

**THIS IS
THE STORY
OF HIS LIFE
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Black
Lawrence
Press

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—BEGINNINGS—

The Dream of Flight

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: is what he was trapped or *wombed*? *Midair*? In a clot of migratory birds?

—so loud were the beating wings. Some nearby land mass, sheer audacious face or iconic ridge of ice or else rock or even some larger Something-Else than just this collective self for the sound to bounce off or crash into...

He was trapped. Or wombed. *Midair*.

*... not like cymbals.
A very thudding sound like heavy hooves on soft earth.
Mud in my mouth a quarter-mile up. One of us fell
tumbling wing-over-wing. One and one and one more
again. Others of us veered lightward. Any common star
is also a singular sun. Any distance is a distance you can
fly to. If that is a sun waits at the end of it...*

Once he found himself entombed in a singular body of birds.

*... which is not true because things die: they
crash or turn away. Tumble down...*

Not many sets of wings but just one single set of wings.

A single-minded purpose of here-to-there. Mad-winged exertion.
Thud and thud and thud again. Breast plate dappled with mud.

The thing he was in was in the air.

It was headed somewhere.

... there are too far distances...

Somewhere was a faraway place he had been to before.

The whole thing had always had wings.

The whole thing had always been alive

en route

*... flying is an impossible thing for almost every wingless
thing conceived. —*

and it always would be.

Noah

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: that it could fit inside a box

—2-x-2.—

Mama Giraffe and Papa Giraffe and the entire City of Mice because they are all each so tiny.

This explains how he now scurries and his long neck. His taste for tucked away little holes and the tenderest leaves atop the tall trees.

Or else the 2 is a short distance

and the 2 is a short distance

and so: he must write so-small in his so-cramped hand as to not even bother to put it all down in words—————

The Toy Boat

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: when he was a boy he sent in the one toy boat he had made with his own bare hands to the Toy Boat You Have Made With Your Own Bare Hands Contest.

Except it was not a toy boat but the story of a toy boat.

Except it was not the story of a toy boat but a poem.

Except it was not a poem but notes for a poem.

Except it was not notes for a poem but his math homework.

Fractions.

One-fourth plus three-sevenths. Seven-tenths minus a third.

None of the answers were answers that he knew. He put his name and left all the other blanks blank.

He won. All the other toy boats sank.

Event Horizon: Original Sin

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: it was invariable then that he would know just enough to get himself hanged.

—*Do you have any dietary restrictions*—

He knew enough to ask her this.

But not enough to know that St. Augustine was off limits. Entirely. Be it town or theologian.

She turned against him then and there forevermore.

And anyway it was not Augustine in his mind but the madman with the sermons for birds because early on she had indicated her especial affinity for wings.

She said for instance she could abide the idea of cherubs.

Later it turned out he knew nothing which it turned out was much safer.

Angel is what they called their only child.

Monkey Mind

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: the problem of sleep and days-on-end with none of it to speak of.

A consistent ache in the small of his back.

The clocks slow ticking. Or noiseless light of what were not ticks anymore but an incessant mechanized mind keeping track. One through sixty a second nature. Counting piled on top of counting.

*—I go backwards from some large number. Or else
an alphabet. Lose track. Start again. Go again. Again.
Again. What is the trick involving sheep. Warm milk.
The cow jumps over the moon. Forget fish: do monkeys
ever sleep. We monkeys descended from monkeys
descended from trees. Hands for feet. Long tail another
kind of limb. Swing. Reach. Search. The ground a
foreign surface teeming with living dangers. Head on a
swivel. Mind inside that won't shut off.—*

He is this little monkey in a box. It is very dark.

He's counting down the days.

Event Horizon: Metastasis

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: the beloved pet dog has a hole in her ear or else the hole in her ear is what he imagines will be born when they pluck the black growth from inside it.

Or else she herself will dig it out on accident with her delicate hind-leg scratching.

Which is exactly what happens.

The growth is tender as new growth.

The tender green shoot reaches. A newborn's fingernail is parchment-thin. For a certain time what bleeds

is always still
alive.

The Talk

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: Angel said
Father I've married the Falconer and he was taken aback.

Your mother loved wings is what he thought and so it was what he
thought to say:

—*Your mother loved wings.*—

I'll be relocating she said. A faraway look in her eye. As far away
I'm afraid as a gyre girl can go. She cried. She said it's not because
I want to it's because I have to. I love the Falconer. He lives by the
sea. He says he's been left before.

—*the sea? The sea! St. Francis of Assisi! That's his
name...*—

Is what he said.

None of which is true but he said it over and over again.

As if it could replace all the things he hadn't known

and all the things too he had forgot

at first or ever lost.

Event Horizon: MRI

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: they take a shady picture of his brain and ferret out an incidental hole.

—*right frontal lobe.*—

It is then and only then that words become somewhat more strange.

Hole and lobe and lope and mole.

Elope which he had done.

The peace or the piece of the Justice.

—*I do I've done I'm done.*—

A ring is a kind of hole.

His finger is no ferret but a shy rabbit
without warren or incident. Looking to disappear.

The Talk with Talk of Being Rent in Two

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: Angel said
Father I've married the Wolfman and this time he knew what to
expect.

She would tear up

—*tear or tear.*—

and say she must go far away. Not because she
wants to but because she has to. Love was a nothing he knew now
turned out safer.

Which is not true.

—*your mother...*

is what he said instead

...loved all animals equal.—

Event Horizon: Oedipus

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: he fancied himself a young man who was not a young man at all but one who was already old or at least a young man who had been aspiring to advanced years all his life.

—a parable: in another world, an Old Man carries the book of your life in his pocket much as one might carry a cherished book of poems. There are dog ears. Smudges of grease where he got his lunch on it. Three pages he rips out and tapes them to his bedroom wall. Because he loves them so...—

He thought of himself as a young man who was not a young man at all but one whose life was already missing three pages.

An old man is a man who rips the middles out of things even or especially if he loves them.



Polonius

This is the story of his life he drew up around himself: the capsule of a portentous dream.

—I was chosen for the part of the boy whose loves are over and over again unrequited. I knew it was a part I could play. I wanted that stage. I wanted my lines. I wasn't the lead but that wasn't what I wanted at all. I wanted to steal scene after scene. More tortured prince than the tortured prince. Mad display to put the world on notice.—

The talking cure is dead. To cure is not to treat.

A dream is up for grabs. Anyone's guess. One stabs a snake with his mother's favorite carving knife. In her bed. This means the intellectual stores of civilization and specifically free-market capitalism won't fit anymore in any brain-sized thing.

Or something.

Or else we push our bodies out into the light of the waking world in order to escape an intricate system of unreliable gods and monsters girding up a vaster darker world behind our eyes.

*—but then I discovered it wasn't as I thought at all.
O no! I was to be the old man mired in protocols and
paradox. Fit to start a scene or two. Etc. The unlucky one
mistaken for the villain shrouded behind a curtain in
the mad prince's mum's bedchamber. Stabbed through
unseen on a hunch. Or a whim. Or both. Almost just an
afterthought.—*

To sleep perchance to dream.

The butterfly dreams Zhuangzi. Yon cloud shaped like a camel a
weasel a dagger a dream. A butterfly.

Whatever else the mad prince has him say it is.