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SAMPLE OF:

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MEGIDDO

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BY

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## Losing Religion in New England

And He said, "Do not draw near here. Take your shoes off your feet, because the place upon which you stand is holy soil." (Exodus 3:5)

But the people walked around  
in plastic sneakers,  
cigarette butts caught in their heels. Morsels  
of fried Oreos and beer bottle caps littered the grounds.

Short barriers had been assembled to guard the graves  
and shape a cobblestone square,  
a somber yard  
for prayer. A woman,

earning her daily paycheck, stood  
on top of the northern wall, speaking  
through a megaphone about the interesting ways  
townsfolk had become corpses.

Mourners had laid hedrons into the walls,  
inscribed with the names of the dead,  
to remember their lives and their

deaths. But the touchstones were becoming rocks.  
The people sat down on the letters  
to ease their tired legs  
and their pant-sweat slowly sloughed off the letters, fading.

They had created a memorial, a sanctuary, an asylum  
for stolen souls. They had planted trees and headstones  
and bodies. They had written down names and lives  
and deaths. And they had built a courtyard so the living

could grieve. They had erected museums and food stalls  
and porta potties: a first-rate free-of-charge attraction  
for kids and adults alike! They had lit up  
prices and graffitied expletives  
and blurbs on the residents' gruesomely  
fantastic deaths. And they had fashioned a hall  
of mirrors so the living could forget about their lives,

and they did.

## Perspective

The leaves trembled before the darkening sky.

They were frightened of it, and they shivered like moths.

They asked if it would eat them whole.

The sky began its descent to settle the matter.

It saw bats flying in the air, and they flew like darkness.

It asked if they were leaves.

The leaves looked back at the weakened sky.

They were aware of it, and they jostled like fluid ghosts.

They asked if it was ready for them.

The sky had a red splinter in it from somewhere.

It looked down to where it had been, and it saw,

darkness rises.

It asked when the leaves became darkness.

## To Be Human

Take me, too.  
Take me to Gomorrah.  
Watch as they,  
ashes, they fall down.  
It's all, well—  
it's all well-intentioned.  
Flesh and breath  
fashioned by the light.

We're born true.  
Were borne through the darkness  
to the tree:  
two to three's half-crown.  
Maiden hid,  
made in His own image.  
We knew more:  
morals, good; and new.

Now born bare,  
bearing two directions.  
One is old:  
Isolde's fatal curse.  
Two is this:  
Alice's growing motto.  
Which is fair?  
The fairest of them all?

We're not just,  
just because we ate her.  
Fruit is flesh,  
fruitless breath is sound.  
We're not vile,  
evil only led us:  
let us know,  
no man is a god.

## On Where I Am Now

What is left at the end of believing?  
Too often, I'm scared  
to ask anyone—*manic* or *maniac*,  
you might say: *these things aren't real, stop*

*scaring yourself over Sunday school.*  
*Do your homework, and leave*  
*the folktales to fiction. Owls*  
*aren't really wise. They're birds*  
*that eat and defecate.*

I roar back like a tidal wave, but  
I'm looking at a pond and it's 4PM  
and ducks are wading on the water.

*Owls don't have to be "wise"*  
*to be important. They're beautiful*  
*already. Stop trying*  
*so hard. I'm*

a boy writing some poetry—get off on Main St,  
liquor store and sushi, get off  
on the sound of my own voice, *egomaniac*.

I need you  
to listen, to see how certain I am  
of our demise, so I'll keep talking—

an ass hee-hawing or a prophet  
speaking. And the Starbucks  
printer paper dean's list diet coke daylight  
can't keep me down. *In pictures,*

*owls' eyes seem to glow in the dark, but that's*  
*just their eyes reflecting the camera's flash. And*  
*that's enough. I hold out, borrowing the harvest*

moon, just for tonight, and a little warmer, just a little less certain,  
I glow back, gleaming lantern, orange in the night.