

## Aristophanes, If Not Halves

We were keys to one another, which meant

We were keyholes to one another, which meant

We were keys with keyholes in ourselves—

Alone in one closed system, completeness

Was perfectly out of reach—

In another

Perfectly tempting

## Two of a Kind

What if Narcissus were heard  
Not by Echo  
That hapless bird  
Humming out of league

But by a second plucky boy—  
Two languors of light caught like  
The wan in want, the shallow grin  
Of an infinity mirror, sure

We story happiness not to stay  
With those who look too close—  
Alone in a closed system  
Peeking through our jealousies

With binoculars, adjusting  
To the manifest of nectar—  
The möbius of beauty  
Turning on itself

## Dao(t)

By time you knew the way, you knew the way  
Wasn't the way—

Alone in a closed system,  
Right as three left turns—you couldn't take

The leftovers home  
Because that would be evidence—

It was easy for me to nail a string to the wall  
And call it art and call it difficult

So I used the hammer's end  
We hear less about, curved and composed

To take the nail out, to let the string be  
As it was—strong, stranded—holding on to paint

I loved as long as error—eros as a rose  
Petaling under water, reaching the surface hungry

# Nobodaddy

Jeffrey Dahmer blamed “the lie” of evolution—  
That we came from slime and when we die  
“That’s it” —

Alone in a closed system

A brain with its desires—  
How could one go wrong  
When there’s no two?

Filling the frontal lobes

With acid, holes drilled in their heads  
To keep these handsome creatures  
Alive, in the narrowest sense, his

Body, surrounded by body—

In the end, lacking “avenues,”  
He opened up, settled into prison life—  
Courteously reconciled with his father

Jesus, always perfectly fresh

From the distance of redemption  
Carved at the joints, dehiscid:  
*This is my body broken for you*

## Alone in a Closed System

There was only one beautiful side of your skin—

There was only one beautiful side of your skin?  
Underneath was a thick weepy network of unknowns—

Proxy-fight or transcendence-twisted?—

Without transgression, your naked body  
Looked perfect to me—still

Perfectly clothed to me

# Recursion

1

The house animals  
Look at us again

With their Rilkean awareness—  
Which is to say, awareness

No name can claim  
While we disclaim

Feed after brush  
Sweep after rush

*We are not your gods—*  
But it sounds all the same

Clang, the same hanging  
Query mark to brains

Without language to press on  
What reads as a question

2

Could it be the same again  
With our curious noise

Offered up-ankle  
To the invisible: god knows

If god knows or hears or cares  
To exist, our love torn up, the dish

Of milk willfully spilled—  
The dash into walls—

The misspellings most of all  
Of *wrist* and *wisk*, *good* and *ghost*,

As *risk* and *wish*, *god* and *host*, wondering  
Would words ever be right?—

Alone in a closed system  
We say, they seem

## Conventional Wisdom

On the way to old age, to make it  
You'd better look like a skeleton

Hide in plain sight  
And meet your end by degrees—

Was this true, and if true  
Was it worth being true?

The deep breath of baking pizza crust  
On the long run: the one song

That is enough and not enough—  
Infinitely good / enough, I wonder—

To last suggests an ending, an ending  
Suggests something still in process—

A bending back, looking back  
I saw you two passengers in one seat

Kissing at a stop sign—  
I kept running like I had a route

But here I am, still out on a limb  
Toe-holding a little Malebranche

To think what makes us up  
Moment-to-moment

Isn't momentum— isn't atoms or energy—  
Isn't God so named and overnamed

But mystery reclaimed from skeleton keys—  
A better idol, an icon we may have classed

But can't be broken if we're to last—  
The earth, alone in a closed system?—

Its tensions allowed to be reverberatory  
Lovers, tenuous and strenuous

Alike, transverse-pliable like  
A sinusoidal wave

Made of reversals—rehearsals forward—  
One way or another a spiral is progress?

The circle is broken? The kiss is planted—  
The run is finished—The night opens up

To the sky, its prize won and unwinnable  
As a backdrop, as a showcase fretwork

## Motion Machine

*Sedentary: cemetery:* allies for a reason  
That life is in motion means  
*Rest* means death, and yet

A kinetic sculpture like this one  
On the upper floor of Logan Airport  
Calms in its turns and trickles—  
Its xylophonic tweets and claves—  
Its rubber balls, bearings in no hurry

To be a clock: It is not  
Meant to mean delay: It is not  
Encouragement to worry: It is us

Alone in a closed system, with guidelines  
We made for Sisyphus, this time to play  
At highest ape, this looking glass as-if  
A view, this motor lift and roller feat  
Within this luggage-handled pause

Collective, then  
Collected into queue—  
The pattern of our chosen straws—

# Gegenschein

The sky still slowly rolls  
Its tongue around the melting cube

The wandering photons minstrels  
Of a tall true tale called  
The Big Bang: unlike most makings  
It seems there was no delay

Between seed and bud  
Between bud and bloom

No delay between milk and egg  
The oven infinitely hot  
The cake baked on conception  
Our virgin birth from quantum foam

Uncanny-quiet, the universe  
Just now, as now goes

About to accelerate its  
Expansion faster and faster  
So fast that someday light  
Will not connect us

Island to island all  
Lost on ourselves

The archipelago shrunk  
From a body of burning stars  
To ours and only hours  
We're just quick enough

To have discovered being  
Followed up its trick

With a flight from the scene  
Of what worked as the word as  
Speed is what an airplane needs  
To be a human bird

In its catch and keep: you may  
Hold on while we accelerate

It will be over in a moment's  
Hungry, lonely closure—line by line  
Grove by grove, now by now  
A window view, some gegenschein