

From *Clangings*

I hear the dinner plates gossip
Mom collected to a hundred.
My friends say get on board,
but I'm *not* bored. Dad's a nap

lying by the fire. That's why
when radios broadcast news,
news broadcast from radios
gives air to my kinship, Dickey,

who says he'd go dead if ever
I discovered him to them.
I took care, then, the last time
bedrooms banged, to tape over

the outlets, swipe the prints
off DVDs, weep up the tea
stains where once was coffee.
Not one seep from him since.

What, you wander, do I mean?
Except for slinging my songs
wayward home, how do things
in people go? is what I mean.

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Stashed my secret name in its haven.
Think I mean dick when I say Dickey? —
I do and I don't; or did, but won't say
anyway. Makes a greener chameleon.

And his name doesn't stain forms.
Stays taut in the face of taunts, refrains
from songs. Words *can* break bones,
but my silent one doesn't form stains.

Dickey hurled a foot through my door
is all, slipped fine out the birth-slime.
Someone's personality christened him
not mine. If floor lamps upset a floor,

his phrases bite moons into the dark.
I recover them behind my horn-rims.
Gored in half or not, totalitarianism's
tell-liar-isms won't make him the Dick

Who Talked. Quiet as a virus, everyone
lying inert he inserts into, stands alert,
becomes a member. That's his cavort.
I know. Holed in his yowl. Not alone.

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Dickey's death feels all over me.

I try not digging at the thing. He died
before I could grow his hemlock seed.

Boyo, the tricksters of this cemetery,

long-sleeved shorts with their shirts off,
can't tell a cow's dead till it's slaughtered.

He was a sublime Halloween snicker,
bat dark meat. Never watched golf.

Not much now but gum and minerals,
blue pods, tainted entertainments.

Our folder warps, drifts, frags, taunts.
Everest ground down to soil samples.

I've lost my sprite, my shot at distemper,
nobody's rabies can pillow this blow.

Nobody's but Dickey's. My "he" is "O,"
who once flicked hearts, a lamplighter.

I could clang wish-bells, break out a dish,
but I know he's the headache at the base
of my throat. He's left ice in my voice,
foam round rocks where we used to fish.

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A finch in my chest flinches to get
heard. Wingman sewed it in. I hear
the *chi-chuwee chuwee* achew in there,
tiny beck beating the big heartbeat.

Mind you, it takes brains to slice
open a hide, scoop out the marble
muscles; craze a rib cage; uncoil
the aorta; slide in a gift like his:

the elf chirruping in my self, itself
elfin (the self's wit-part part want).
Pity I'm not someone else's heart! —
elf elsewhere, another body's grief.

I don't mind my beater's a warbler,
or how in-the-skin is the finch's cry.
Eat sweat, wet seat: its homunculi
pinions ping in my rock tumbler's

cavity. I place my ear to my chest.
Finch-flitters from the solar-plexus,
beaky reminders keep keeping pace.
Oh my minute pecks, tend your nest.

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Dickey my door, I'm seeing. Yesterday
I can tackle after all, and I feel like it
opens an ocean view from my parapet
of mountains and moons of Mercury.

Beaches needed badges on Neptune,
remember? To give us a memory,
Pisces, I christened you Gemini.
Nebula. Ash. Steam from a Dune.

We pitched tents in contentments.
We sanded castles. Me? Your factory
of Radioplasma. You, my stationery
output, now stay put. No complaints.

Dr. Rivers sees to it my seas belong.
His orderlies tip white-caps at me
like I'm a stranded merman. Dickey,
my buoyed-up somebody, unsung

island gone inland, you swam out
of my blues, but our duo disordered
the herds. Nobody played shepherd.
Well now, you and I are words apart.