

If the Tongue Dangled

I don't know why the
tongue doesn't
dangle from the roof
of the mouth.
Branch, not root.
Seems right.

It could rake
instead of flip.
Snatch bugs like a
backhanded whip
as well as
traditional.

Better use of
gravity, always working
downhill. Still
capable
of flipping wads of
whatever
just as far as watermelon
seeds.

I wonder what our words
would sound like,
thrown
from the top for a change.

Would we hear them
hang,
coil any differently,
could we, say, blow
rings of them

like some useless bar trick
meant to captivate
the naïve, or

the innocent others
who think words
crawl up and out
from the gut

instead of dripping down
from the mind
that gloves its control.

Hi, Dad

It's Thanksgiving
time and we really missed you
again.
This one was just about perfect.
all your favorites
and everyone showed up.
The grandkids ran everywhere.
Mark fried a turkey
and after dinner the boys and I
sat around the living room
talking about the war, and you.

I told them how you were once
left for dead.
None of us had more reason
to give thanks than the fact that
you got up off that snowdrift
your squad left you at
when you didn't respond
at all.

instead of freezing on
the battlefield, you
walked yourself to
the field hospital
one arm taped to your chest,
another strapped to a weapon,
enemies surrendering to you,
shrapnel in your eye,
shards raced around your skull
and out the back
as if proof of luck of being
god's favorite.

That pine tree which
sloughed off the snow
and sprung up,
tempting you to
empty a clip into it
might as well have been our
family tree, sensing that moment,
burdened with fate,
when you put one foot
in front of another
all the way to here.

Word Puppets

I wanted a word for
twisting the
magnetics in you
this way and that
but found all the letters
were taken.

So I look for the
numbers that could be
values, or addresses,
for the places such ideas
were parked and waiting.

Pile rocks into word puppets,
draw shadows into
the upside down
of the language,
try to train fire sparks
to swim back to us.

I pass my hands over
everything, letting the
bloodhounds
in my fingertips
sniff for invention.

I fold and unfold my world,
crinkle and smooth again
to expand it beyond
its own nature.

I paint with amnesia and
scrape with rediscovery.

Allow myself to be translated
by other versions of me.

The word I may have
been looking for
is not silk-shred
but a third cousin of it
in the negative accent
of the missing songs.

Listen again.
Please.