

The Law of the Image

In The Law there's an image of me as nothing but myself.
I look obese. I am more than myself.
I'm lying here on a mirror reading The Law Against Images of Myself.
I'm looking at myself. I look criminal with all this media on my face,
the white powder all up in my nose and on my lips.
Los Angeles invented this media to destroy bodies.
Los Angeles invented bodies that it could not control
for they were driven by an occult force: Fame.
I invented my son to destroy Los Angeles.
When I run out of my son's room I bring the rain with me.
The image is a flower that opens up in a drowning victim's mouth.
If there's such a thing as Poetry it should taste like that flower.
It should feel like water on one's naked skin.
But it feels like a curtain instead.
Sweaty and someone has drawn lewd images on the velvet.
Someone has cut a strip out to stuff in my mouth. It tastes
like Victory. Poetry has to destroy Los Angeles.
Poetry has to be Los Angeles. Fat City. The wheels
never stop spinning, the blood never stops circulating.
It's like summer will never end. In the dark we hear
the grasshoppers scratching their legs.
Our daughters are all sleeping on a "Chinese bed."

Like the damaged tool, I can't be of use anymore.
I've become an image of myself.
Or an image of a tool, a hammer that is supposed
to be used to destroy icons. But it's cracked.
Of course it's also not at all "like a tool"
because I'm not a "tool" at all. I'm a cadaver.

These poems were recently published in Johannes Göransson's The Sugar Book (Tarpaulin Sky Press, 2015) and appear here with permission.