

my arms in the water instead and saved  
the thrush, hurled it back at the stunned sky,  
and the wing-scud marked that bitter rain's  
second fall. We were bathed in it.

Did you hear

at dusk the thrush's eloquence unchanged?  
Now there is only the wind in the dead,  
unshed leaves of the beech tree—a bronze rasp,  
and beyond sound, corn-stubble fast in hoar-frost,  
the rows' frozen yawning—the field's rigor.  
Let this be what waits for you: your soul cast  
into that mottled breast, you inspire rain;  
rain fills your hollow bones, and you descend  
a slow, stale wind—a stone on your foot, until  
the rain exhales you, revises itself—  
a dead, heavy well—and above you  
my same face, grown still, on the water.

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## Pinion

### THE TRACTOR TURNS ON PREACHER

I was dragging up the trunk of a wet  
red-oak, when it hung a stump, and I lost  
purchase; the tractor reared and fell  
back on me. I was held fast there, pinioned, not  
dying, growing numb and light, wait-crazed  
and finally calm. The creek bank saved me;  
its wet reasoned it would take me back, gave  
every time I took a breath. I breathed  
down: my chest did not rise; my spine fell  
into that wet depression, and a beech  
tree wheezed, and the creek strangled itself  
on the rocks, and time was severed to bleed  
beside me and then clot. I was impressed:

stone, bone, gristle, muscle, cartilage, and clay.  
I smelled it; the woods were ripe with fresh death,  
and the drone of the locusts rose, reclaimed  
my voice, disclaiming me. A lone crow  
landed on the tractor tire, and it turned  
with him, disevolving. He looked at me and spoke,  
“Be quick now about it. Before the others  
hear.” And as he spun slowly the mud  
fell from that wheel, meat from its bone,  
and the crow growled, his mouth shut.  
I saw the paling stalks, then; with my eye, open  
in that feathered belly, I saw the dead  
silk, the sweet milk seep from the abundance  
I had thought mine. I watched the wind thresh  
the fluming leaves of tobacco, the bright glut  
of morning glories. The bottomland bore  
old freshet scars, and in the woods fat stumps—  
fiery carcasses—oozed my same story.  
And then I was over a strange country  
I knew nothing of. In the meantime:  
a spider had come; from her distended  
belly the umbilical self raveled, a fine  
viscid line enjambed, her web definite  
in the steering wheel; the shrouds had collected,  
the sleeping plenty wound in her cursive;  
by a clean incision, a locust had left  
itself, hollow but clinging to my shirt;  
a kingfisher had flown down with the dusk  
to eat where the water had worried  
a ragged, blank margin. Soon they would come  
find me and interrupt it, but not before  
I saw the way things are, not before I saw  
cast from the belly of that halcyon  
its confession of ribs, a conversion fall  
clean and white, indefinite, on placid sand.