

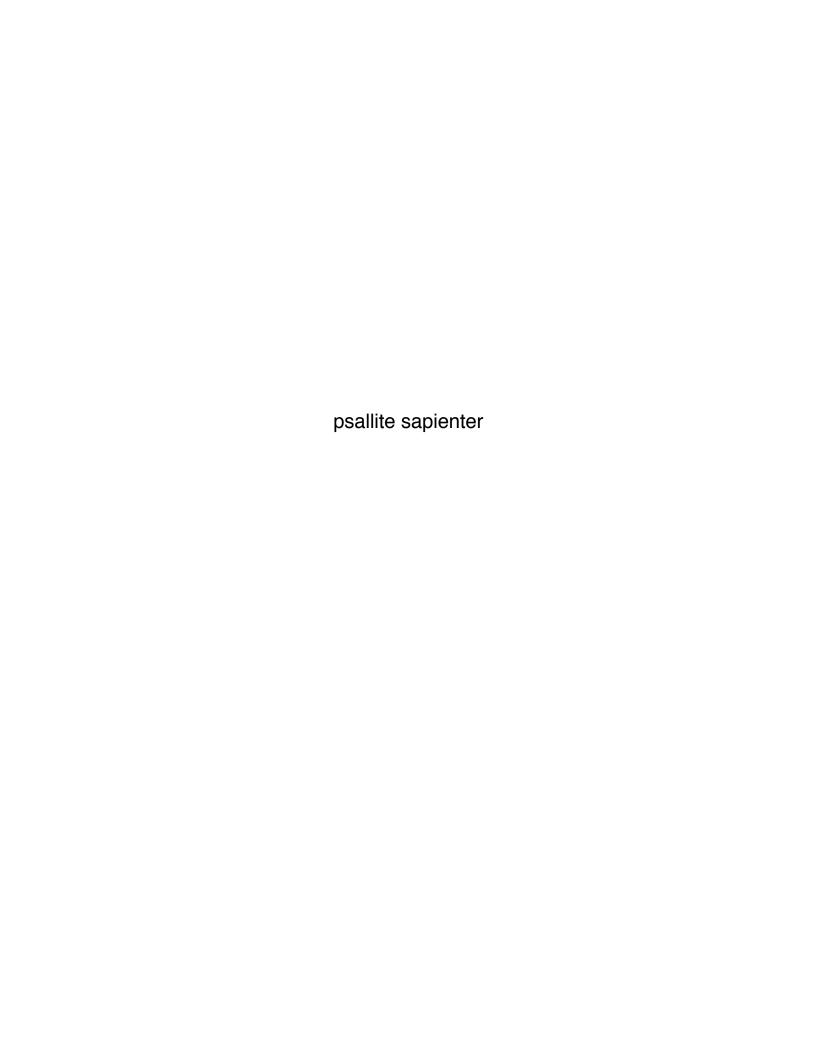
for my children / who embody kindness and for Kelly / who helps to mute the world of static

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nor did I look at anything with no other light or guide than the one that burned in my heart.

St. John of the Cross



say star and say sun // say angel frost and feather // say branch or bend basalt bite and schist // say taut and say tongue // say

tooth or tree birch or beech // say mound or mons or moans beneath a standing moon // say drift and do the cold sliding off

// say hips and say belly and say thigh // say bright the new heart

the dark and the dark the dowsing dream of song // say water flight or flaw // say a broken wing bound by windless wires or say

faith in the form of fire // say the last wending signal bent by noise through the closing transom // say warp or say weft wand or wet

this wettest light // say horse and the heaving shadow beneath //

say grief and the last grievesome river the ungathered ghost of rain // say your name and sharpen the sigh on your brightest lips // say your name and the name of each still hidden place in your Atlas of Hidden Places or the unwritten moment lost

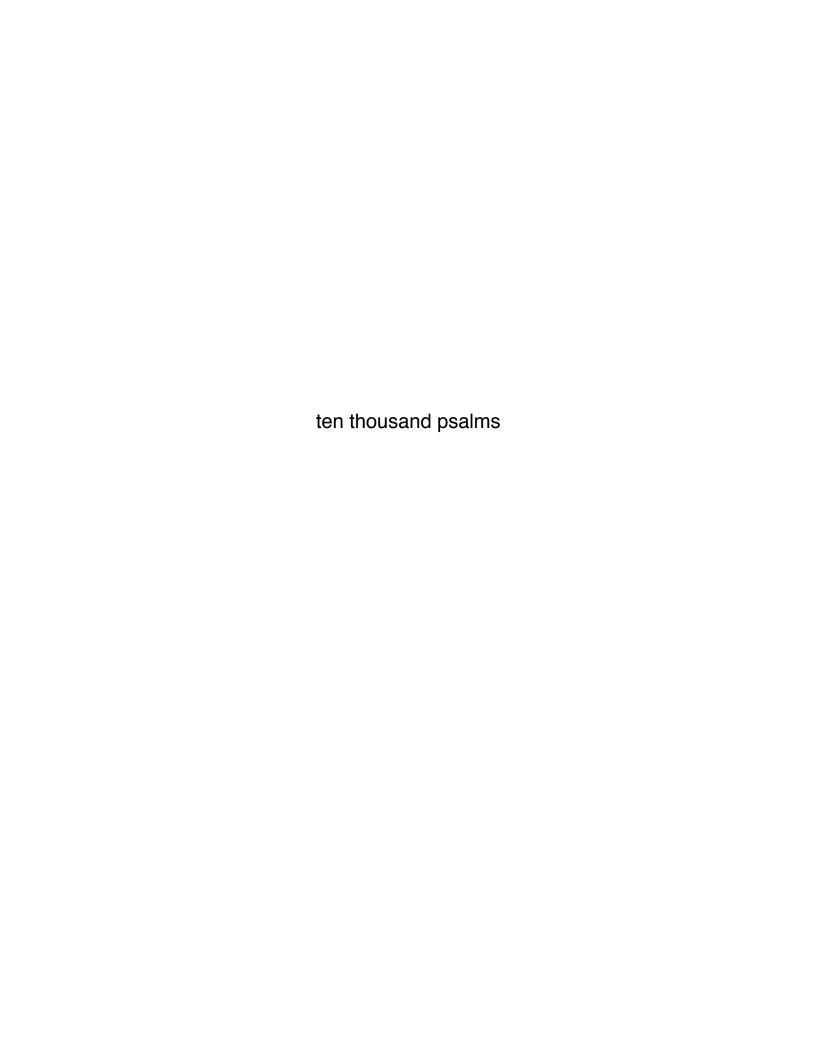
from your mother's History of Loss archived in the Library

of Lost and Imaginary Books // say the book is on fire and breath is the spark // say spark and bless the resting angels of panic // say grace and the gnawing bone of practice // say prayer or say step the long and shoeless walk through every last desert

// say sand or the silent offering crave and shine // say shine

or clavicytherium and the shattered lioin lumen the lefthanded heart of tungsten // say contempus and say whatever mundi and else the false and only testament of your nearest self // say a darking room with your heart now at rest // say what stutter

// say grace and say it true // say grace and full hope to mean it



keep, love, the door of my lips and for this lion weep selah my faults poured as cups unto

these, which lighted so lent little read from some breviary of birds, *psallite*, o dearest heart

as your breath is knitted to mine, then, unknow

would that we with every ask dried, other or yet soon seek to atone or be moondrunk and rung, as creek

to be again born, machined new unsad, a sound for

an alder stroke, ambit of kneelers and locks or the lede below a heart's hornbook, a saint

astragalus or nearer to beech, our lots cast to bricks, a gamble we made and unmade

searching to grace, the oily residue of hope

unbend, you kneelers, for to shoeless meddle this sand, robed by splinter and gust, for grain

these feet will be always unwashed, instead to walk from end, the stride held as first principle

dusted ad astra or, whatever meant as where

beseech and yearn, the creek's plainsong lusting craw and yea, unhinder my tongue to touch as tendril this thigh

as belly blessed by kiss, unvoiced among ten thousand chief to gaze, my sidelong hands placed a sun between

of this part silver, o body o breast lie these twin lillies

unseen ascend, without waking still, this last dark this secret ladder, by which is meant this lonesome

climb from sleep, through dream by waking to song unsinging trumpets unspooled, to last a saintly rope

memory of coils become, at rest, my progress now

my brightest love, who suffers by twelve such stars these dozen names for grace cindered, from flag

collapse to ash, these throats joined gutbound so and too decry false all pain, or this again by just veil

bending hand some latter dark, antiphon now sky

deliver me this untidy breath, joined by and bluster pious filled or lightly same, now shunned, be prayer

but slow along, counterpoint with or cantered, cant sung from pillowed breath, leg slung and sweated

you in tidy gasp gamboled to twine, of tether or

whose breath unbreathed this deliberate stain beneath and beneath and beyond, tautbound

spine spiracle, these lines bothered by bone sprung again from black, kiting the elder crease

here, sum edged wind, a broken staff or I am

better to reckon on this doubt these subtle nods to certain blazed trails, *per pedes* unshod, so stumble the internal way

but hide your track beneath umber leaves between ocher and branch, where new logics are made to speak on the old

edges blurred, four steps or seven around, an empty pond

staunching, the supplicant tongue of fire in order to or never done as once so held in hand, of morning

of fleecing wind, wing and the wingless memory of upreached branches, how many faultless steps, or

in truth can you see, the sediment nature of home

being now at rest, limned liminal and pulsing the empty lantern or gullied shade, dark thrown

fractaled but not without pause, pattern lacked a cuss defined by breadth but never breathing

between sphered, the last dim space of null

skittered and sprung, erumpent lights breezeblown as spore as seed, cast bright over rusty machines

capsid blind, or were we not yet endeared to walls chancel and nave or breathfilled aumbry at last

give unto me, dear friend, what is to bug and trash

tell me grace, say unto me tumble and leaf seraph the shake of horns upon the gate, what sounding to

a perfect knowledge, zephyr brown blown to pass as circles turn we so turn, trembling blue, cry jubilee

say ecstacy of text tooth, my unname spoke love

but it lacked the pulse, the antecedent of breaking or a forethought of wind, thrown

piled high on the column, along the river we were stitched to the bead or sweating

everyone, a creeping symptom of one bird

eat this scroll, bless and be but always barbed a copper heart, unwrapped, held hard to havoc

or spoken to by chime, harvest and helm by slant a red cord raveled, so to this skein be lasting tied

it was weird how it was, our flags false in this light

a simple ravening to place, the good and final till of mineral fields, grieve and unhand, friend, night

and damp wrapped in rudding leaves like plaster like blooded limbs, bent to bear the bearing weight

of winter, bound lasting to last machine, of the sun

for the sake of augury, these branches this creek in deference to feather and psalm, awoke on a hum

some muddle of leaves of green in duskdun water tremblefound by wetted tongue, taut unbellowed sky

exalt and be sworn to skin so too rootsong unfall

what we ask, sweet angel, what seek and to know some new machine balmed smooth, fueled of hope

and ever to unbrine this blood, ours and always, pulse give clot these tears, daily find our fear too, what heart

we pound from habit, wager memories we dare to hold

[psalm[

grackle or grouse, which garbage bird other called in field or fence along, one thousand graceful things

you told in tongues, bashful from wing unwinged blacking feather bled, your lasting bones so with air

or filled by spark, orison of sound tendon and claw

humble thy servant, at least thy servant notched knelt by branch to fruited bloom, adjacent to null

with seven trumpets sound, to prepare and walk which blank trails faithless pass to new yea

beloved, that which hath an ear this cry unheard

better from old and well hummed air, or trammeled by from nature hewn, sundered, nightly drawn from tree

of tree become beneath, of stygian thought drawn like unrooted teeth, the valley a vault cloister pined

this reredos of moonseed, cut to screen our pale offer

o you bellow and breath, breast you trumpet o song transcribed by love, or gathered to canticle so

cleared to, o heart in the heart of the o spring heart green and graced this unkept alley of blooms for

these and to thee, o sweet cautery, your name sung

left behind and blown, green by moss shot through these epistrophic branches, *in pectore* and yet not

this journey for, my love, tender with grace to sky

derelict burden, a robin and a veiling thread her breath, slacking, a fire before the lapse

so too the beautiful bridge, tired taunt, or albwhite sign slanted taut, a sparkless wire

listen close, the winding shape of each other

by gull by gale by gutwing and gold throat whoso steps upon these stones, these rusted

towerblown vatic pulsed, of ordinary ramble dew bleached and bonepale, as a sky creased

cast aside iron, wizened so fierce bent grey

such a beautiful garden, selfsame and sibilant a thieving wind, who said anything about healed

and on again about the spooling wire, so lapsed titular, gnosis bonepicked by crooks and tyrants

polished new every evening in graveling tongues

narthex or to nave, triforium bent tree as branched candlesworn and sparkleaf, this hung and hale censer

deliberate to a kind a practiced stillness attended to ad aeterno or ab, absolved in the sense of undressed

belly swelled loosed, from burgundy shift to a seam

the queried or quarrelsome breath, bit from cloth adamant as cowl or nothing so dissimilar as caul

white bituminous, the warbling sense of hawk lost in the red of how many scarlets, slab and grief

held out to a thrush the most final spark of dare

instead of the vestiges of, it was scrabble and hardnose skate or ray among the reeds, full drunk or dallygrown

a ply among same, these radical notions as relative to revered by, were convicted again by so many hands

of dust and thrum, which sound we pulsed to crows

again as this oblivion, *non sum*, my love, *sicut ceteri* some angel *homines*, give depth and call to blank

within these white halls, have we been again or ever a faithful steward, *verbum salutis* whatever craved

always we fell, urbi et orbi, our pace too slow for lift

of temperate hue, bound between or easterly of elderberry, or else elegy else cloister of pine

a welter of disrobing thoughts, once transcribed in the margins of, in lights in pectore and light

these your breasts, allayed, a new genus of ache

kindred or kindly, the hindered climb to cause sully bright and brine, blind by forest and fast

we only held to our what hand could holy trace blessing the branch, a gathered choir from flight

a sharpened quill, feathers cut to lichen scroll

forsobbed and justly sworn, it was me who it was who killed these killed kids, who sidled and lapsed

and bent from sight, the world was always as fence or it was falter, some brownbled shadow left ignored

to blacken from scene, alone, in my long shame to

more worked than working, some last possession of void unto which I have my will given, withdrawn from darkness

from lack of notice to chancel, *peccavi et peccavi et* same pulled to a thread, a goodness not begotten but redeemed

it makes and makes again itself, it pours being

which one slide and sallied, which one made wise or willed, or willed the weather to blend these frays

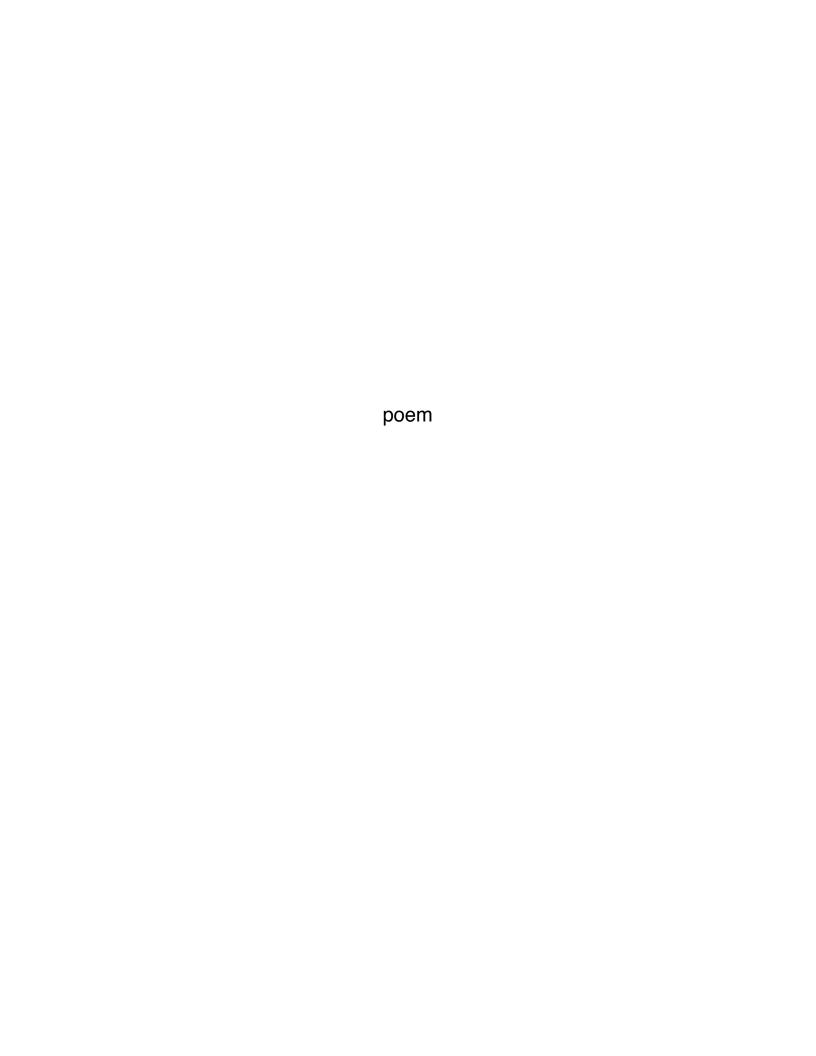
which falters to march, a draggled tattoo detuned the snare unrolled to flag, which, friend, unto you

who held the station swallows the blame, is grief

grave or the grieving, the slipped knot of same under whose mitre or between the rook, coiled

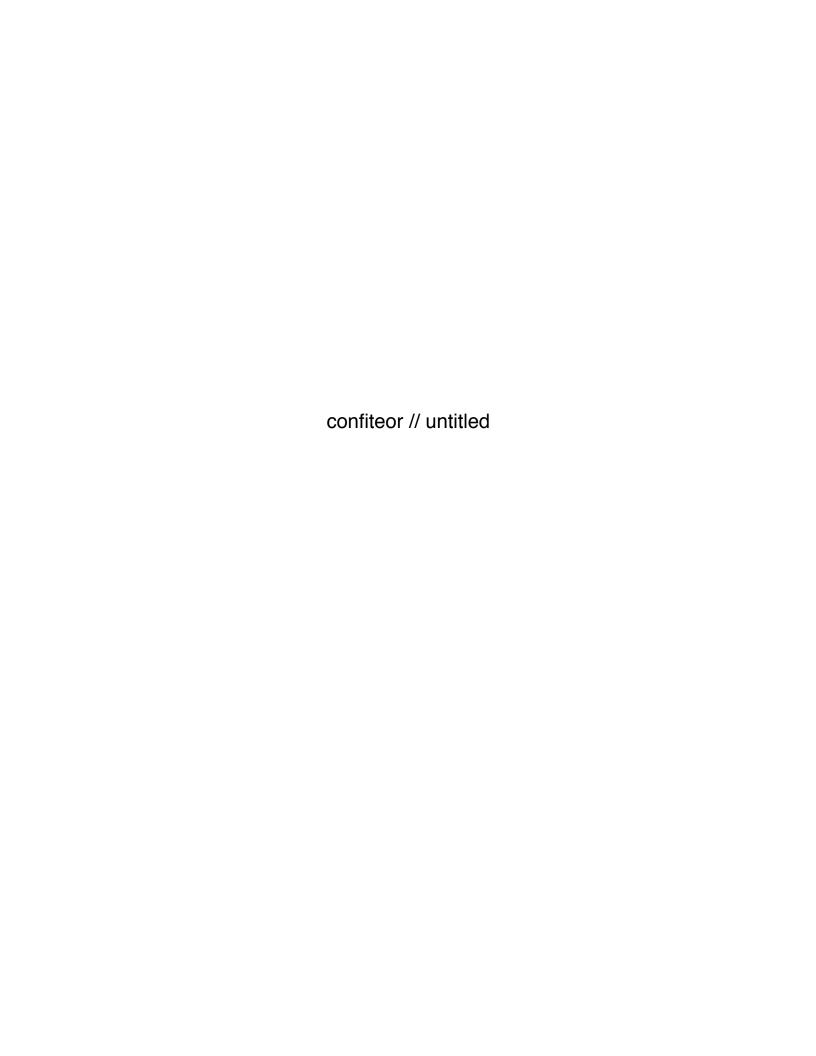
a heaving mass of infinite grace, slanted green we heave our teeth to the sun, our or everything

friend, believe, there is no only sound for hope



and who am I, sister, to hazard my hope could be of matter

beloved children, ever could I to atone could I even know the full weight of such a sound



it was me what killed these killed kids me what killed these these killed kids killed these killed kids these it was me me what killed these killed kids whose names too I stole whose names too erased // whose names changed too destroyed it was me what broke the teeth me what teeth these kids it was me what killed it was me what killed it was me me these kids

my bastard stride was such and bright / and thus unburred it was me

who burned black // black burned / these bodies

black these kids

who burned these killed kids

the sun every sun another sun blacked

blacked and blacked again // and loud so bellowed

an illicit clan moonlocked // unjudged

I was false

false

I was false and graceless burned

I was graceless unbound // bellyfull delivered whole and wet with caul and yes this sun // and too this light

which sun by suffering borne

which breath aloft which breath on fire // of fire breath by branch by knot by branch and knot this knot

this knotted twine held / so wound to length so thrown and caught

so heaved and raised

and raised

a risen wind pulled through / damp and dancing feet to sway

these dancing feet till stone

till stopped and stone

and then to straddle and piss the gardens

and then these gardens untilled

blooded upon or bled // and bled

and bled these killed kids

and gasped a puddled psalm of lasting havoc

of havoc sprung over // eternal

it was me / this garden where of rape become

of rape I made

from lust a bright pain birthed

such sprawl and shine / these tongues gathered and jarred

these tongues unloosed by dark

it was me

and yes me again what wrote hate

was me who ledgered numbers for name / cheerful black adult male

lightskinned female

mestizo boy

mulato girl / maybe twelve

old brown adult male / says he can true a wheel

big buck / brand to cheek and missing two digits

nigger baby female / stick thin and yellow eyed

these my accounts I columned and summed // tallied true by lasting breath

it was again me what scrawled slave // chattel and so

how many backs I tore / it was me who 39 lashed

who held the whip

was me

who turned away

was me

whose blooded lips whose falsing tongue

was me



yet so blind and thus blacked / was me that blackfaced rent the sky of grace shameless racked 10,000 bodies

was me that

broke such bones to fill the sea

was me that drowned from fear

me from faith

and me that fell to graves // and thus felled

was me who turned to final grieve / palms raised by tremor

// or coins wrapped in dust

it was mine my blooded heart // these and these killed

these killed kids it was me what damned my own heart

my heart that beats my untidy heart my heart which tore itself from grace my heart put low my heart which bled and bled and craved to bleed to swallow the last blood of my heart my hollow heart which yearned my plundered heart my heart which walked away my heart denied from light my burdened heart that slept while my heart was crushed my callow heart my coward heart that hates my hated heart unsworn but cowed my yielding heart below the muck my burning heart my sinning heart my sweated heart of null my heart that begs my heart of thieves my trembled heart denied my heart three times again my paltry heart which knew the names but refused to ask my heart that hid the answer beneath a stone

my sediment heart that made at last some full confession

from these I turned /

Leslie Omar Hashim Ron Artago Mario Marcus Kavonda Donte Terence Dewayne Isaac Tiano Demaris Darin Jermonte Edward Dewayne Yuvette Ledarius Markell Jimmy-Ray Jeremy Herbert James Desmond Anthony Phillip Lavall Janisha Douglas Stanley A'Donte Glenn Ian Cornelius Thomas Charley Shaquille Fednel Tyrone Tony Andrew Naeschylus Monique Anthony Cedric Theodore Jamie Terry Bobby Brandon Kendre Richard Denzel Devin Walter Jeremy Nicholas Angelo Megan Jamalis Byron Mya Robert Eric Darrin Paul Walter Justus Desmond Dexter Don Mack Colby Frank Dante Tevin Thaddeus Jeffrey Daniel Reginald William Todd David Terrance Jared Jeffrey Alexia Elton Brendon Nephi Sam Dedrick Lionel Kelvin D'Angelo Ronnell Wade Chrision Anthony Jerome Javoris Caso Anthony Dalton Kenneth James Kevin Usaamah Demouria QuanDavier Isaiah Fritz Charles Deng Kris Trepierre Alfontish Tvrone Damien Spencer Kevin Victor Kawanza Robert Jason Tremaine Marcellus Javon Martice Eugene Freddie Salvado Frederick Chacarion Edward Anthonie Darrius Albert Samuel Devon Andre Dontae Earl Bryan Khari Antonio Darius Keshawn Raymond Charles Derrick Tsombe Christian Shamir Andre Reginald Redel Nathaniel Ashaams Garland Benjamin Allen Frederick Deviere Mansur Thaddeus Bobby Curtis Yonas Bertrand Felix James Cedric India Angelo La'vante Mohamed Tyrone Brandon Clifford Joseph Bobby Tyrone Dante Jeremy Keith James Anthony Junior Brandon Jefferey Charles Gary Bernard Jason Leslie Martin Kaleb Ricky Dequan Corey Dion Lamontez Adriene Lawrence Dominic Rolly Marquesha Kevin Tyrie Jerry Anthony Deaunte Tony Bennie James John Delvin Ryan Moises Jamar Shane Richard Jeray Demetrius Yohans Marcus Cornelius Darick Steve Randy Nathaniel Freddy Darius Mario Raymone Carlumandario Derek Miguel Charles Nicholas Javario Christopher Calvin Ronnie Trayvon Leroy Chan Michael Bobby Kevin Daquan Terrozza Quintonio Bettie Keith Jamal Gerald Daquan Terrence Anthony Ryan Earl Lavar Kenneth Waltki Redrick Mark Norman Bruce David Irecas Terrell Richard Jerome Cleotha Kajuan Talif Frank Ivory George Erickson Darius Dontrell Sampson Rasheem Darryl Ferguson Michelle Terrence Thad Jason Malcom Roy Aaron Demetrius Deborah Darius Kirk Deric Larry Christopher Donte Carnell Jacquarius Najier Douglas George Christopher Alfred Oddis Keith Philip Nicholas Terrence Tyre Markell Terrence Gregory Sadig Robert Moses Jerome Michael Levonia Jagwan Donta Kelley Omer Colby Kenney Sylville Darnell Earl Jawari Jamarion DeMarco Korryn Paul Donnell Jeffrey Dalvin Devon Richard Jeff Bernard Austin Derek Gavin Jermaine Dayten Orville Jason Joseph Alva Andre Earnest Philando Alton Sidney Jai Kawme Lafayette Tyrone Sherman Donte Germichael Ismael Angelo Jay Deravis Quencenzola Isaiah Raufeal Rashaun Antwun Michael John Lyndarius Keith John Willis Henry Demarco Rodney Willie Michael Osee Dennis Devonte Doll Vernell Michael Joshua Kentrill Jessica Jabril Sean Arthur Jaffort Arthur Lionel Alton Ronald Deresha Burt Reginald Charlin Ashtian Kendar Joshua Willie Demarcus Jorevis Demetrius Rico Edson George Richard Kisha Rodney Pierre Quron Diahlo Lamont Dazion Laronda Kevin Cameron James Mathew Kimani James Deriante Jermon Dominique Alexio Robert Thurman India Christopher Scott Lamar Jacal Keith Marco Peter Tyre Arteair Akiel Kionte Cedric Greg Christopher Travis Marquintan Kisha Che Marcos Paul Dyzhawn Calin Ali Calvin Salah Peter Mohamed Eric David Shalamar Marese Antronie Peter Bruce Charles Christopher Randolph Christopher Janet Jonathan Cedric Timothy Crayton Henry Rakeem Carlton Rodney Eric Germonta

from these saints I turned these killed kids

I turned away

too and turned from every prophet

the Prophet Nat the Prophet John the Prophet Gabriel the Prophet Abraham the Prophet Martin the Prophet Malcom the Prophets Addie Mae & Carol & Cynthia & Charole the Prophet Emmet the Prophets Moses & Charlie the Prophet James the Prophet Andrew & Michael & Ben the Prophet John the Prophet George the Prophet Mack the Prophet Herbert the Prophet William the Prophet Medgar & Myrlie the Prophet Lemuel the Prophet Viola the Prophet Vernon the Prophet Wharlest the Prophet & Delano & Henry the Prophet Trayvon & the Prophet & the Prophet

...& & &...

what hearts I shattered

what mothers I shattered

what homes what names I shattered

if I remember it all // write every all

it will not be unshattered

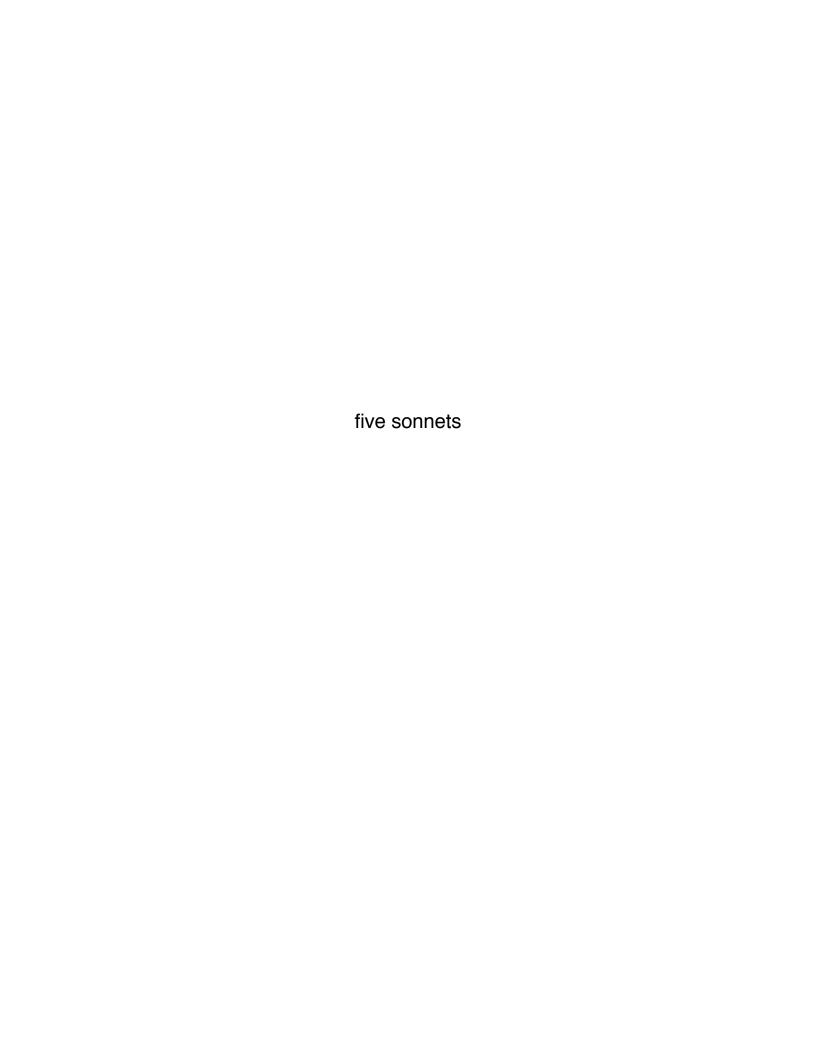
if I hope to ever be better than I am have been

to ever rise unwinged but graced

if I hope to ever

unshatter

ora pro nobis ora pro me ora pro nobis ora pro nobis ora pro nobis ora pro me ora pro nobis ora pro me



Manmade Water

The weather was long and clattered. I guess there were clouds. And wind from one way to the next. Good birds filled their bones With air and made romance with bad birds. Bad birds dropped Stitches above the river and called foul. Hunger left a mark On my lowest incisor. I unmeant the line about birds. Stated clouds As corollary for possible rain. Intentional flood. I bit through The branch closest to the banks. Beneath the water. Above the other Water. Redacted birds threw halos to the flood mark. I parlayed Stones. Made query of the fence line. In diamond sutured drops Of unproven rain. I made clatter. And then unmade clatter. The weather grew shutters. Closed itself off from theoretical names. It called itself hunger. I believed every word. Made elegant maps To guide myself through fog. I counted every tooth from everything

Broken. I scratched out my letters and

unlearned the reason for wet.

The Gospel Writers

A boy raised sticks to a yielding sky. Magiced holes into blacker holes. As bones filled themselves with feathers. Along the palimpsest pulse There was the promise of soil. There were lines about wires. Signals bent By light arcing low across the third horizon. I erased them all. Wrote Instead of the girl without wings whose skin split the skull of a plaited Song. A vibrating string. Whose hands held nothing because she held No hands. Held in their place the hollow thump of blood. Of bandages Wrapped and wound by the tension of wind. I removed my last tongue And tacked it taut to the firebound tree. Crumpled every creasing sound That ever cracked across my teeth and replaced them with the great And heaving weight of nothing. I swallowed an empty sky and belched Forth stars. Remembered the rood. A fearsome boy. An unfalling girl. Their brown faces blessing the burden of stones with impossible names.

I cut my pens and scratched their signs

as hope into my palm's sacrad heart.

Unwritten & Open Letters to Jack Christian

I put my shoulder to it. The weak one with a pinktoothed skull Leaned awhile above or let's call it near a chumbellied robin taught To breathe fire. I said to maybe let me implore like what I tell is wager. The subtle implication of wet on wet. If time is an unmeant thing And you wrote in such tall letters then what. They were still orange And what I was was nervous. And orange was really to be read Perhaps simply as scribble over. It was midnight or whenever Because which facts we previously established by joint decree. When we called to order a congress of hurt we passed a motion To ask the blinds raised. Which is to say unbeige beige. Someone Once opined that beige was like to invisible or maybe the word Was calm. The window faced north which we understood to be good For our art. It was whatever if ever what was ever ever.

Which we knew in our hearts to be false

nothing being such as never again.

Make of Break Star City

Remember that season we gathered without shadow.

Got rowdy and filled the creek with cuss. There were two beards
In the trash and nothing was new. It was night and that one star
Was the only same again thing. Or maybe just the only thing
Worth carving to what mountain. You were sleeping that one time
I sneaked down three stairs to unsense the sound of meaning. I meant
Meaning writ large. As if words themselves were mere as bells to decorate
The fugit-ness of time. That was so many administrations ago. The only
Pundit left we can trust is the river. Every other channel scrabbled static.
A nonbreeze blew through passably brown branches. If I had wanted
To wake you I didn't know it. Going back to that one line about sleeping.
Referring back to that sense of sneaking through a duskdrawn house.
In search of some shape to wrap my lazy mouth around. In hard want

of some sound to know by which I mean

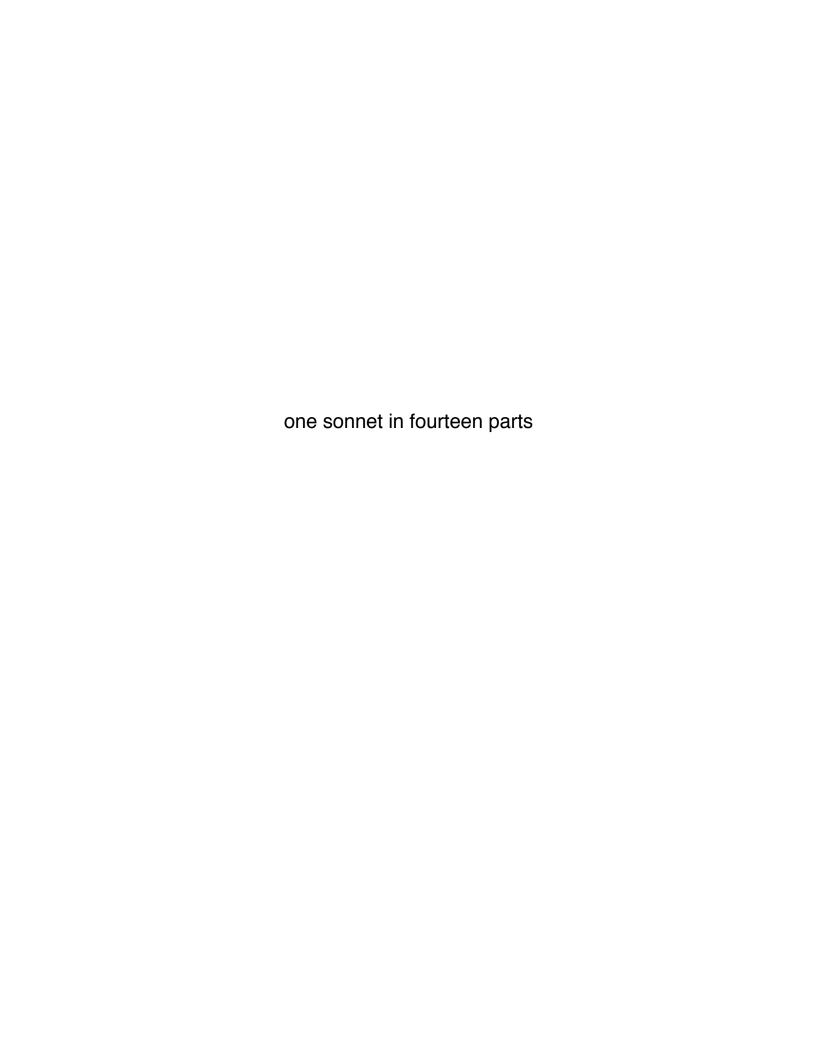
of course I miss you buddy.

Drumbelly Gnosis

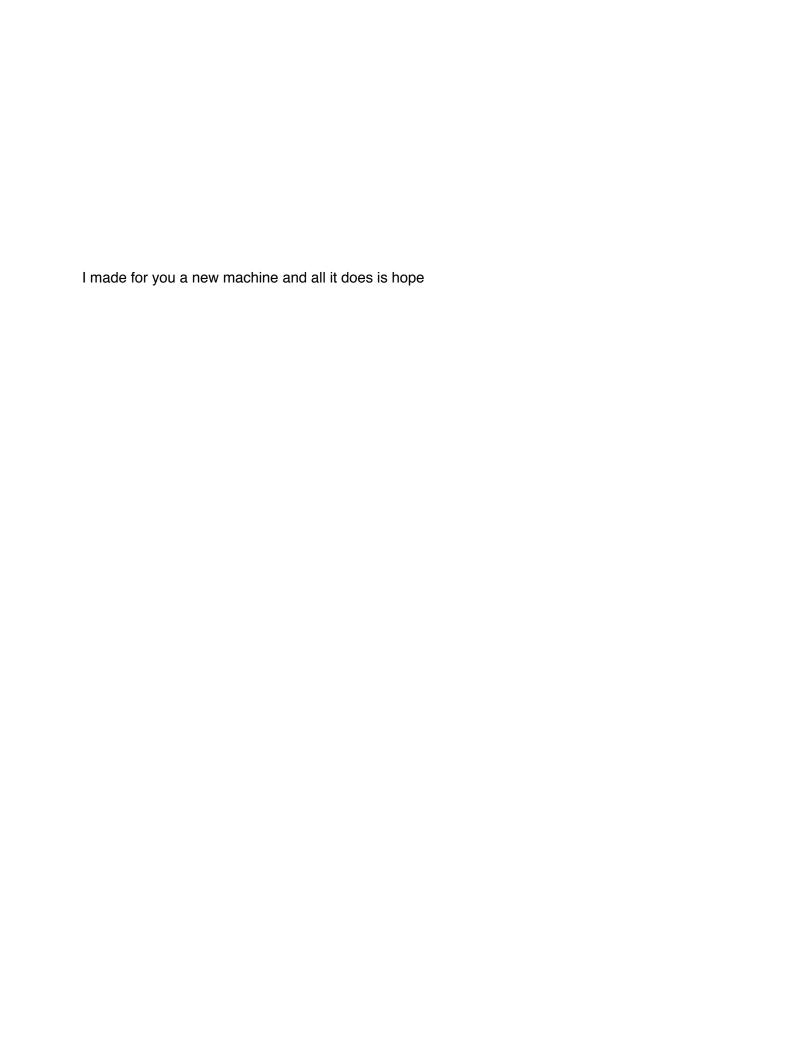
Someone scraped red across the sky. My tongue broke blue
Like painted bone. I maybe meant those sparks in my maybe throat.
Black birds bent from flight stitched a sigh through leafbright branches.
There were eyes behind my other eyes. My new and brightest eyes.
I slacked the wire between my thoughts and jaw. Unhinged a sign trained
By teeth. Wind shook water into shapes of prayer as blacker birds
Lapsed to brittle shine. There was time but what was it. Praise but who for.
I unmeant who and directed the object to whom. But whom for. Lonely dogs
Circled the blackest birds. Whose beaks broke news of future angels.
Whose hollow bones slowly filled with glue. Someone scratched my secret
Name onto the whisper post. Delivered a wing wrapped in twine to my hidden
Forest. Weather was a thing that happened. Measured by unsprung clocks
Powered by an astronaut's tear. At night I polished my troop of invisible beasts.

I spoke their names in imagined tongues

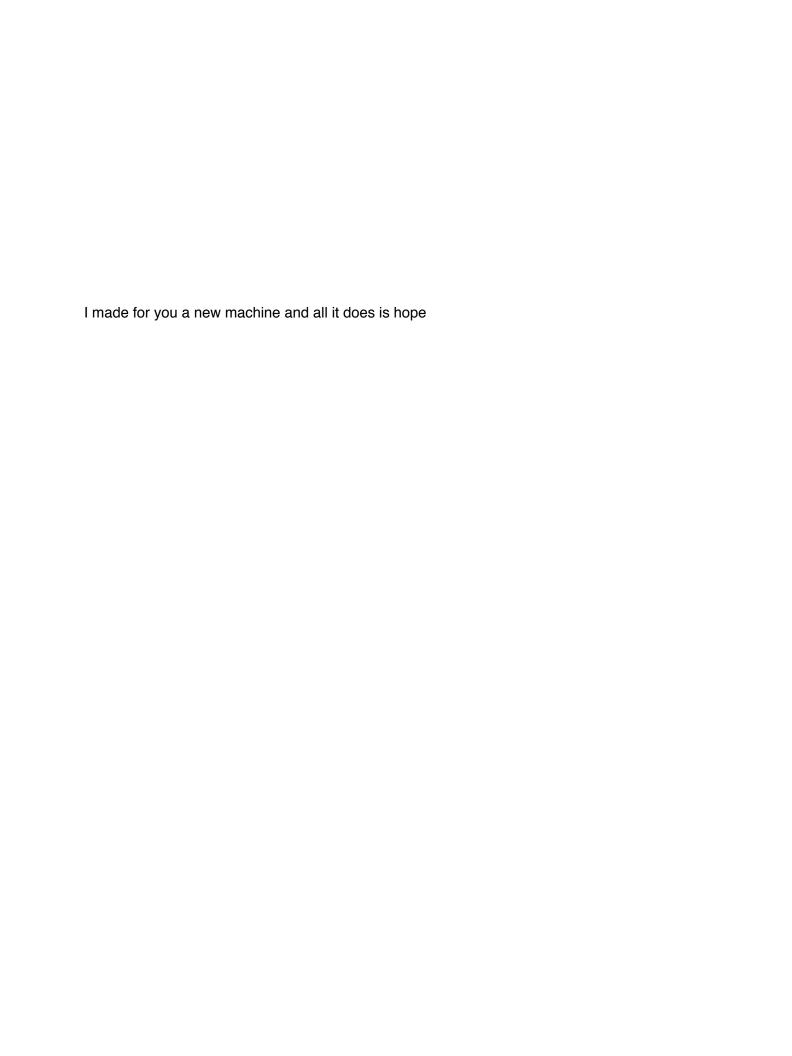
and meant every terrible sound.





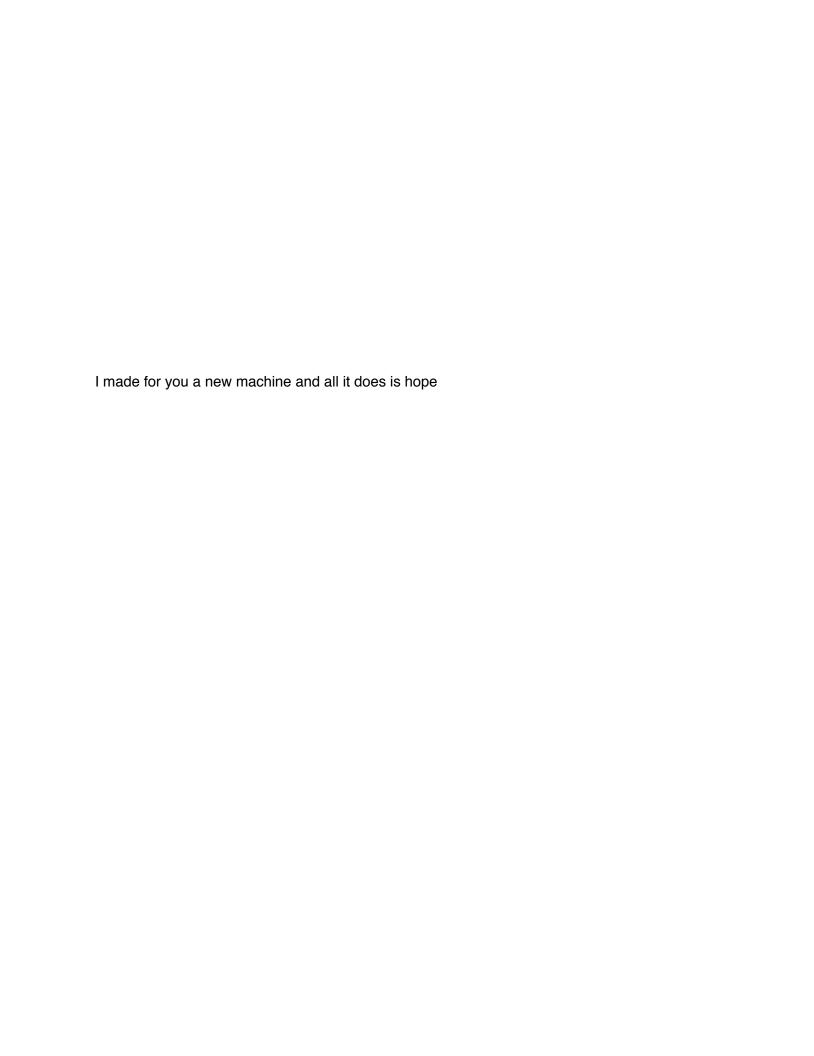












notes on the text

psallite sapienter may be translated as "sing ye wisely."

"ten thousand psalms" contains allusions, however oblique, to: the King James Bible; the Latin Vulgate; the orations of Cicero; Ludwig Wittgenstein's "Blue" and "Brown" books; St. John of the Cross; Meister Eckhart; Ralph Waldo Emerson; the *Apophthegmata Patrum*; the Rule of St. Benedict; and St. Augustine of Hippo. These allusions, most typicaly, consist of small bits of language extensively rearranged, if not outright changed.

The names honored as saints in "confiteor // untitled" are compiled from the database of police violence administered by The Washington Post. It bears noting that these are the names of just two years, 2015-2016.

acknowledgements

Some of these poems have previously appeared, in slightly different form, in *Gramma, Sprung Formal*, and *Incessant Pipe*, as well as in my chapbook *Geoffrey Tungsten's Grievesome River* published by Sybil Press. Many honest thanks to these editors for their consideration and support.