

Two Poems
by C. S. Carrier

Insert Appropriate Here

What's the word for cargoships upturned in port,
moored still to piers? What's the word to reverse or
undo it? What's the word for how wicker barstools
float crude vessels through town when clearly they
weren't supposed to? What's the word for someone
wrapping themselves around a tree until water
remembers where it lies? What's the word for
firstfloors that erode, but leave secondfloors? What's
the word for land scoured so eyes ache blood? What's
the word for suck the ocean makes sloughing downshelf?
The word for sound it crashes making against as pushes
back not stopping until mountain? The word for how
fast it travels, undresses the caughtoffguard? What's
the word for buffalo & goats getting foamswept? What's
the word roads & bridges washed to deurbanization,
devillagement? What's the word detritus composed of
pilgrims at picnic? What's the word for those who rape
those they salvage? Word for dry ice & mass & gully &
obliteration? Word for sound of bodies? Word for man
carrying just freed by the tide son, for woman whose
forehead eats sand, whose palms open sky?

A State

This is morning, this is a feather stuck to the
window, this is a bagel with creamcheese, coffee, my
usual starting place.

This is the genie that vibrated my heel, this, a lock
of her hair, taken without incident, 11 October 2002.

This is a shewolf that suckled me, the panting beside
the rocks, narrow gait between trees, hinge she
perfected, wily old goat.

This is a birchtree, petrified, a decorative
knickknack dug up from the shore, mallet I play the
talkingdrum with, talkingdrum from the armpit of a

beautiful man, who loved me, but not enough to teach
me to shave, old ornery cus.

This is me & that beautiful man asleep on the sofa,
me, the cloth one, the sound struck by hand, song I
know by rote, like rainforest.

This is the indentation made by the dictionary, this
one, the Latin teacher, the glowing spear, this
wisdomtooth extracted with novocaine, trickledown
effect, green fatigues, Iran, diverted.

This is the whistle I can still do, this, the chewing,
the dreaming.

This is Garuda, Brahma, Kali, Ganesha, the butter left
everywhere by Krishna, Tricky McTrickerson, while
looking for his flute.

This is the first person who got hungry,
this, what's left of them, full of vinegar, ideas for
new jackets, the eye carried in a grass pouch, the
body being flicked, bitten, choked, burned, torn, hung
from a hook, like this.

This, the first word, first utter, dearest chamber,
this growth I cut from my heart, emptiness come back
because it keeps coming back, the fact I keep it,
paint it canary, tag it with a transmitter.

This is a raven that scuttles across the street, this,
the to scuttle, the great mimic, the powerpole, its
perch, the kitelike swooping among the frost, spiked
grass.

This, a wheelbarrow I first had sex in, that I had my
first sex in, this, its pool of water, pull of water,
where I bathed, drowned almost.

This is me at 7yearsold: living in the Great Dismal
Swamp, riding my Green Machine, the coolest bigwheel,
& watching the best afterschool cartoon, "Attack Force 5,"
& trying to escape this stutter I had,
this sensation of being a spore trying to fall to earth.

AZALEA

An azalea maneuvers beside the porch.
I sit on a rockwall below the azalea and its eyebent petals.
I burn between my azaleas.
Backpedaling, the azalea surrenders its arms.
My hair's the most beautiful azalea.
I don't speak until spoken to,
until an azalea's strapped to my back. Where I coalesce
I butcher the Spanish azaleas of tongues.
I take pictures of barns and rockformations
along the azalea.
The azalea up the block sells cheap whiskey, perfume.
Candles hold azaleas and their lyric improvisations.
Call me azalea. I'm azalea on both sides, dawg,
inheriting a southerncross.
Nothing exists I can't azalea with a glass of water.
Should there be a threemonth grace azalea for sex?
The azalea blushes, wipes its face, which stings the sidewalk.
I blow smoke at the azalea and write
letters to imaginary lovers, azaleas.
The azalea comes unfluorinated.
In its white church are the snarls of red timberwolves.

--C.S. Carrier