

from *God/he*

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the poem “Three Snapshots of the Trinity upon Christ’s Death on the Cross” was short-listed for the [2004 Utmost Christian Writers Annual Poetry Contest](#)

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GOD

i.

he's a miserable being
stuck with the knowledge
of their secret sin
a doctor who
treats chlamydia
before lunch
when he closes his eyes
he cannot
shake
the image of the gunshot wound
to the head of their whole race
he cannot wash his collar
or chin
splattered as they are
with blood
he's an unhappy being
with a front row seat to
madness

ii.

love
what a dangerous thing
to put in their hands
that could
tear apart the world
with one small touch

iii.

from the looks of it
you don't seem a vulnerable
roughed-up God
one small bird fallen from its nest
feathers plucked
mercilessly
by the pastor's
son down the street

iv.

he could kill you with one short breath

snap your bones like celery
he could locate your heart
and give it a final, terrible blow

v.

he is capable of such kind things
a gentle hand that does not fear
the boundary of touch
he breaches cold pools of isolation
softly nudging the soul to hope again

vi.

and you put your
thumb on it
a strong
jointed thumb
turned it
deeply into
the grain of my
flesh
kneaded sore
muscle like
dough

vii.

what confidence
you must have
in your
name
that you
would allow
silence

HE

i.

as a linguist
concerns himself with
syllables
thinks about palate and
placement of tongue
he looks at his life
or those parts he is able to see

there are words
he does not yet know
a language he
hears but cannot understand
or speak
he imagines a
new vocabulary of
being

ii.

he thought
words from God
would quiet him
unfold his mind
like one clean
cloth
nourish him
until friday

iii.

he sees himself slightly
like a soul
caught in too much skin
he finds himself remembering
moments of his life with
no apparent significance
he sits over these memories
fishing pole in hand
longing to hook
a silver fish

iv.

at risk of falling endlessly into his own intellectual pit
or rummaging for hours through the pawn shop of thought
he chooses to say, louder than cynicism or wit,
that God is truth
and that is why he needs him

v.

he wakes
stunned
toes curled over
the edge of
his own mind
a goldfish circling
its bowl
to the same
new place
one faint
memory of choice
the decision to pray

vi.

who knew which words
would grow inside him
spread like a tumor
hidden and hungry
in the dark

THREE SNAPSHOTS OF THE TRINITY UPON CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS

i.

earth-weary
heart
stone flung
fury gripped
around the armrest
of the
throne
ready to
slam the door
of heaven
bolt it shut
grief
the lump
caught in his throat
unable to
steal a look
at the vacant
seat
beside his clenched
right hand

ii.

hurled mercilessly into
the deep
moth-eaten
underworld
swallowed by
anguish
punishment creased
and carved into his
body for
offenses so unlike him:
thieving murder sex crimes
tongue
working out words
like the pit
of bitter fruit
words
made hollow by a
blind, starless

universe
back turned to his
cries
hell the
shape
for those words
to fill

iii.

tormented
like an amputee
scratching at
absent limbs
fooled
by the impulse
for embrace
guts turned
inside-out
like a styrofoam cup
thrown to the
street
mad with the
taste of desire