

## From Molloy: The Flip Side

In a din chamber  
Mother sets my vice  
Little bed of needles

Have no fucking idea  
How I got here  
Someone called 911

Ma's aide, maybe  
Sent him a strong current  
Checked the floor for balance

He swears "no way"  
Hands over a few bucks  
And picks up the stack

Tinfoil, tin darts. We jet  
And unravel evidence  
A nest of imports, so they say

What's what now: speak!  
Gotta check out soon  
Be done with dying

While they read the signs  
Parrot's mess, a broken sink  
My legs bid adieu

Who am I kidding? Haven't done  
Squat in weeks, can't read  
His chicken scrawl; he barks "why not?"

I write mortar for mortal  
Without wanting to correct  
My mistake like a stranger

In a dark forest I piss on words  
“Vase,” “bed,” same struggle  
Only plusher. A relation of sorts

I spawned one somewhere  
He’d be an old fart now  
Not the grand love you’re right

See a pretty bonnet, a crumb  
I lifted her rug, so tiny  
And slanted toward a door

If I’m not mistaken  
I’ve known him, my son, that is,  
Crap! I forget his name again

The question bars my way  
Every stump every bit of damp  
Muck wants to be born

All goes blank. Any minute now  
I’ll go bat blind, then the head  
An empty pot will follow

Pain’s IOUs keep in my throat  
Where they make a fist as if  
To say we’ll show you

Did you say what I think  
I heard? Fault? Boo-boo, blunder  
Slip up? Do you still use such slurs?

At the instant, peep holes  
Like troughs drain light  
Leaky little eaves in the bed of the sea

Then neither tavern nor black weeds  
Only A and B in an empty field  
Till the cow drags its ass home

It's the fixity of the empty set  
A bit self-conscious of standing in  
For twisty bleak road ahead

No doubt about it. There were two  
Of them; they had just met in a ditch  
Wearing coats because of the weather

The brute mezzo of stomping feet  
Beneath means nothing yet  
But at dawn they'll speak some

It's not like they're buddies  
Waiting for a pint or a handshake  
On the way to the office

The treason of hills  
Finds a path no doubt  
From his bedroom

Where he guesses  
Flanks, crests and valleys  
Rise, indigo, even

Even if it were the caverns  
Of his heart—that black  
Crevasse he roams at night

Pressing his stick, I'm ashamed  
To say, once level and stout  
Now a mere shadow where I crouch

But this cigar in the breach  
Like a corkscrew in my guts  
Sand, ashes and dust of fallen things

The fuming hand, mangy skin; alright,  
I stink. My crutches scrape as I try to  
Ask him, please, the this and that

East of history, I missed stuff  
The very alphabet, large glass  
Somebody left in the alley

Shit! I hate talking about myself  
Since every I is a he. Look, he split!  
Should I be watching him still?

To row in silence toward  
The world of objects is to wish  
A story resembled them but better

Whereas I'm at bottom  
I mean literally, that's my crib  
Somewhere between scum and mire

B, isn't it? Among chariots  
And the rah-rah of carts leaving  
Town before dawn; it could happen