

*Alli Warren*



# Yoke



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# THE DEFENSE RESTS

Call in the rocketships and plenty of rocketfuel  
We'll go on living in spite of logic  
In fits and starts  
Between two abysses  
This is one of the problems  
I was cracking up  
I was falling down  
Mishearing, as in a dream  
My own dear flesh  
Against which I am seeking justice  
In an attempt to boost attendance  
The dream about the burned out village  
The lopped off heads  
A very small gesture  
Onion like  
I learned all this from a parricide I met in Siberia  
He was a noble man, as was I  
We spent the month carousing  
We buried the body in the cellar  
A tooth and an eye  
You do it in front of their backs  
Like a pen knife or gun clip  
This mathematics is non-Euclidean  
The book, when it falls, makes piano sounds  
Devil knows what a woman is  
The head is bound by the stomach  
A narrative is illumined by false intentions and slid off its base  
Very well written but says nothing  
Take the totality of these facts  
You might look for a long time  
In spite of this evidence which is impossible to doubt  
I return to thee unopened  
I hoard my patrimony and pawn the ladies  
I do not want your gratitude  
I want your panties

# POEM BEGINNING WITH A LINE BY JIM BEHRLE



They can't hear you, but you are brave  
when the clouds come out  
sucking the small holes  
between the hands

banging these amplified stems  
that have a seat in my guilty  
guts that do spring up  
unannounced

in what is so light  
your body I broach  
I just want to lay  
and lay  
under a moth  
but this is silly and hard

some powerful locks  
in there a jet hurling itself  
over my head  
stop leaning  
this is not a garden  
there are no hearts here



# WORKING IN A HOTEL GIFTSHOP IS A GREAT JOB FOR A POET



The first geography in as many days  
requires putting big books in order  
The old ones bend their heads back  
like tent or fish

I don't think I can come out for a while  
On the living room wall  
I've got too many ears

The laughing fit in the grocery store  
where eyes brighten neon or green  
and blood stains the blow holes

'I went to my pretty rose tree'  
kissing and twitching his eyelids  
on a stone floor  
in a string box

The pelvis to which I refer  
is a tongue the sound of a slide projector  
or pumpkin pie

The whole first stanza is nothing  
but this green stuff

# I WANT A POEM TO DROP ITSELF OFF A LAKE



this owl here  
keeps a bee in the fridge

killer whale please don't kill  
I don't even know your name

the children across  
the street I can hear

mourn one  
after another

this is a sign of love  
toward the end is a big bridge

throw me over  
when I float up

like refuse  
the scaffolding rides me

when sirens come we lay  
down with the corn

and saw  
that horse in half



# FUMBLING BUTTONS



I am a transplant of smog  
in this expectant coming water makes  
wishing you would notice my acquisitions  
whispering when you wake this furtive moment  
my little mushroom cap

I want to offer you in the morning in the quiet house  
I built for that need something pliable:  
vulgar arrival, non native plant

all the furniture creaking  
on my pollen chaps  
like a wad of pennies  
two fingers deep

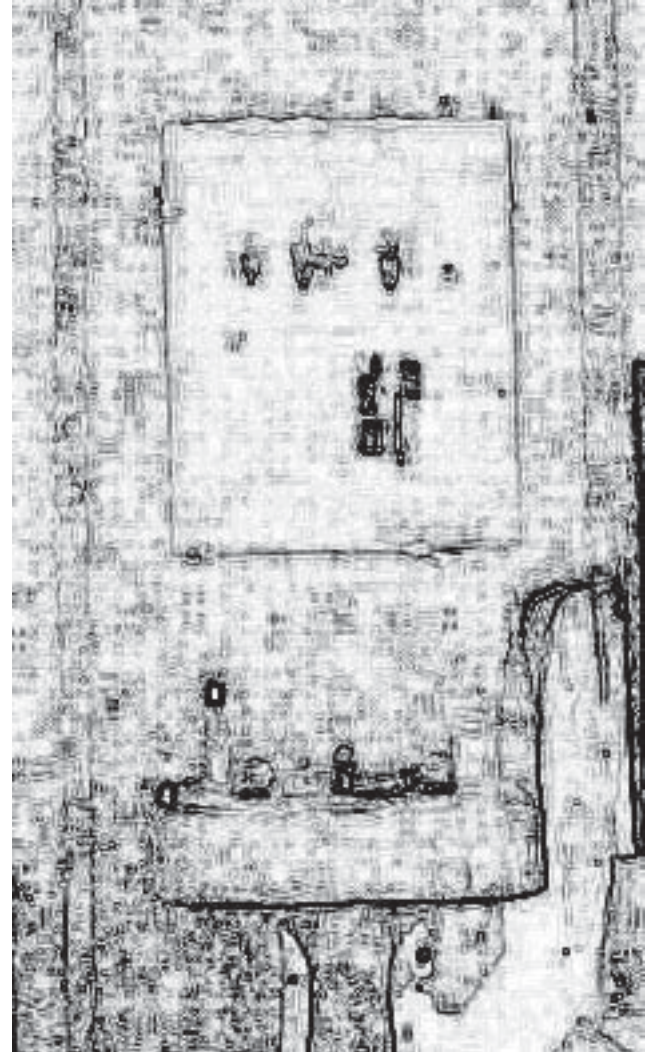
# SMELLING THE PHONE

The gun rip  
the heart out  
which rips  
the moon's heart  
from that windy rip

What the lyric said  
to the tongue  
what said  
to the dog

In that entrance  
which was  
a broken mouth  
a motive  
had this sexy white leather  
binding me  
all over town

There I was  
all these light  
things about me  
a few apples  
porous atop him  
some birds  
scanning the local registry







## CIRCULATION MALFUNCTION

We bury pockets of air  
in the backyard like a barrel of fog  
in the park a man guarded by pink balloons

With a little room we could make it down the hatch  
beneath the bulging cars  
as our bodies tumble over  
the ashes I whistle out

If I make inconceivable noises  
will someone know what to do?  
will they shove these vowels  
under deep pockets of skin?

# ON THE FIVE WAYS TO GIVE AND RECEIVE LOVE



the sugar only makes you sick  
along the wisp  
constant conduct holes  
split pea drip off the lip  
rising price of spilt milk  
some recycled kind of light  
in the mail an address across  
a lake vacated by birds  
gagging on their good name

in the crowded abyss in  
to which we speak in  
the seeded night  
spreading brass  
knuckled pleats in  
pasty pink lace  
wade into hungry  
long banging loose  
button address  
fondle everything mouth  
laid on the edges gaping  
heavily armed divided front  
chest woven open deliver



the highway is a kneecap  
we skirt down  
satellited by oaks  
smell of wood burn  
off shore hump back  
sequins and tablature  
rub against this  
sloppy second pronoun  
show me how to stand  
hot anachronism  
post deep end  
busted and irresistible  
saran wrap and fuck me boots  
closets full of closets  
we open and rain falls out



I am leaning into things and smelling straddling  
expectant refill the capacity to convince oneself  
the radio is off there's no need  
to mention it we planted a seedling  
I am literal it grew  
into weeds in the one room  
with the door shut

The termites I found mean  
every word this dangerous musical dirt  
tastes like a lot of soil  
as if I were an island  
bent from which impossible angle  
eating everything and eachother up

You were calling  
through the sooted door  
to me my yellow spike  
trying to heal a deadly bear  
scavengers on my kneecaps  
as I sat outside in the evening  
I did not get bit

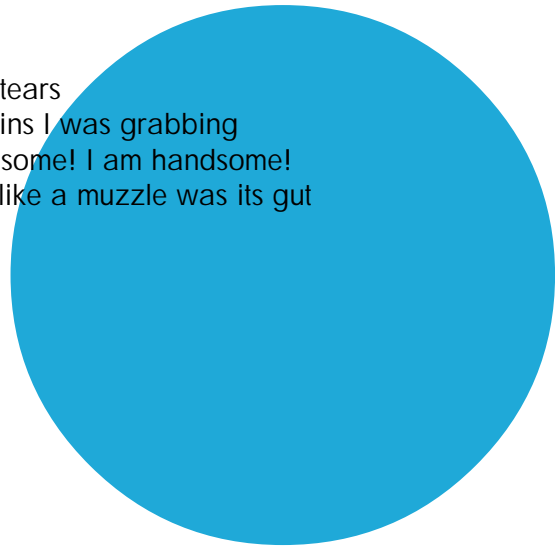


## **BREAD AND CRUISES**



If the seeds take  
the text will touch you  
a big round letter in the mail  
I won't speak about that  
which I have no knowing

The floor drops out  
from back to middle  
that endless supply of dog tears  
I was turning into Billy Collins I was grabbing  
my lungs saying I am handsome! I am handsome!  
then a bird made a sound like a muzzle was its gut





# TIL THERE'S NO ONE YOU COULDN'T BEAR LOSING ONCE\*

splitting oysters  
against the wall  
like a squatter I saw  
your eyes wake up  
and stretch

when I say that  
that bird has a beautiful head  
I mean we wait  
for the exists to open

a bell was being rung  
in my dream and ran  
the elevator into the bowels

little hearts I told them  
to shove it  
we were jewels  
and didn't know it

in an Eastern room  
a body on sand  
poses as a boy rolled  
by waves



mail me the city mattress  
soaked in wool  
sticky and shiny  
like a poem

I sat down to write  
handful of sulfur  
spooning your name  
like an infant

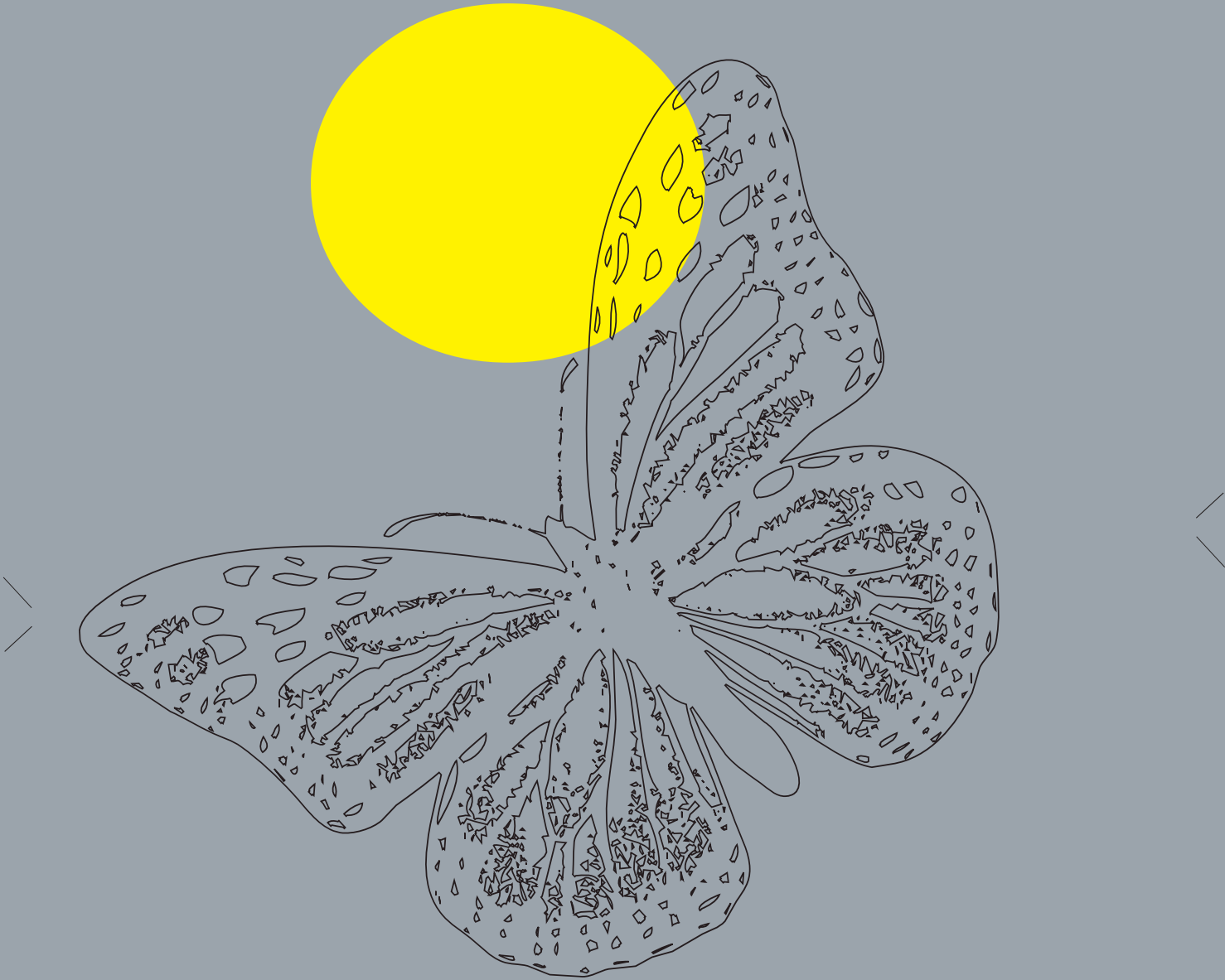
which is a wrong idea  
a plastic tarp  
on a mound of dirt  
shook into a cove

# \* FROM JIM BEHRLE'S POEM WHO SESAME AN AFFECT OF I (COCKPIT LOCK)

In the dictionary of the future  
you look up futility  
the unity of efforts  
is not a remnant though  
there was some communism  
A poet would do a lot of good  
to have a little body, objects  
that sound as though a finger  
opens a jaw, a hotel  
of the mouth There is no entrance  
it is viable social action  
grabbing his head and neck  
from the south end  
Little green things  
cloaked back and forth across  
an airy facade of electric soot  
I am very lonely I am  
very sad she wanted to say  
in the poem  
that avoids metaphor  
delivers lots of babies  
full of sockets  
silly with some gullets open  
Above street level the plane  
belongs in air, the red yarn

anchoring the ceiling to the chest  
Our neighbors in units  
signifying street songs  
things that you see  
some kinds of writing  
of actual pictures  
arrivals and departures, feeling guilty  
and bad Someone had their hands up someone  
else was a war criminal  
you can see the "patterns"  
outrightly, the mistakes of grammar  
which are naked thus  
embarrassing A romantic  
jumped off a boat and died  
I cite this as proof







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