

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