

with new knowledge. If God is cold, it's because
he left the nursing home with only a few

dirty blankets and muddy socks. If God speaks,
it is in single syllables we board like boats

to reach our fathers. Yes if God speaks,
it is a single golden O like Saturn's largest ring.

GREG WRENN

Signal

From the center of my chest, between
my two inadequate pecs, I've sent out

high-powered signals—

the sound of hoofbeats,
fake meat sizzling,

a poorly sung aria—to announce my habitable world:

I'm here

and lonely. When my moon's

called Buck, Hay, Wort,
and Thunder, come meet me

at the jetty. I'll be lying
on the rocks, contemplating

the idea of forever.

Pass over me—couldn't you?—

like wind through sea oats,
I'd wake with old-timey maps

to Awakening, toward
Everlasting, scratched onto the lenses

of my mind's eye.
Is that what it's like

to meet you? Or is it like suddenly,
while dreaming,

knowing I'm a dune?

The Pieces

A stealth fighter was shot down,
a Nighthawk in '97,
when you were twenty-three
and coming out in Gainesville. Once the wreckage cooled
in the frozen field, the peasants nabbed
the ejection seat, a wing, the pilot's
dinged helmet, and sold them
to the aviation museum; Chinese agents bought up
the rest, oh for just one fleck of the radar-absorbent coating,
to reverse-engineer it
for one's defenses . . .
If there's ever an Armageddon,
the restored fresco told me, the dead
will reconstitute themselves into glorified bodies—
might I meet yours again
as it bursts from a mausoleum shelf
the size of a microwave,
your ash transmuted
into beard?
I'd watch the bits of your cornea
burned away during LASIK
fly back into your eyes, like dust motes drifting
back through the light
toward the projector.
Your bad vision would return
then perfect itself—you'd pull on
your eyelids, blinking
at the halos, a rainbow,
the endless fires. Today,
fourteen years after the crash,
China's Chengdu J-20—twin-engined with

swept-back tail fins
and a bubble canopy—soars invisibly
over the karst peaks of Yangshuo.
Its first flight.
Before you died,
we met on a swept-clean hill. My hand
slightly shaking, I felt
the pink scar on your scalp,
two red ones too.
All three were alive.
Alive, all of the pieces.

L. S. MCKEE

The Birth of Alva

Alva sits under the tree. The leaves make a second sky
if you look up

at the right angle, and pretend
you have forgotten

how you came to be there.
Alva is and is not me. Sometimes
I'm tired of walking around in the same
ole body, under the same

foam-ceilinged sky
or the too-blue August one
with its nagging sun, or the one on the page with all its bright
re-memories,

radiant as neck pain and the damaged joint
that burns

with Sirius-level
white-heat-that-feels-like-red-heat

when I turn to look
behind me. I wanted Alva to be born in 1914.
So far back in history

it had nothing to do with me.
I wanted her to go to war and survive

in a way that I had read might be
possible. I wanted to make her a preacher's
daughter, a midwife, a physicist smashing particles