TITLE AND WANT TO WATCH
BEN FOSTER IN SHARP CORNER

I would cry for my mother.

I would ask my father
to cry for my mother.
I would cry for my father.

I would ask my father
to cry for his brothers.
I would cry for my sister
who said god
is a cigarette
in the cosmos.

I would cry nailgun cry unkissed heels

I would cry for my brothers.
I would cry in other words thrice
For myself.

I would cry on film for god for god on film

I would cry for the drink drinking that the
drinking ends

I would cry brevity

Cry foreskin forecry

Cry rest
room rest
moon

I would cry for god all that
All that having
to separate
the naked from the naked.

I would cry for my children
Cry Genevieve

Cry Beverly

Cry name, knowing name
hears not

Cry ghost for the ghost
whose ghost
thinks dogs
are real

those dogs, with time

gesture 3

Old poems, I've made my cry to the world.
Puberty's pop-gun. Gender's low star. The
short dream of touch meant to abridge the
skin's ceaseless letter to any angel that
remembers blood. I'm not home. God's teeth
are very small.

gesture 4

Lakes laze through the last showing of the
angel's invisible shadow. Fire thinks itself
unburned. Thunder hears a slow thing. I
don't want this to start. Lure the image out of
god. A ripped-up squirrel at the end of the
world.

TELL YOUR CHILDREN EVERY DAY YOU
DON'T REMEMBER THEM

In this church there is a toy phone on top of a
toilet seat. I miss trapping god with nostalgia.
I miss amnesia. A boy is a bell is punching
into that fatherless space created by any
shape born into a world of swimsuits. Oh
fury, moon of hopelessness, the astronauts
need nudes.

OUR DREAMING DRAWS AMNESIA AWAY
FROM THE SAME GHOST

Are you willing to leave them alone on the
earth for their last twenty years?

I doubt with presence my absolute hereness.

Amensia.

I believed inquiry would mean I had a
Question.

No one likes your gesture sequence of
Poems.

We left the water
To leave the water
Guessing.

Don't get mad at babies.
Be nice to god.
Tender soldier, there are birds

That bury teethmarks.

The ground is too soft.
Your hand will die.

TODAY A TENDERNESS TOWARD ME
HAD ME WELLING

Before you were born you listened to your
own unrecorded grief

Diagnosed gods
test weapons

Today a tenderness and so on

gesture 5, in three failures

I let a kid punch me in the stomach might my
brothers ride their bikes down a hill and later
I let two kids pull me out of a bathroom stall
might a bike upside down in my dead sister's
room stay upside down in the photo of that
room held up by my living sister who claims it
can doctor god

~

Death keeps time by the far amen of the
face. You have to be very still in your clothes
or they won't last. God is two dead creatures
looking at each other.

~

What doesn't happen in the current dream

stays
in the next.

I roll my own wasps.

Curled in a junkyard tire, the sibling christ
blesses oil spots real or no

gesture 6

enough
about me
these gaps
in your grief

EVER TIME

In the movie hidden by me watching god

In the movie hidden by me watching, god
gets in the ambulance ever time

In the movie hidden by my watching

Their poor happiness

The child running after a wild tire they're poor

Poor acne the handwriting it becomes

Angel acne a bone popping out of an echo in
the ghost of my soul

The handwriting it becomes when put by the
handless

On that tire gone

God of hands

gesture 7

Loneliness spreads into regions of sleep
never before undiscovered

When I say my son is dead you can't say if
he is or isn't

In a field of handpicked sex follow not the
glow of a sobbing fingernail

Recognize time when I see it

EMPTINESS WRONGLY HEARS ITS NAME

I've put my hands on my brothers hoping
they will want to equally die. In the dream it
was me checking on me to see if I was faking
sleep. You can change the mirror's past with
the face of god. In the dream they find ice in
my stomach and shatter notions of
conception concerning dying glass angels.
Kill my aunt again I dare you. Eden had to be
super small.

I AM WITH MY BROTHER AN ACCIDENT
OF PEACE

I bring wine to the table but also my will to
place the blood piano on the front lawn and
play it for the vomiting passersby. Touch
writes the unreadable bible on privacy. Fill a
baseball with the stop sign's blood. One
death is hard to process do you think Death
has a story about a particular life? In the
afterlife of your gone-ness I am de-blued by
shock. I write stuff like that because I can't
write more than three times with my wrist. I
know you're tired of me carving belief into the
face of god but please kill the golden poet
who knows we can't eat food. Howl non-
starlike into the flash of the eye-prone before.
Dear addict ask image what god did only
once.

INDIVIDUAL BEATINGS BENEATH A
BOMB MADE OF CHILDREN

My unreachable
mother, new

and unreachable.

All the bodies I'm sent into are in pain.
A caterpillar bellies across an hour that's
been touched

by the last
butterfly's
moment...

I know that's easy. I'm not here
for the writing.

ANGELRY

A cornfield made of rain

A ruined ghost
showing the palms
of my mother's
hands
to infants
ecstatic
with eyesight

The low miracle's most vanished
pleasure carried to its invisible end

ANGELRY

An arm cast
in a long
heaven
raises
not from birth
a hand

100 bodies
learn to count

The mirror remains an unfaithful marker
of those Ohioans
presently addicted
to the speedy
sameness
of decay

Re-hungered

a needle
boils
its nearness
to the doll's
backbone

NIGHT

I don't sleep anymore.

I can almost see

god seeing

a child.

My stomach remembers every olive.

I have two phones

but no favorite.

LOCATION AS FOOTNOTE TO THE
WRECKAGE OF MY FUTURE BROTHERS

Driving home from my mother's shattered
arm and mirage-eaten back, I convince
myself I've taken a wrong turn. I've only been
on this earth twice. My body doesn't look
different in the dark. I could be living in a
man who's lost his loved ones. Behold I see
the deer deformed in the same spot that it
was last week and know I can twist my
shadow toward those deer in the nowhere I'd
be.

NIGHT PAIN

There is always a mosquito on my wrist

I learned
so early
that belief
became a cat
checking
my pulse

I thought of something
the other day
mom

I don't know if it happened
A little girl
got sick

swallowing
band-aids

That's a weird way
for the body
to get out

of communion

I made that joke where
ever
one with
the nostalgia
of goldfish
was everyone
left

That girl was on tv
getting tickled
by a man who wanted
to still
be in Eden

Mom I saw the car
No person
it said
plainly
is here

Some boy
next
if not
for time

SADDEST THING

Thunder forgets
its god.

Television, our widowed star.

I'm in all of my dreams.

VIOLENT THING

Emptiness uses the unfed to see time.

The angel of dearth
Is the dead
Twin.

A comma is in a bird.

CELEBRITY THING

Distance makes touch in the skull of an angel

Beheads god in front of a star

Poetry didn't save us

And we weren't smart

PARADISE

Kids toss an egg as high as they can

Run, or don't

NIGHT THING

Carried
by a parent
one becomes
a ghost.

I can fall asleep anywhere.

Crucifix, cop car, etc.

Mirror,
the photo's chapel.

Days my son
forgets to walk.

TOOK THING

bodies don't last long
in heaven
a study
was done
the circumcised
smoke
too fast
I don't
love data
these babies
letting god
take shape

WRITER THING

the eyes
in a sad
race
a game
of godless
tag

DEATH WON'T HAVE A SINGLE DRINK
NEAR THE UNEATEN BREAD OF MY
BODY

The fiction of the ambulance ate the prose
outta christ

I've never been alone for three days without
calling
creature
creature

Ghost
hates
the wild

I was very angry at the noise that made god

MOVE GOD

You've been killed and they are eating
the body of your son.

What time
can do
with a crumb.

ANGELRY

The comb
born
too early

How long the hair cries

PASSCODES AND ALCOHOL

A man kissing a man behind the ear
behind a tree
no god made

A thumbprint above the front door
of the house of a hand
surgeon's bread
making child

The frozen pea
in angel's wrist

ANGELRY

We are pain's first memory

They were alive
when he left

ANGELRY

Weirdly gentle pictures of my sons

Found by a woman so strange
She strangely

Cannot die
From being

Who is the angel for the angel of death

LOSS SURGEONS

Birth never gets its person. The title of this poem was once Babies no one can lift and the churches that hide them. I keep thinking of that flood, and how it had to have killed children blissed out on breathing and how it had to have betrayed those animals drunk on a quieter water. Ah drink, ah brothers, a toast: To the life I spent on my impossible disappearance. A thought everyone will end up having is god watched me die the longest. They don't have a sister. A comb with her hair.

NO SHAPE TO CRY INSIDE OF

The people started naming their bodies

GOD

a color
terrified
of waiting
mistaken
for the color
of waiting

BECAUSE A METAPHOR IS GODLESS
AND A SIMILE CAN'T CREATE

a wasp drops into jesus.

Anything you do to my mother
you do
to my mother.

Eclipse, the painter's toothache.
My uncle

cuts hair wants to go to space and says

Nothing ever became art that had even only
once
ruined
the hand.

Hell had already a garden.

All we see
we've watched.

ANGELRY

A minotaur, a unicorn, and an angel walk into
a bar. Stay terrified. Your feet will bare
themselves to abandoned rabbits.

CREATION THING

A crushed moth in my mother's throat is
dreaming of a red lightbulb. The silence of
our hair is too much. I say to brother break
the same finger seven times you'll hear a
churchbell. Eyesight changes what seeing
owns.

A MIRROR HUNG DURING A LIGHTNING
STORM

Know, unreachable
scar,

the dress
rehearsals
for touch
run late

CROW

phone of god

SWAM

blue hair crying
in your wrist

ANGELRY

Time thought there'd be fewer of us

HARMONY K

A machine in the ghosted and are these yes
the agreed upon animals. Error prone infant,
my mistake is gone forever. My favorite
action movie is classism and ours is a silent
one about god forgetting to save her
progress. I thought it would be the eating that
would be hard to devour. Obsession is a
border. Sometimes when I babysit
apocalypse you die behind death's back.

BULLET COLLECTOR

Might a man come across the man he's
imagined, the man creates god.

My son, born sick, isn't always.

HEISTS

An ambulance filling with doll bones hits a
dog made of the wrong echo. A swimmer's
skull leaves itself to the math of passing
through god. A tattoo artist, who once longed
to show roadkill to a star, peels in the
moonlight the white apples of tortured
stickmen. Bringing them back won't bring
them back. The angels knew for three days
where Jesus would be. Faked amnesia
thinking they'd stop.

VULCANIZADORA

My brother can't get that dog injured by fireworks to leave the church. He has me try different names on the dog but I don't think it likes being called. The dog isn't ours, of course. Hard to know if that goes for the whole dog. I dream I write a book that can track sadness. God has been the same since eating plastic.

GOD HAS BEEN THE SAME SINCE
EATING PLASTIC

I watch with my son a slasher film and we
become unknown at the same time in our
revelation that the poor would time travel to
the exact place of their exit might they be
more creatively poor. I am furious still that
attraction in Eden began to matter. My
brother hates the human body for what a
machine can do. I don't think my angel
knows I've died. Don't think my brother.

I HAVE BEEN THE SAME SINCE
for Andrei Tarkovsky

It takes three ghosts to end the present.
Outside it smells like not touching you. I don't
go anywhere without my bomb. There's no
place on earth on earth. I don't take
photographs I can look at. My body has
never been a body to your quieter mother. I
drink myself into walking. Three ghosts eat
the mouth of an angel from the back of the
very spider that called god with a handprint
into hand's only dream. There a tooth, and
trainsets. Inside the movie there are two
rules. We're alone. You can't miss it. Don't
look at photographs that answer to image.

I AM RUNNING OUT OF WAYS TO BRING
MY BEAUTY TO YOU

I come to in the middle of eating. I am
making a sound that drags an ear through
the stomach of an angel. My sons catch fish
with silence. My daughter sings them to a
cricket left in a human mirror. By the time our
loneliness reaches god, we've been created.

ANGELRY

Churchbell, fetus, ceiling fan. A frog hops out
of my brother's dream and lives instantly.
Seven men pull a child in all different
directions out of a car perfectly owned by
their wrecked father. If you don't sleep, your
body will remain too crooked to crucify. Many
of my poems are not called *cleaning my
son's back*. Here we are.

LAST ANGELRY

Adam makes bread for his sons. A mosquito
collects mosquitoes from Eden. Everyone I
talk to knows my mother. Shy x-ray. Shy
tadpole. Brain a headlight packed in snow.
Sorrow is sadness that believes in the future.
This is what I thought my blood was doing.
The afterdeer of it all. So what. So what,
angel. Your mime my abuser.

THING, SEEING

Two wasps spooning in puberty's
microscopic dream

A newborn's eye as a moth
of blood

Glass of milk
afraid of god

DEEPCRY

AI ruins reincarnation. I have tried to be seen as blue without the choking. My son looks for his won body. His own. Sex breaks three lightbulbs in the chickenhouse. I first thought an erection meant something was trying to get in. I stayed up nights longing for the swimmer's re-kissed ears. Is your mom happy? A ghost knows where it is by snowfall and by crushed cigarette. My dad was crying and I had to pretend I hadn't sat on the arm of the couch weird. My son bites his arm then presses a button on his speech device that erases the words from a prayer uttered in a time machine. I didn't kill myself bc I never did.

TO YOU I LOOK LIKE THIS FOR THE
FIRST TIME

is there maybe
a way
to come back
from my living

a rare
disorder
wrapped
in a cigarette

safe
sad

a skin cell
dead
to the face
of god
an angel

designed
by an angel
a baby
walking

too early

an egg
cracked
in a star
please

can we put
in our arms, that

(something small
(that walked

LIGHTNING'S FIRST MOUSE

I was suicidal for years in my mother's field
of melancholy jellyfish. Our past changes the
sex of the wrong person. Even time believes
it's god's addiction to time.

SOUL AS THE GHOST'S LAST MEAL

There are so many ways to drink and so
many paths to your uncle sleeping in the
second to last car on earth. Echo trails off to
become a widowed expert on the
reinterpreted dreams of its unmade phone.
Eels translate for lightning. Children injure
themselves in one vehicle accidents. In their
small lives I hope their presence has
understood an immoveable god. You keep a
little water in the lungs of the doll.

DEEPCRY

I was writing in the dream to you about the dream. A quick note, really. How to replace a lightbulb. Treat a deer bite. How you should never let someone cut your hair while it's raining. A little story about your mother selling baby teeth at the crucifixion. Not yours. See pic.

DEEPCRY

Outside of the dream a wasp drags
mournfully its own hovering as if it could
have in this world a single nightmare for a
tormented pair of scissors struck angelic in a
field of hair. Outside of the dream,
communion. Audio of my body's interview
with the cannibal. What else. A price. An
infant's barber, sad as an ear, whose money
we remember to have.

SEEING THING

Microscope.

Endless child. Ghost
at the water fountain.

LONELINESS

Blink

And you'll miss

I WAITED AND WAITED TO NOT LIKE MY
KIDS

A crucifixion scene where I am too slow to
stamp out a cigarette on the surface of the
moon.

My awe a spider erasing its own memory in a
cube of ice.

ADVICE

Be born.

Forget.

TO WAR

I will not watch god watch my sons eat
nervousness

BESIDE A FIRE I AM DRINKING MYSELF
TO DUST

Borders change the silhouette of god

VIOLENCES BEFORE BED

designed our brother designed a bathtub that
couldn't hold itself in any position long
enough to keep god's gaze in the injured
overlap of stillness as paroled by a creator
stuck in a shape-addicted form

designed our sister designed her sister as a
crying joke inside of a third sister whose
hearing loss created the moon

designed the moon designed an egg to break
the ribs of the moon

END OF NO

I scroll
To where my son
Isn't dead

Or past
Or past

PERISHED THING

came first
plastic
then
immoral
loneliness
then
said a whale
to a whale
scratch
your eye
with mine
we've seen
for weeks
god
pass
for silence
in the apple
death
of brief
eels

LOSS

God recorded nothing

BED HUNGER

You cannot count people whose fingers are worried. Eternity eats a clock in paradise. Touch can't write. Bliss is a trap. Imagine having the perfect day. Perfect forgetting. I really wanted to like that book. Some rice, some wristcutting. My son disappears but only when I think about him. I sang in church and spelled words correctly. Jesus got close to passing out but in the end had to fake it. I held small jobs in the basements of movie blood warehouses. When not dying I felt odd setting in a hospital an alarm that would trigger no meaning. Wim Wenders is a no notes name. God isn't much. Silence in the bomb's empty stomach.

VIOLENCES BEFORE DREAMLIFE

designed a seasick photo designed a
darkroom to keep the empty trap from
dreaming of god's unsurprised stomach

designed we designed a terrified mirror to
sleep with the angel who imagined our
seeing

designed your mother's mouth designed a
grape all could eat from memory

VIOLENCES BEFORE TOUCH

designed I designed a thumb and with it
started the scarecrow's collapsed church of
celibacy

designed my doglike creature designed for a
deer a memory using only those sounds
taught to god by cars driven at night by blow-
up dolls mourning the pink life of mimes

designed we designed a drunkenness that
could breathe for a hole and the hole filled us
with crickets and teeth

designed the cricket designed a classic
hummingbird too stunned by the non-miracle
of beast to leave the pecked eye of christ for
the prayer of stillness darkened by a
specifically timeworn crow done with being
three times the size of god

designed god designed the same creatures
as god

I had my honeyed life

designed my weakest son designed, ah

designed my passing designed passage
through tapeworm's nightmare of permanent
stars

designed this poem designed the idea that a
cricket could leave something in the future
and get it back

tattoo
a wasp
its father

YOU

You died and ever
thing
was left

VIOLENCES BEFORE SWEETNESS

designed lightning designed a pair of
scissors from something sleeping in the thigh
sobbing on the right side of god

designed sound designed a voice for god as
a way for animals to tell jokes

unburn
the angels

it's my year to add a brother

designed these fuckers designed

designed a machine designed a map to
cover with cornfields the umbilical cord koans
of data abandonment

designed sleep designed restraint blue

designed blue

designed my brothers designed they are
white

designed skin designed pressing on prayer
with the oyster bruise of a fingernail starved
in a mirror by the invisible disciples of
nakedness

designed death death I did this for

VIOLENCES BEFORE CREATURE

designed your phone designed for mine a
thumb as the secret god of a hairbrush
teaching blood to crawl

designed eating designed eating the bee
stings in our smuggled bread

designed the injured designed the dead

A GHOST WILL DO BUT THERE'S MORE
PLASTIC IN AN ANGEL

I smell 49. My blood can't find me. Jesus was
the first crucified to turn his heart into a
spider's web. Everyone I know on the
internet is *alive*.

ADDICTION THING

by tomorrow I will have run out of the week I
need to make it through

ATTENTION SPAN OF THE BORN

Time is still leaving Eden.

We go through so many animals.

VIOLENCES BEFORE ASTONISHMENT

designed image designed a look for the
expressionless to use in their broadcast of
our expired witness

designed passage designed nothing moving
in doom's souvenir deer

death
isn't moving

a ghost is an angel that remembers killing
god

VIOLENCES BEFORE MEN

designed the afterlife designed the afterlife of
missing children

designed the dream designed its biological
dream

DEEPCRY

My knees pray to sugar. I name my sadness
after a mountain. Inside the mountain a
flower bends to impress worship. No more
poems about drinking. No more singsong
scarring in the baths I take to burn myself. In
a video store a preacher falls asleep
emptying the late bibles of my belief. You
can't tell because of the starfish on his face,
but that's Jesus. So what if I yell at a friend in
the throes of soft cock capitalism. Oh moon
of blank want. I eat myself out to make my
brothers laugh. Oh scarce feast of intimacy.
My cousin's band has the best name ever.
Everyone is alive. Let's get high and love our
moms.

FINAL THING

In an emptiness designed by no one

tried
to print
touch

DEVASTATION THING

A deer
helps lightning
run
from a ghost

A deer helps lightning run from a ghost

I have a gun
but the world is empty

I am still smaller than the god of my aim
Wait

Regret
has a moth
to bury

NOW WE'RE HERE THING

There is no god left for god to impress. At night I grow in my arm an arm for my son. My dream lasts for three days. An animal forgetting to drink. A perfect stick crying itself white in a hell of dog heads. Sex doesn't know what this poem is about. Eating is a shape death knows to eat around. Heaven only looks abandoned. Imagine a shooting range. Not that one.

EMPTIES

Eden created time so Eve could end god's suffering. I only worry about my son's death because I can't leave his dying to others. That's the alcohol being silent. Watching is just seeing a cyclops cry. Fuck that kid, is what you're saying. Skin is the real winner. The bone has a bone's name.

GOD'S DREAM, TOO SMALL

The killing, the movies, the drinking. A
spotlight stolen by a man in a deer costume.
My son saying he wants to live at home until
his brother dies. God's dream, too small.

END HEAVEN

Your mother sleeps to mourn the secret
ghost of your death

Horse
has its blurry
life

A TOY RACCOON FINDS A HOLE IN THE
EXTRA

Without Jesus I don't think God recovers the
password of every angel. I'm poor and I yell
at people. Melancholy nonsense. It's the blue
comes inside the blue. A dove is bitten by a
moth. A baby cries for a baby out. Language
won't tell you what to say. My cigarette has
two dreams

plastic
and arthritis)

I eat until food touches food.
A real gun

should do more.

LISTENING TO MY SON BREATHE

I'm not
close
to anyone

EDEN THINGS

I was sick and tried to finish a cigarette.
Online at least I can speak my prayers to a
god that leaves me godless. Any weapon
you hold has been tested on a child. Any
weapon you don't on a field of children put to
sleep. I don't love my children because loving
puts nearness on a map only angels can
fold. I with them watch cringe compilations of
miracles. They die but who's counting.

IN WHICH I PASS OUT READING
DANIELLE CHELOSKY'S 'PREGAMING
GRIEF'

I dip my body in a paint that makes rain cry.

Alcohol is a warden.

I read re-predicted nonfiction.

I miss
my mom
with god
with god
I miss
my mom.

What if all I've taught my children is how
to love me.

I want to touch all the writers
in the places
numbed
by what
they read.

I watch that one movie where you pretend to
be

disabled
poor
my smarter

brother.

Possessed by return

god
is unbearable.

Imaginary
bombs
imagine.

LISTENING TO MY SON BREATHE

You put your body
in which
day

FIRST THING

Climate change killed a ghost and every
angel slept.

Animals hid their dreaming.

Microwaves
confessed

to hummingbirds.

Our longest death
remained a boy
his brain
god's
now

NO LINES

with some distance
god
gave suicide
to a crisis
actor

ANTI FRAGMENT

sometimes they kill every last
others
every
first

oh nursery of injured microscopes,
we only bomb those whose blood can
disappear

when I don't hear from you, I don't think
you're dead

I'll see it when I know it
in fact
I have
the words

PRO FRAGMENT

touch sleeps in a blue mirror

I wrap a dead mouse in a blurry map and
miss
three
of the four
children
that were me

super quiet parents

FRAGMENT

Memory stops eating in the afterlife of the
past.

A cigarette can sometimes be a search party
that finds nothing.

Angels change their sex based on the owl
that hears them.

In church I break my fingers trying to open a
baseball full of rice.

The breaking happens so silently we are
noticed, say my fingers, by god.

Will my children see my body

SON POEMS

a cigarette loses time in a church for
anorexics

babies jealous of our sadness die happy

I am trying to say the next thing before you
have a mother

what if not hurting your children is abuse

my last words depend on the password I
remember

choose any parent to make my brothers cry

belief a skull faith a stone

toothache a worm worried about a star

no one likes me I love your poems

can worms worry

VIOLENCES DURING RESURRECTION

Stop using canaries. Small motherless bombmakers give birth on the moon. Their crying is real but they have healthcare. No one asks god what the body can do. Hope used to be devastating. I recognize this place again and again. A sick son's brain is the dog of time. Jesus died, came back, and named his ghosts Cain and Abel. We fill a microwave with cigarettes and the television calls it a birdfeeder. A school is the church of school shootings.

VIOLENCES BEFORE EGGSHELL

designed the tornado designed a still child's
stomach for the painter of tornadoes

designed the healthy designed a tongue
scraping by on nudes reading from god's
fingertips

designed the sick designed the sick getting
sick outside

designed vigil designed a prayer-chain
drinking game

designed the baby designed a baby okay
with dying

designed intimacy designed a son speaking
near his father's mouth

designed a fingernail designed a method of
tracing a haircut inside of a circle the moon
met online

write to your mother and live

I ONLY BELIEVE IN ANIMALS THAT LOOK
LIKE THEY'VE BEEN LEFT OUTSIDE ALSO
WHAT IF THEY DID THAT TO SOMEONE
YOU THOUGHT INITIALLY WAS YOUR
MOM

I get sad and write on myself.
Watch hunger like it's a tattoo god is
practicing.
Is this the life to say goodbye from?
We have to give these guns to someone.

WE'VE NEVER MET AND I DON'T KNOW
HOW MUCH I MISS YOU

Eating fast food syncs nostalgia to the heart of grief. You can't hit a deer that doesn't get out of the way. I thought at first I'd lost my grandparents, my aunt, my my. But then they lost me. Dear afterlife, here is the moon. I order online both suicide and longing then wait for a song about drinking in a haunted house to end. We've never met and I don't know how much I miss you. Everything god touches god didn't make. There are bird bones unbroken in the breadmaker's mouth. If it's a bathroom machine and not just a bathroom, you can stand in there handing out slow cigarettes to people who can't look at you. Angels knew there'd be children, sure. Detailed children betray us all. Stop loving my son. Take a miracle away from a photograph. Had those two left the garden with everyone else, imagine. What we wouldn't need. Pain tells time by what god hurts.

TOUCH HAS TWO HANDS AND GOD IS
SLEEPING ON THIS POEM

The cops are beating a guy who says mom
mom mom and the cops in their
motherlessness get more mad. Artistic,
faithful, wtf. Some plastic in us that makes us
want heaven. My brothers smoke cigarettes
or faint doing math. Time is a sick angel but
not the sickest. What this means to snow is
Franz I don't have the details. I think my love
is real.

MASTERY

A white plate washed in heaven. Mirror with
a broken heart. Nothing's ghost freezing
inside of a star. Pray away the shyness, y'all.
That chicken there dreamed its head off.

I CAN HEAR THE DOG THE SNOW IS
DEEP

A spider was given a way of crying for its
broken time machine

Pain
moves god
around

You can say Palestine now

to a doll
of a doll
that is crushed

I COULD HEAR THE DOG THE SNOW
WAS DEEP

Teeth for people who kill an animal for its
sound. Teeth for two boys fighting over the
color red. Teeth for my piano playing sister
agonizing over the childhood of my last life.
Teeth for my mother and teeth in the
cigarette box of an unshaken priest. Teeth in
the bread, teeth in the blood. In the meal that
keeps me on earth. Teeth. A tooth. A baby.
Oldest thing that we hold.

End

/ TELL 5PM IT'S GOD SOMEWHERE /
Poems – Barton Smock – October 2025

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