

ANIMAL KINGDOM

Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me bleed, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
“The Collar” - George Herbert

“Sir,” she replied, “even the dogs
under the table eat the children’s scraps.”
Mark 7:28 NEB

1 *Survival Of The Fittest*

I wish I moved like a beast, brutally
obedient to all animal law,
haunch and foreleg drawn taut to beautifully

strike prey or take a female. Smooth on paws
of a cat, I would pad through a silence
altered when lust and hunger spread my jaws

to a roar, thoughtless in the violence
stringing sinew to bone, which iron and sperm
whisper blindly through my core. If I sensed

estrus, the urgent, red tempo of germ
cells, and mounted in a surge sharp as fire,
the female's ruff in my mouth rolling warm,

and if I stalked through the dark unattired
in wisdom but full of the awful grace
that every animal bears like desire,

I would not chafe this diction of restraint
against my skin until I am erased.

2 *Antistochastic*

Since I am a beast it would make sense
to move like one, to drawl the language
of the skin across this present tense

slowly, dripping with sunlight, languid
in my pleasure. Sleek as a porpoise
leaping, muscling up from liquid,

I should flex my blood with no purpose
beyond the kill or sex. But strictures
inflect me and I loudly practice

the law scribed in this richly textured
cassock, this word made meat that I wear
past imperfect, fractalled Scripture

coded along procreation's hairs,
chromosomes raveled like asps and smooth
as adders, where, latent in word-pairs,

a lion dies of a broken tooth,
a lamb frisks in the garden of youth.

3 *Knowledge*

Attired in wisdom, I am struck
stupid. Commerce in the lingo
of squander renders my nut shucked,

money-brained. Wild as a dingo,
blood pelts whole vocabularies
past a future tense with jingos

and hucksters, power and glory,
preachers and prophets and cut-rate
retail sales. Mine offertory

biddeth high unto Big Mac. Great
value. Full meal deal. Extra cheese.
Communion and fries consecrate

glut. Numbed by abundance, I feast
against the death my dearth betrays.
I am the kind of bartered beast

who knows, and thus must choose to pray,
who, knowing, forgets to be praise.

4 *Moral Animal*

This narrow kingdom of death
defines my prayer. When germ cells
encrypt scripture and a deaf,

blood-hardened penis retells
laws of nature, when a bleached
blonde sags to all fours and sells

lots drawn on her womb, her breached,
Golgotha portal hammered
at by three-piece-suits who preach

money, and when I stammer
my want, hungry and alone,
what harsher desire clamors

through the harsh desire I own?
I praise from narrow domains
hollowed in tablets of bone

because these peptides contain
living, as the law ordains.

5 *Cryptich*

My soul has a bone-splint.
I pray the prayers in genes.
I repent my blue-print

for flame and tongue. I sing
my want in the inner
sanctum of want. I glean

fallen crumbs, a sinner
claiming procreation
rights, or at least dinner.

My rough incarnation
slouched in that instant God
set self-replication

sets God in motion. Flawed,
body split from the holy
as if a crypt for awe,

molecular, lonely,
I bear God, slowly.

6 *Animal of the Cloth*

Wearing the vesture
of a dog, I've humped
among investors

in the fuck biz. Pimps,
and their prodigals
in high heels and simp-

ers, weave madrigals
of silk and honey,
promise miracle

stiffeners, money-
sleek love or at least
good times. All moony-

eyed, I've pierced the greased
birth canal and touched
Golgotha's bright beast

bleating praise, the breach
mitosis completes.

7 *Meiosis*

Each gamete chipped
off the old block,
each image spit-

shined and half-cocked
haploid as Christ,
each soul unfrocked

by body and twiced
nicely, each skinned-
alive and sliced-

in-two gene-skein
coded with ad
campaigns absconds

with one half Dad
and Mom, burgles
the crypt of sad

news, those squiggles
Jesus juggles.

8 *Oracle*

If the knit
between soul
and flesh sets

soul equal
to flesh, I'd
lool easy,

the lush juice
of a plum
smeared across

my tongue. Glazed
purple skin
offers praise

enough, burst
in my mouth,
if I trust

the dark fruit,
my sweet heart.

9 *Broken Word*

Blood-thumped
iamb
unslump.

Enjamb-
ment breaks
my I

AM a-
cross lines
that ex-

alt mol-
ecules,
the syl-

lables
this an-
imal

conforms
to form.

10 *After The Assay*

Bro
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by

Dar
win's
wis

dom
I
claim

de
sire
is

blazed
breath:
faith

less
death.