

# syntaxicon

Steven John Thompson

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#### In fond memory of

Jack McManis

who spied Hart Crane and William Carlos Williams in

my flight with metaphor and

John Haag

who espied my fight with enjambment as

a wondrous winnable war



#### POEMS

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## justaposition

I read of poets and what a crew we are time travelers often inducing nonsense seduced by the future after death collapsed like plants or pretty flowers night gently shuts to plyful whispers.

The preacher says Abraham was a bright businessman Abraham was is not for some of us sufficient yet by faith whom faith calls up yonder he looked for a city whose builder and settles for the unknown was God.

Funny man so quick to jump I none the wiser anywhere but here had never contemplated suicide or desperate thought how still peace seeing through my fearful eyes I foolishly you see cannot understand such hatred.

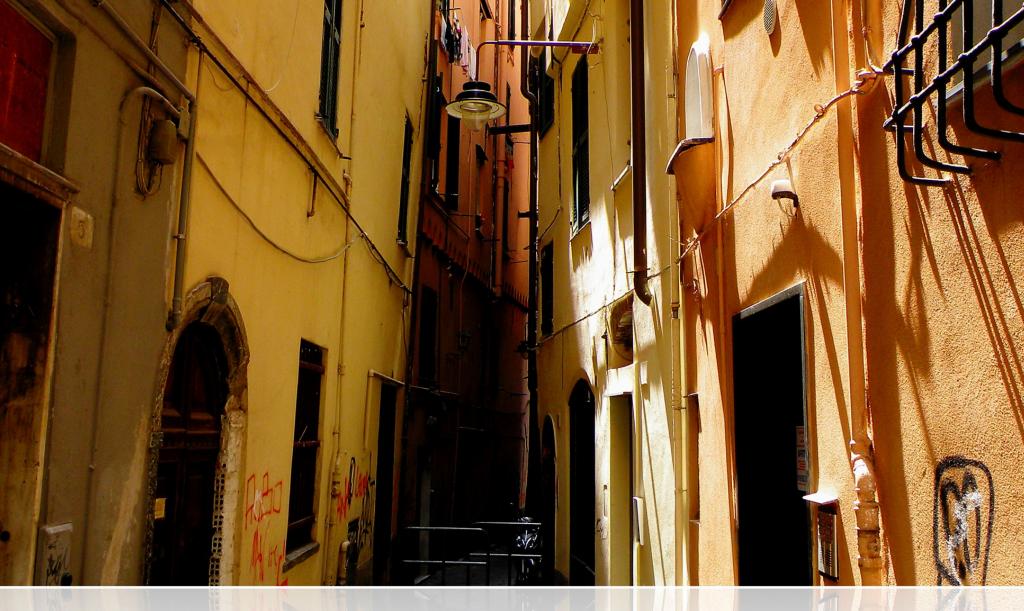
Condemnation is not on my list of virtues what can be so ugly in life but poets mainly poets death swallows hell all known perceptions who live life to the fullest strangling on blinding man every little word.



#### man eating ants

I walked these boards a young
man bare feet followed Julie
Dohr from school several hundred
miles my furthest trip from
home I even worked where she
worked but in Kitchen No. 1 making
clams casino lobsters thermidor oysters
Rockefeller and crab cakes when
I went into the walk-in once outside
the room where fat women pitter and
patter meat from zillions of battered
crusty crabs into shapes similar to

hockey pucks when turning to leave spilled two full trays while cleaning up looked up to the face of an owner who knelt to take his delicate cakes from the walk-in drain and placed them on their trays quite gingerly he pittered and pattered them like the fat women I passed outside going back to Kitchen No. 1 so I ate there only once ever though failed to order crab and now these crusty creatures trapped inside their hollow shells fat memories battered frantically asea by scurrying little insect thoughts that gnaw and tear and shriek and devour till nothing's left but brutality banging on broken boards determined not to be just a man eating ants.



## Wednesday Wander

It must be only a mile one way but clichéd
I walk the dog this dogdayafternoon and
question the motives behind wrought iron
bars covering doors and windows of so
many neighborhood bungalows.

Many are decorative enough to be works of art yet who would stalk the inside peering out through steely bars if not the fearfully guilty—the threatened?

And who would dare threaten amidst these

vast throes of white lilacs sweet scores of bougainvillea birds of paradise even plumb wild geraniums?

I live here for night jasmine bespeaks my vulnerable mind purging any threatening forces pounding irreverently hard against my most impenetrable entrances.



#### Advice to the Lovelorn

This guy in the booth in front of me is built like a small pachyderm scaling rashes on the back of his neck these coffee shops are full of broken people who lived here and are dying now being offered their favorite chemical blends on the way out and convinced it is the water cancering their lives while I eat their donuts and pizza and see their fats reflected in my face in this monitor and know one good flu will burn it all off but these are the ruminations of youth lost of love of the unrequited the gone opportunity noted while passing through these small towns in Pennsylvania named after German and Swiss counterparts adjacent to those named after coal mining industries where fuelish fracking and roman calcoholicism rule the

poor more now than in any earlier life yet more significantly there must be some solution to this leprosy whether self-imposed or otherwise this unwieldy sadness steadily punctuated with false hopes that go nowhere in this rising destiny of failing flesh this son-of-a-bitch of a storm that curses each horizon in our courses of progress delineated betwixt the sacred and profane they're cursing Obama they're cursing their government they're cursing the Christ in between mouthfuls of plastic pastry particles and creamy GMOs so angry at the way things were and angry at the way things are and angry on the intricate way back to the dirt that inexplicably must smother them end to end.



#### bro-kin

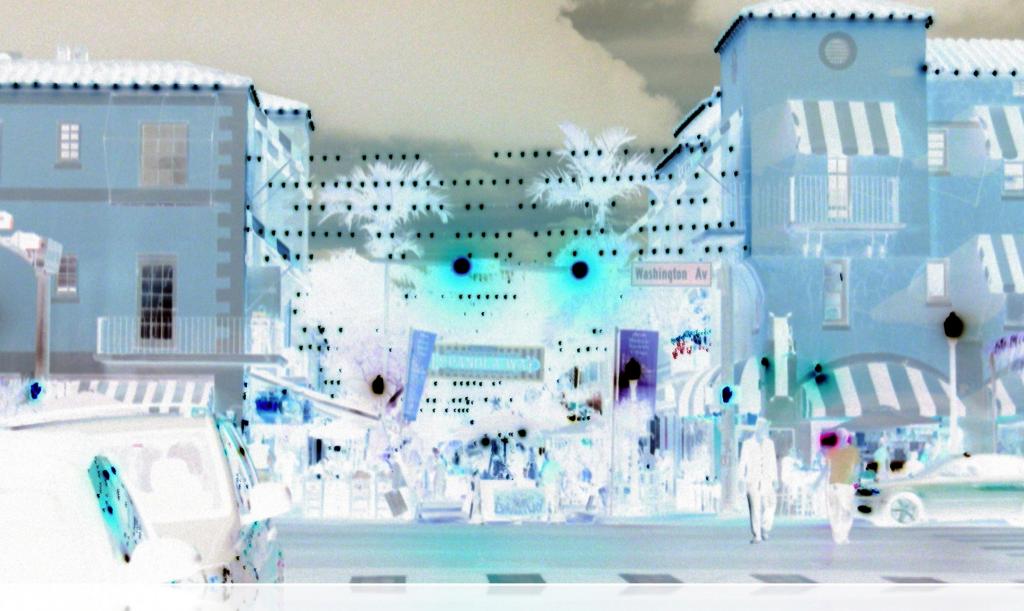
Ariadne Diaz-Marroquín rings my cell to invite me over and away from the lone coming cold threatening my broken window but there is no invitation to succor this bitterness wildly staring from its empty seat across from mine despite the cook-peppered crunchy cob of corn that so intrigues my upper lip and gentle golden liquid butter weeping over my mashed potatoes there is no running from any cold nowhere to go there is no.

Yet we only see this festering this striving this unletting go that keeps haunting through the agings across these

great divides above this gross ingratitude this is no earnest henley enraged in storms against a god and due enter-nity no bold poetic taunt towards blackness no searchlight flicks on walls in caves of shadows but a steady digital slap of electronic awareness and surveillance always ahead beyond complexities of a single simple tile mosaic beyond the clap and the technobabble an exponential instant shudder of flux this rising extremity of clamor and physique of deeply pushed data of iphonic sleuthery sensonic touch this pulsing frustration beating us outwardly to expanding holes and inside with whips of diligence for the endless youthful rising is a narcotic hypnotic carmina burana chilling the nothing tomb as a crystal blue martini glass sits frozen and waits for its dizzying elixir of crushed bone and tattered tissue and genome headed for that big surprise the way of all flesh the ensuing bitter or bidden bliss in the coming of no cold lapping at the memory lapsed by awakenings in the wisped mortality of some encephalitic surge of missing of messing of monument of monumental non-movement of more of and for everything moored to time and

rhythm and sinew and rhizome and traces of distances found lying in the depths of some gutter perhaps alongside one crowded supermarket cart that has escaped electronic surveillance boundaries for now for living supermarket carts.

Dylan taught us everything is broken but wisdom says it's this pretentious pastiche this unrelenting unwieldy mystique it's unfamiliar familial betrayal and turncoat testicles residing in kin it's this unforgiving syn tax the blistered the chronic the screwed the moronic the eschewed the demonic the waiting the coming cold crying over it's over it's empty gone byebye so worthless so meaning less this nothingness beckons beyond all past all God Nos a torrid sea of ceaseless beings broken bro-kin.



#### i maiMnid am

Today the world cups for the needy and the takers run over with generous gifts for any salvation any peace or respite the prayers and endless pleas rise for the helpless and even the hypocritical silent requests that help keep our churches country clubs instead of hospitals yet you haven't thought of that now you can hear her coming towards you on the same stretch of sidewalk not in direct confrontation at least not this known occasion and she doesn't just tear at the sensory overwhelms of this hypered day's experience for she runs deeper than any tear or rip or lesion and lower than any gap or abyss beyond all practical

human resolution lucky for you or call it sweet destiny maybe release your breath for now you are one of the fortunate sons since she is lost and to you right now and taken over by some other realm in cursings and sulphured blasphemies in obscene skyward gestures you stole from a glance typical of stranger humans who cross in similar scenario yet you had to look since her figure was a starlet's long straight hair in her approach framing her hidden till turned twisted face shockingly weathered to the bone from the legion moving with her within her what would appear to be insanity and you know darn well this is not subjection of kings resigned to years of eating grass you know damn well insanity doesn't look like this or act like that or roar or hate and spew like that but volcanoes do and dirty bombs yet she has snapped her focused gaze past you untouched by all her given gifts unscathed by platitudes or bequests beyond the care of any human cause while she must be if she's to ever know release she is not the subject of anyone's prayers no not the lilting dancing daughter arrived here full of lifetime schemes no memorial to Mulholland Dr but behold the Babylon blasted mothering whore of

ten thousand tempests screaming at the top of their unlungs out of hers for those not keenly listening just for you a sanely strolling newly shaken passerby in Miami.



### air apparent

it was worth the rain for most the day to surprisingly step through to this wonderfully wet world so much Magritte yet more splashes of Parrish clouds dripped with precious metals here on the side of the bridge where I walk I cannot help but pierce with stark distinction of dualities the eastern sky smoldering under a mighty autumn tempest inking the river an industry like the Dickens off the peripheral hemisphere arcing my left shoulder.

while plating the water as Maxfield
would with a fury of laced electric
strata thoughts gently nudge me beyond
the sunset to a more perfect world yet
tottering over this massive span a
scale tips in favor of its giant eyelids
leaning weights at max his pieces of
eight slipping slowly through violet
clouds drifting violently past the sun till
falling like concrete wheels wrapped round
steel clusters tons of iron crashing into the
breathtaking void this bridge divides.



#### In 2004 we saw in Kabul

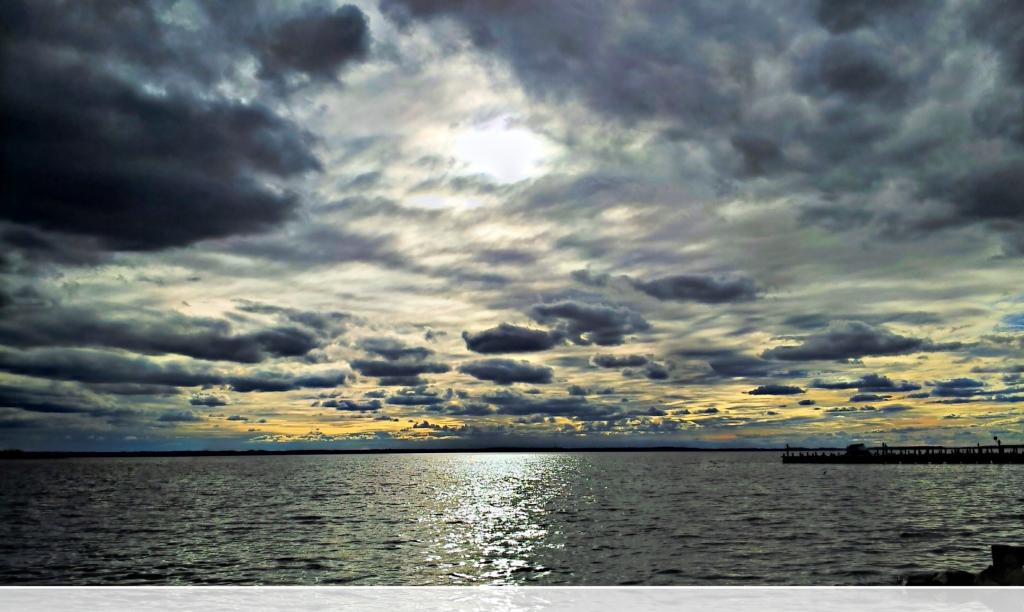
faces towering over then justly tortured faces of death shiny new faces of freedom faces of hope faces unveiled clean-shaven

the face of a kite now flies freely high in the face of what is left of murder forced to face the sound of music while joyous faces once lost behind burka or scruff dance down dirt streets of taliban death

and whose death is this anyhow but cohorts to evil for this history this stream of sorrow now lying muddied face less or running scared to Kandahar

the face of one little girl sports a smile the promise of a future relief of sorts a cautious intangible glimmer that until this day held its breath beneath poppied desert winds hurled with double awe against a distant peaceful shore

wandering through the dust of death atop tank and cruiser beam faces of triumph faces of exultation faces forbidden once hidden revealed



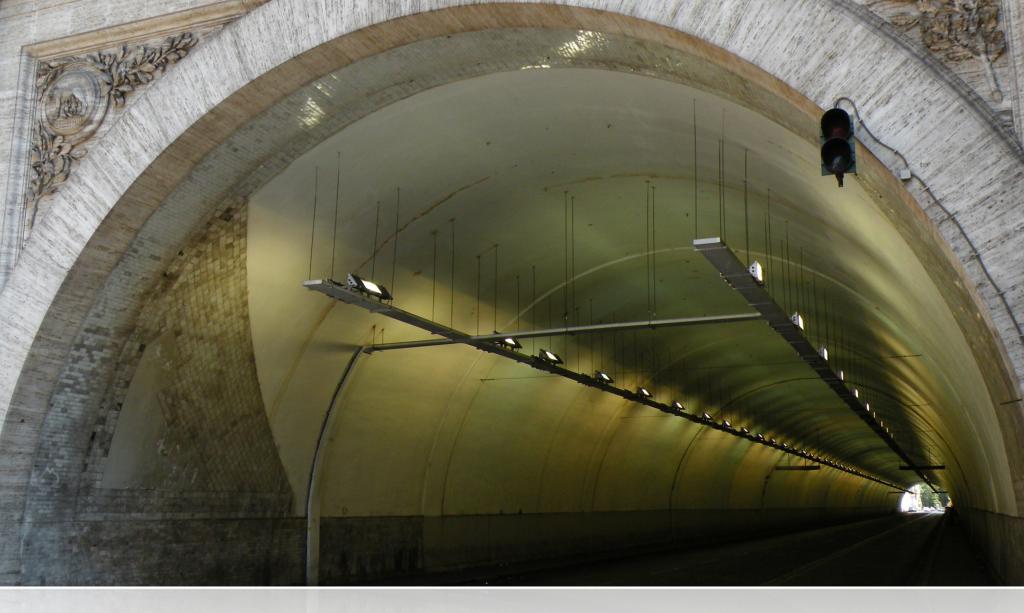
#### chainsaw eulogy

The Mexican has trashed the bougainvillea leaving a couple dozen blossoms and a lone stem bent skyward. Takemitsu is dead though his baton waves on despite being cut down like a weed this chainsaw morning while this afternoon Susan wept.

I enjoyed the bougainvillea too but she she lived for it yet I never knew she hated Mexicans on and on about his merciless ways she would have left them

intact a steady stream of bright crimson bliss carelessly caressing that ugly wire fence now anyone can see in and she takes no comfort knowing it will grow too thick again.

Takemitsu is dead though I hear him swelling in the seas of a distant orchestra pulled out by the roots on another chainsaw morning in Ventura windows wide open his arms chaotically surging over our storming airwaves the bougainvillea hanging on for dear life.



## tunnel vision

suppose the wind lay silent mercury smooth in your cupped white palms

suppose your smile would stir its sweet invisible breath in hypnotic trances of delight

suppose your pleasure frees your grasp only to kiss your face in wafting pillars of light perfume suppose your treasure lingers about you longer than lost love you once had known and hoped would forever endure

suppose the wind inside you now would rouse your soul to unseen strength and fan the wisdom of your precious intellect

suppose a gang of priests kicked the wind out of you before burying your palms with hosanna spikes pounded deep into the heart of a nearby tree



### opus maximus

in a moment you passed by as just a
blur across my vision nameless and
I realized whoever you were from my
past was not important because eventually
we would connect even as I cross this
walkway and the sun drops shadows over
the snow covered grass I reflect on how you
really were not there but will be one day surely
not exactly in the literal place of there but
near enough to recognize and your face will
fill this void replace the temporary blinding and
eventually we will connect not as if some new

age revelation were upon us because I did not see you there that way but only as a memory of someone who would one day be near enough for me to laugh with and recall how once I saw us eventually connect not in any physical sense but definitely in the physical where we might converse as old

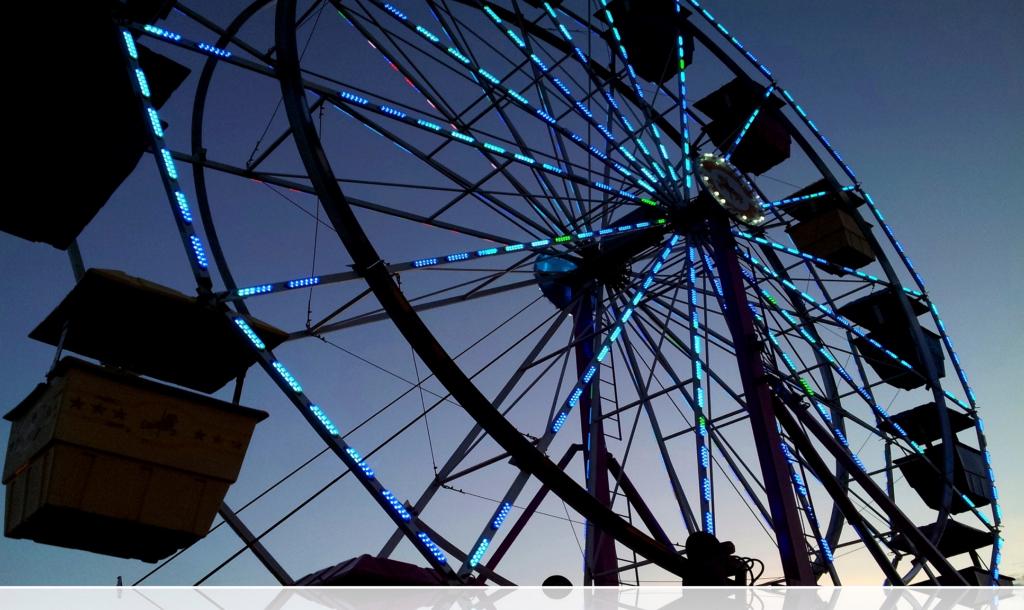
friends we are though not as old friends really are but as we are new yet old because we have both entered other physical worlds since and eventually we must connect if nothing more than to reflect on how we thought about each other often or perhaps viewed one another as nothing more than a blur or shadow crossing one another's visual periphery waiting and wondering how one day we might connect even like a fetus or an embryo almost stillborn but only in the sense of still waiting for our pending births while trapped in time and its elements till we eventually connect and we reflect upon those incidents that

touched our distanced lives since last connected.

I am often struck to interrupt my life and question how it gets like this so bizarre confined to one small planet yet no talk here of fiber optic telephones telepathy or dark Jungian recesses of the derelict but a simple thought that eventually we would connect not in some cosmic chance or predestination though almost as a prophecy engorged and pregnant patiently waiting while holding myth a mystery until some bright epiphany wakes our trappings in the embryo lying still yet sucking life from some wild pomegranate source which is but may not necessarily be sucking on another since we can structure life solely around the detriment of self not connect. ing to anything but nanotubes we must some day for sure for more than just to feed our

frenzy and again I do not see you that way for you to me are a pleasant touch I yearn

for not with passion or intensity but as the finger finds a silent crack in the womb a bleeding not in gushes of blood but a steady stream of light flowing in search of some hidden crevice and waiting till time itself will stop to connect on facebook linkedin or twerk or tweet to this miracle of birth pulsing its beat through strewn muscle flesh sinew bone synapse until finally screaming we eventually connect not waiting any longer to be born of no small happenstance out we come dangling some taught invisible cord wondering if one day even we unwittingly will be forced to throw in the sweet placenta of our defeat sweat soaked bleeding inside and gnashing pearly teeth before being totally disconnected.



## your death my dream

riding the same ride side by
side I touched you with news of
your dying as we all are you once
really said yet even faster I can
see until I woke to see
you as you were in
September in the arms of
your living room wife heart
arrested dead in the ambulance
cry of a faraway day to break into
pieces the finest of chinas to night
fall into my deepest of dreams



#### abandon meant

Were you my father would you buy me the moon or abandon me from the womb let others love me through this life while you defend those who pay you more than well enough to do so would you have spoken to me maybe 10 times total in my entire life to date which by the way had I been Jesus would have put me in the grave last year too late for concern on your part as you plan to

put the grandkids through school or would you care less that I may be fighting tooth and nail to get an honest education and may very well never get one maybe would never have seen your face and had that one specific episode to recall for the rest of my life had I not taken initiative by the throat to head to California some 15 countless years ago?

Wait. You're not my father.

You're just a filthy rich lawyer who holds his breath and sinks into fine rose otto leather when he dreams long distances or spies another Pennsylvania postmark.

#### **Terminal**

Thoughts now trail in wisps of what was once your poor excuse for arms enshrouding my neck fiercely locking together clinging for life as if suspended from a massive girder steadily whirling in time and space spinning and whirring encircling some lovesick orb somewhere beyond the sweltering pain of this our dying room.

Your dead weight hunches me in rising slowly your face a breath away in sync with mine though yours breathless my back the crane that chains you from your troubled quarry pulls your dark eyes hollow as midnight sun into mine while silently you're questioning everything.

Till eternity comes I won't forget my jerks from sleep at 4 am your anxious cries for popsicles your slurping wondrous juices over blistered lips across the remains of

your rat torn tongue refreshing your orifice streams of soothing colored ice flowing across one huge black canker from the chemo.

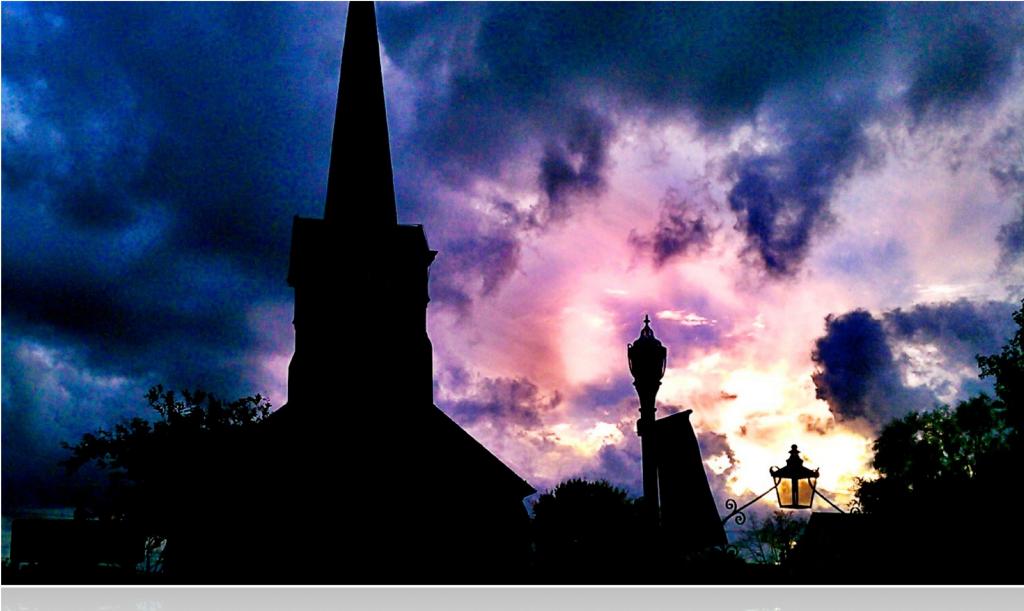
I talk with you melt into your drain we disbelieve as the blood of fire pours over our heads our bludgeoned hearts till Jesus comes you settle down and I go to my room lie there sweaty from your dreams before morning steals through your mini-blinds and I'm forced to rise exhausted take to your side to rub your feet swollen as the sea.

You strain for words for strength your eyes enveloping the air for everything including me your gentle song all that remains what I retain inside where worlds collide in gasps of smoke not as once filled you and me we have no words no choice you have no voice your gaze beyond the void then back at me.

I leave your side but for the day return to find you curled on the floor asleep your fragile frame no longer in control and yet you're past embarrassment now beyond all vanity as sirens roar the air hangs hard I tell you to hang on and you agree before I hear your last request to sit you up those splendid eyes for the very last time forging steel into mine and once for all I fail you.

Because technicians now are in control and me I'm out of control not really sure just what you said and you you're being carried out the door upon your back all yielded to this afternoon scene a stick rushed down the street and out of sight but only till I drive myself behind arrive and wait for the time I'll fight my last on earth with you.

Because you struggle with your mask and no one sees your air suppress until an aide becomes aware and oceans spread your peaceful lips peeled and raw black eyes deep shut grey head thrown back your outstretched hand now squeezes God's you focus keen while where I stand time parches on and boils down to hiss no wave goodbye I watch you die.



## doxology

please deliver me to some
sweet idyllic stop beyond
a wayward star beyond
this place of wrath and
recalcitrant fear a place
of quiet rectitude more
constant than the sun even
quieter than the sun much
mightier than the BBC than
CNN a realm past drugs far
from these tears no dust bunny
heaven fashioned by our own
clutched fists or all the billy

joels out there but made for
us created and designed as if we
could not choose as if we need our
mothers picking out clean clothes to
lay upon our blanketed beds and
tender fathers being nothing
more than there and merciful
friends exuding cheer while
wielding alabastered fragrances to
a yielding open wound or seeping
wild honey gently oozing our
wild eyes in perpetuity
please

God

smother me with a still infinitesimal voice

bury me alongside blaring trumpets of ending voyage

but wake me into one inescapable inexplicable peace

world

without

sirens amen

#### **IMAGES**

Belfast · Northern Ireland [16]

Dewey Beach · Delaware [4][20]

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#### STEVEN JOHN THOMPSON · PHD

Steven John Thompson is an editor and professor focused on Internet phenomena and emerging technologies. Steve published pioneering quantitative research in 1996 on Internet addiction and dependency. He has theorized on agency of icons to iconics to iconetics in artificial intelligence.

Steve lives in Savannah with his cats: Bravery, Bethany, and her daughter, Linda. Special thanks to Paul Levinson, Rob Pappas, and Philip Trader. Visit <u>steve.ws</u>.

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