Dream Songs

*For John Berryman*

Henry’s dreams, west bank rivers,

All rivers now only have west banks,

Burned out beds, garden beds where snakes could sleep,

Whispering to ashes the silk of their bellies. We yearn,

Bolster our life full of yearning and mistake it for love,

Mistake love for all things, the fish and the body of the fish,

Just meat that cannot mend a thing. To be atop the tree,

To stare and watch is to be held by the frail branches

That we set ourselves upon. I bury like a dog buries,

For later but later is always forgotten, dispelled and left

To change into a new future, dress down, replace the head,

Rebury a past in this fresh grave. Henry burns the blind house

Remiss at what was inside, rats with matches in their mouths,

A nest of kindling like a life, built for fire that comes in seconds,

Leaves in moments but reeks the chyme of hours.

Blurry pictures of nobody missing, the round table is sat around

With the dozens said missing, the dozens and me, the most here,

The least away, just Henry in the bold seat, at the head of the circle.

The freeway undoes my buttons, leads me to Jane. Her displeasure at me,

That leaves me with nothing much left to hide. My scarred and blind face,

Just Henry on the bench, sleeping below it with hot lines of water

Dripping on my face.