

cattail cast tattles Till tale,
lowing low along the hollow.
crickets chirrup and ribbits lick-up.
what's chucked the 'hatchie swallow.

skin scow skiffs upon pond scum skin
going slow along the hollow.
now may mayfly alight brown brow.
what's chucked the 'hatchie swallow.
inexplicable walls—uncooperative roses

—the black out—the sirens—air cracking with each rushed
inhale—this is the waiting—cross legs and hard concrete
steps—skin punctured on crooked nails pounded into
stained planks halfway—rusted heads stuck out like
the dull backs of whales in this placid ocean—for what
for what what—the armageddon—only the unreachable
punishment meant to cleanse the simple deeds of our regret
—counting the flies around the dog's bloodied numb ears—
black and red in the standing cling of the too long day—
unable to cut off the lost pieces of his body that can
no longer give him pain—the flies the flies—wings charged
with lightning tapping red rivers inside dead continents—
they have filled too many barrels with the weight
of the living—and the storm that finally comes—
unprepared—droughts more important than needing—they
fly away or imagined to be so quick to disappear

—he no longer bangs into new interruptions—inexplicable
walls—the calls he tries to catch with broken ears—choosing
still stoic and quiet in the rain that falls from the one
direction that he hasn't tried—tail sinking in such paced
measures—not unlike my father burying fish guts around his
uncooperative roses—the water rising in the grass of his
feet—drowned marks of his life in light—he chooses still—
he chooses to sink into the ocean he never imagined he could
touch—look dad—look—i am no longer afraid to swim—or
is that just the crushing of my teeth inside this mouth
too tight for repenting—stoic quiet in the storm unaware
that the tremors on his haunches rising through the knots
of neglected fur give him away—howling what he remembers
to be the sound of his sister's name
—as i hide my hands in the water—but i am found i am found
again—in this shelter of black disaster i have clutched—
and painted my face with bare knuckle punches until i was
more transparent than american black—i am found in the storm
that won't give me reprieve from the calling—the calling i
follow into the water—squat and ready—he takes enough
steps to bury his head in my legs—praying to god my hands
are strong enough to squeeze him to eden—promise promise me
or is it just the thunder—yes—night stagger and great
burnings—it is gentle to kill in misery—i promise
regardless having misheard prayers before—that it will be
still it will be silent it will be cold tiles and scents we
will never forget—and the hair on my leg moving then still
against the wind against the last exhale of his nose

—against this fan hung centered on white ceiling spinning—
drunk wilderbeast—and his ghost his scabbed ghost swaying
blind and sweet above our naked bodies—my wife dear wife
sleeping in a pillow of angry mothers and misdirected
fingers igniting more than this mount of dead dragons—
shielding her crying soul that was once saved with a skinny
raised hand—with a turned body—with the expanse
of her back that knows no broken lines—knowing knowing—
isn't knowing more than we were ever meant to handle—dragging
my nails over her skin waiting waiting for the storm of the blind

—as i get off the bed trying not to fall—seeing my leg
beneath that i can no longer feel—the slowness of buckling
into one's own burial—the sad fragment of some truncated
wish—i know it is so—loving myself for the first time
—the scar under my ring of gold—shedding blood again
on the page—to pretend that it is just my words that are dying.

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chiwan choi

Chiwan Choi is a writer, editor, teacher, and publisher. He has been a member of the Los Angeles Poets & Writers Collective since 1989 and his poems and essays have also appeared in numerous journals and magazines, including ONTHEBUS, Esquire, and American Book Jam in Tokyo. Chiwan's first book of poetry, *The Flood*, will be published by Tia Chucha Press in April, 2010. He is a regular in the Los Angeles literary circuit, often invited as a featured poet at readings at the Hotel Cafe in Hollywood, the legendary Beyond Baroque in Venice, and the Los Angeles Central Library. After a two-year stint in New York, where he received an MFA in Dramatic Writing from the Tisch School at NYU, Chiwan returned to Los Angeles where he and his wife, Judeth Oden, launched a new publishing company to feature Los Angeles writers, Writ Large Press, in March of 2008. He lives in Downtown Los Angeles with his wife and their dog, Bella. You can follow his writing on his blog, www.chiwanchoi.com, on www.writlargepress.com, and on *The Nervous Breakdown* (www.thenervousbreakdown.com)

