

Seahorses



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*for Arike
who never sleeps*

Contents

1

Aubade	2
The Last Book	4
White Rooms	6
After Coming Home from the Detainment Camp	8
Nooses	10
William Tell	12
Collateral Damage	15
Mourning	16
Calisthenics	18
The Face You Wear	19

2

Before Dawn with Angel Raziel	24
Revelations	26
Jesus' Day Job	28
The Good and Pure	30
Standing in the Ruins of Gomorrah	31
Those Sore of Soul	33
West of Neverland	35
Samson	38
The Person You Once Were	39
The Emerald City	41

3

When Lights Go Out in the Village 44

Sometimes, The Way It Is 45

Threnody 47

And They Called Him Cain 48

Pulling Weeds 50

Winning the Lottery 52

Communion 54

Monasteries 56

A Good Ending 57

Old Friends 59

Acknowledgements 61

Aubade

For children caged like hens –
Many without bread –

By the governor
And his promise of gold coins

For *fowls* caught
Near our town's doors –

The ones to blame
For the lack of jobs.

A morning song
For those pilloried on stage

With faces blue and *softened*
From rotten cabbage.

A mirror for the residents
Of this town

Whose laughter and applause
Crescendo

When each *fowl* goes limp
And is dragged off to *The Coop*

Where filth like him are held
For months at a time

Before being kicked
And kicked out

By *heroes* with guns
Protecting our town.

The Last Book

After it was tossed
Into the pyre

Husbands kissed
Their wives

For children
Parents bought

Toy authors
With dug out eyes

Cardinals
To Imams

At long last

Imams
To Cardinals

Al ham du li lah

As the flame rose
And glowed

Into the air
And night

The soot
Steady in climb

Cleansing sins
From wayward minds

God's will
In a new paradise

White Rooms

I think it's just us today
So I'll crank it halfway
But you have to scream
Like it's full voltage.
Deranged with pain
Is what the others say
And look for
When they rewind videos
To see who of the detained
First shuddered, screamed
Then passed out
In their own piss.
For both our sakes
Beg and scream.
Confess to all you didn't do
While foaming spit.
I remember camping
With your family
(Yes I have to fit the harness)
The steak and cold beers.
Julie thinks it's stupid
You should keep on like this
No wonder the twins
Have been taken from you
(The gag too)
And what about Laura
The shit she must put up with
The eye rolls and name calling
(I know you're in pain
But you're not doing it right
Your face must turn white

And please foam at the mouth)
Anyway Julie thinks it's stupid
What you're doing
For those god-forsaken people
Who don't even look
Or talk like you
Selfish not to put on the uniform
And defend the state like we do.
It kills me to do this.
Over shit immigrants
You don't even know?
When the guards return and ask
Tell them you've had a change of heart
And what shift you'd prefer.
Tell them your boot size
And colored baton you'd like to have.
Think of the twins. Think of Laura.

After Coming Home from The Detainment Camp

You take a long shower
With hot water

To cleanse yourself
Of the urine and stench

“Those foreign animals drink
And use to wash themselves.”

You throw your uniform
Socks and underpants
In the washer

Then scrub your hands
A second time.

After dinner
You chat with your wife

About her favorite
Reality TV show –

Who among the characters
Wrestled each other to the ground

Who survived the night's
Elimination round.

You indulge your daughter
In a late-night snack
Of mint ice cream

Then tuck her in bed
After telling stories

Of monsters from far places
Who speak different languages
And are always filthy.

When the house is silent
You oil your gun

Polish your boots and baton
Test your walkies and
Arrange your keys.

And because you won't touch
Each *animal's* sweat and worms

In the morning, you'll buy
A new pair of latex gloves.

"But that's tomorrow"
You tell yourself

As you cradle two glasses
And a bottle of wine

For you and your loving wife
Who is waiting, naked
And impatient in bed.