

Brooks Haxton

ISAAC'S ROOM, EMPTY, 4 A.M.

From the dark tree at his window
blossoms battered by the rain
fell into the summer grass, white
horns, all spattered down the throat
with purple ink, while unseen birds,
with creaks and peeps
and whistles, started
the machinery of daybreak.

COOKSTOVE

after Heraclitus

Fire kept loosening into flames
the sunlight
trees had woven into wood.

BLAST AT THE ATTIC WINDOW

The mind
at the top
of the attic stair
wheeled
in the galactic arms
of a snowstorm lit
by streetlights
from below.
Inside a spinning cloud
of stars, the mind,
in an intricate
swirl of ice,
leaned forth,
gyroscopically true,
vibrating
at the top of the stair.

SHIPWRECK: LAST THOUGHTS OF AN ENTOMOLOGIST

Bugs flitted over the face of a ghost
that looked up out of the sea,
his own face at the stern of the lifeboat.
Sea skaters meant mangroves, islands,
water, maybe, you could drink.
If he could stand up, he would
scan for where. But now
he had to think. Bug, *bugge*,
used to mean a boogiemán
or bugbear. Something vague
passed underneath his face.
He was thinking: bugs,
true bugs, included bed bugs,
water scorpions, and toe-biters.
His image in the water smiled.
In Baja, the ferocious water bug
may bite a person's toe.
A person may, for pleasure,
bite another person's toe.
The two of them in bed may coo,
or moan. Inside his face
he felt the wrench of tears,
but no tears came. Three hundred
fathoms down, in total dark,
in almost freezing calm,
a sow-bug-like crustacean, longer
than his forearm, moved its limbs.