

standard contract issued by any finished writing, isn't it? With each word sitting pretty in its river of world with plenty of nothin and fishing poles

from here to Saturday pointing to the inalienable fish eye stared back at consciously and, not to put too fine a point on it, dead. Then where does that leave us, the supremely mobile readers and writers moving in delicious obedience to desire as if time could roll over, play dead, sit up and beg in one seamless sentence? TV paws this bone Sunday mornings: "You may boast of your macho lifestyle . . . But on the other side of your last breath . . ." The preacher thunders on 17, the Grecian-Urn-like audience sits, I

change channels, the phrases look to change the culture from the inside, and, sure, Herb, take another breath, a deep one, for us all. Like the other objects around here, a poem is a collection of moments, piled up so. The past says: it was late August, late afternoon, one of the years, it was when I was still a person. I want to learn the early words for memory, sight, for going inside and watching light paint the ceiling and then leave. There are no such words. Your last breath,

Mom, was a quick choke. You built my first pronouns. That's what they say: I can almost hear it. Houses, tents, faces, he- and she-places people live and mirror, and then they—you—disappear inside. I'm as much a you now as you were. It's near the end, tenth-edition light already flooding that dream of the 747 negotiating the back stairs—wings knocking against the walls—and then floating through the alley separating the bank from The Jolly Bar. It's not here, broad daylight writes, and you were never there.

THE WOUNDED BOUNDARY

I suck
the twin
breasts of
identity for
as long
as I
have memory
of myself.

There, where
I was
not, and
now here,
the future
masquerades as
present desire
filled full.

It really
is a
bit funny
the way
things are
and then
are not.
It sucks,

but only
to empty
the forms
I need
to fill
to know
the pleasure
I felt.

The mirror
is black
at lights
out. Thought
can't back
out.

You
woke me
for that?