

PSALM 38

A cursed psalm of David, remembering the sabbath

Owner do not blame me for what you've done. Don't grab at me with your glowing serpent-limb.

Your arrows fixed me. Now fix your hands above my own.

My meat's insane because of your anger. There's no peace inside my bones but that's my fault.

I'm in over my head in this bad field. And like the load weighs down the horse I lay down with my Master. Like that burden I'm burdened.

Because I'm an idiot all my cuts fester and get perverted. It falls apart like clay. Bribe me Lord to drunk seduction. Falsify me so I can be globular. I will crawl out of this flesh the maggot

That tells me what I am.

Bow me to the earth push me and I yield. Coppice me and I'll stop complaining. Always at the boundary of the only field I know. All day these crops grow dark and get sipped on by ants. Walk this way with me don't be afraid.

For my lines are implanted illusions. Nothing's sane inside my meat.

I am but you are. Yes I'm afflicted. You hang around in the hallway and debase me. I make sounds inside my heart's narrow room.

Lord you're my favorite. An Owner. The Crying. A valley I want to swallow.

God I'm confused. My dignity leaves me for the pit. Even the lamps inside my eyes aren't mine.

Affiliates come here, don't turn on me: stand by, comrades, in the distant field.

They used violence who wanted my heart. They interrogated me in the dark who wanted my flesh. They talked like empty cans whirling around in the rapture. Now they wring out their laundry and remember this song.

Now I a sick creature have one bad ear. So like a bitch I kiss and tell.

You make me into a man. I cannot hear and I have nothing in my mouth.

In your cavernous wound God I store up my scratch. So you will hear me out oh Lord My God.

Because I said Lest my enemies move my feet for me. Lest they blaspheme

against you when they spit on me from above me.
 For I am prepared by these lashes.
 For I promise I'll tell everyone wrong. For I fixate on my deficits.
 But my enemies are alive. They fix my hands above me. That's you oh God. Oh
 men unkind inside of which I spin like a pig.
 Those who come here to exchange bad fruit for good seed detach me from the
 world, and blade me. Because I choose to follow mercy.
 Do not forget me do not abandon me here do not leave me oh Lord My God
 My God of this black field these swans the cows the blood of my brain. My
 God do not depart from me do not scatter me like water do not turn me into
 water just yet. I'm soot but let the soot for a minute go up without me. Let
 me stay here and watch these lamps burn inside my eyeballs and let me be
 two glass worlds. I changed my mind I want your fever.
 Stretch yourself into a shape, hold me oh Lord My God My God My God of
 this vessel of ink, and this pen
 Get me out

—T.T.

PSALM 38

*A Psalm for David.
In memory of the Sabbath.*

Lord, don't argue with me
In Your fury and don't, in Your craziness,
Light me up. Your arrows
Decorate me, You've held me under

Your hand. Sanity isn't in my flesh.
Your anger isn't in my bones anymore
And in the sky, I look up into a blue strange grave.

The prunes under my skin decay or have You smothered foolishness all over
my face?

I've showed up solo, like dusk into every day,
And my loins—my *lumbi*—fill up with illusions.
I've baaed the hollow music of my heart.

Lord, every favorite thing of mine...
My heart is worm-holed, crabapped, my courage
Is over, the electrical wiring
Behind my eyes, my friends, even just neighbors
Who were friendly, have approached me
And stood, and those who were close to me
Were now only close to me, and the ones who looked
For my spirit did iron things.

My spirit did iron things.

It did vain things and was vain all day.

But I'm without ears. I can't hear
 Anything. I'm a dumb man—I leave the duct tape
 On his mouth. Because in You, Lord, I sparrow, I
 Hope. And you hear me clearly, Lord, my
 Lord, my *baa* is the Psalmist's to you.

My enemies Joke like pinball machines.
 The soles of my feet push down.

But my enemies live and they live.
 They've shampooed my hair with ginkgo berries.
 Those who exchange Your good
 Light matches near my ears
 Because I hear the Good. Don't think I don't know,
 Don't leave me behind, Lord, my Lord, don't

Just walk out on me, Lord of my wishes. Lightning,
 Throw down some rope.

—S.B.

PSALM 38

Lord don't strike, I know it gets hot up there.

Your lasers get inside me or worse. They're pointing at me, they're touching the outer parts.

You get worked up and it makes my friends sick; my aunties; and my goddaughter-to-be. I get no peace in this shack of ribs I live in, that's what my sin's about.

My sins are about weight, hauling it, who else is hauling it.

It reeks where my skin opens up, where the evil dumbly dwells.

Meanwhile I hang over the day's ground mooing. I get very, very close to it.

The day's ground talks to my thighs, which get hot like the ground. The blood in my thighs. Different. Gut-pulse in there. Are You safe?

My heart is weak, very, and my body's whining about it. My body's disquiet. Dis-desire. Different.

Lord, the blood in me wants, You know about it, You've heard this one before.

My heart pulseth, now my words betray me. My eyes were beautiful once. The reddest sun I could look at.

Rashes bloom on me that could drive off any comer, lover, neighbor.

Dermatologists, they try to get me where I live, and my rivals, they mouth off, all day they lie about me, this day, June 13th, I hear them. Hey rivals, who recorded you? Who runs your pulse, speech-to-text?

But like Amanda on the Fitchburg line who interviews strangers for her class project on Meaning, I hear not. She asks me to repeat four times. She writes the word *Feast*. I have a mouth I close it.

This makes me the English-speaking husband whose wife, for seven weeks, bleats only Portuguese. But I don't reprove anyone, I'm like that.

For I write You, Lord; I receive no letter; but You'll get there; that's how I know You're lordly; RESPONSE REQUESTED.

For I wrote the whole message in the subject line. If I slip into the body text my enemies will see, they'll peer at me through their camo-print readers.

Look how I get ready to slip. Daily. Ruefully.

I miss the mark I know it, I who am wrong, who sin right in front of you.
I'm sorry.

And that changes not the vigor of my enemies; multiplied, wrong, hateful.

If you change good for calamity I'm against you, I'm out here for good.

O my God Who are Named. Good. Don't leave me.

God of Rescue. Safety. Of Salvation. God Deliver. God of Victory, Literal.
Or Spiritual. Deliverance. Exhaustive Deliverance. Gate. Dismount. Concord
with me. Destroy the time between us.

—*E.D.*

PSALM 102

*A weak man's prayer, I'm scared, I wrote this
Before God, if prayer's the water, He is the drain*

Please help me Owner I'm trying to talk back. Let my cries rise up through this pond scum.

Please don't turn around I can barely see Your face already. Squeeze through the nozzle of today and contort to fit here in my ear. In this daylight I am calling out to You my Owner. Listen to me and comply like the swifts.

My days are defective like smoke. My bones wither like hay.

I am the chaff a reed like the desiccated brush my blood dries up because I forgot to eat from Your trough. Let my bovine comrades feast on me while I lie here like grass.

My screams wrest themselves from my voice and stick to my bones. They keep my meat upright, and bones.

I too was a prostitute in the desert. Now I am a night heron trapped in a stranger's bathroom. I remember taking a shower in the motel and trying to cut off my hand. That's when God turned around and said

That's the point you stupid bitch. For the first man on Earth

You're not as smart as I would've guessed. Well Sir the problem is

Satan likes my wife and my first thought was

Thank God it's her. I mean seriously. Sure I am vigilant. Sure I keep watch, and provide

Her where I can. But like the sparrow the anchorite the D.J. and the beloved

Here I am hiding beneath Your narrow shadows I borrow here on this screen this page this cave of light. I was borne of these bowels I remember

Moving like clay on the dark side of rapture. The night burst and I made the trees

Now I lie awake thinking

Yes Eve was a relic of me

From the beginning. All day I unbraid my enemies from the line

God wrote. And those who used to pray for me at Home Depot and praise my

aptitude cutting nice 4x4's. Even they conspire against me now.
 Because I will chew through gunpowder like the Host does when He cannot
 have me. I will mix a martini with much dripping and wailing for You My
 Lord My Owner.
 Because You love me because I hate You because rising freshwater dense I have
 wrecked myself on Your strange cliff.
 To me the days are shadows sinking through hell in the distance. And what I
 said before is I am parched like hay.
 But You Lord permeate the blush at eternity's end. Your tombstone is the
 generations' generations.
 You came into being out of miserable wrestling just to save me from this slime-
 black whirlpool. Because You Time's substrate pity me because it's time
 because the covenant is right here it's this grapheme Look. We have arrived
 at this place together. Look we're singing together that's psalmody comrades
 I own you now. I speak and you speak back and the seconds speak at the
 same time look.
 For we Your domesticated animals worship yet. Yet You walk on. You who take
 mercy on the dirt God please take mercy on me.
 Which is why we fear Your name oh Lord like all the earthenware kings lined
 up on the shelf.
 Because You made the wrestling God. Because when we look at it we're not
 looking.
 He looks upon the singular prayer of the crippled. Who themselves are the
 prayer. And does not hate or mock it.
 Let these things be written again by another generation for the first time every
 time forever. And may those people who spring up fully formed from the
 crab apple You raze and renew again likewise give praise to the Lord.
 Please don't deride revile or refuse me God I need You. For You foresaw me
 from Your glossy spot behind the frame of your violable reliquary. Up there
 in that citadel where lightning stops oh Lord You guard the sky and the dirt
 from the sky and the dirt. To foresee is to make for You My God My Owner.
 So that he will hear the weeping of these words my shackles. So that he will
 unbind us the sons of the dead.
 So that they will preach it in the fruit markets. I will worship the Lord's name,
 who is Not the Dusk.

When Jesus swoops down to weld us together at the end of the wire
 Men will harmonize with the birch trees
 And their song will tend to the Lord My God. Kings and birches will sing
 together oh my God.

So respond to Him when He calls out to you lying there on the roadside.
 Chicory and yellow branches hanging over you on the roadside. Here's
 what you should say. The daylight is scarce oh Lord. Tell me I don't have
 much time left and tell me the message is mine alone. Now swear You won't
 leave me here where demons move like moths in the brush. They enter me
 through my eyes and devour pieces of skull. Wrap around my face Lord and
 asphyxiate me instead. May the clay take me before the devil does I'd rather
 it be Your decision. If the dark lamp has to shine like a beacon to another
 world I'd rather it be You I'm following. And if that light's what makes the
 desperate stake that shines in the place Christ's heart's supposed to be please
 stick me too. The devil took me to New York the devil took me out to lunch
 I want to be Your gamble. I am a dark blue mare I am the tallest heron on
 earth I am not lying here in this dirt on this long red road to Your nightfall
 for no reason. Say all this and then say

Turn oh Lord, by destroying us wake us. This we wrote write will write forever
 for the first time. Thus the trees thus the dirt road thus the larval object in
 the welder's sky. Think about it they too roll around up there in the chaos
 through which Lucifer swam and struck matches and raped those fissures
 of muck.

Therefore do not revoke me again into the bad half of my days where demons
 stalk me through the mud

In the moon's reflection in the water. You give the generations their years but me
 You give the annual frogspawn. Then You put them in my mouth then You
 make me swallow. Fuck You God I'll do whatever You want.

But You oh Lord made the cow at the beginning. And You are the engraver of
 the sky's glass walls.

Oh many-handed God those fortifications will pass away like vestments but You
 are a permanent fixture. And everything grows old but You are not a quilt.
 You change and it's changed.

You are that are. Self-same in the turning and sloshing like the blood that
 encircles the earth. To You the years don't run out.

The sparrows Your prostitutes shall live oh infinite goblet. And their eggs will
order the boundaries of the world. Demarcate me like that Lord. And
promise me it ends.

—*TT*

PSALM 102

*Prayer of a man (Reader, he was anxious)
And before the Lord he poured his prayer:*

On the day I invoke You, come to me, Fast One.
Because these days get woven into invisibility like smoke
And my bones are as thirsty
As firewood.

My ribs have been forked like hay.
Like groaning to my voice, my bones
Have stuck to my flesh. You see moments
Lock eyes with Your servants and that's how
You get them.

I'm trapped like night in the raven's house.
I keep the single vigil of a sparrow in its rafters.

All day my enemies whistled out-of-tune
Against me. They were my own choir.

I chew on ashes like bread
And stir the moon's tears into my cup in the effort
To mimic Your anger.

Then You lifted me up. Or had I never moved?
My hours disappear across the lawn
Like shadows, and I'm thirsty, still, like hay.

The Lord claps once, and then *ah-ha*, there's Sion.
In His *gloria* He's the Whole Zoo.
His pupils dilate like night in dusk and He

Doesn't scorn prayer, thank You.

These things will be written down by our kids.
The kids, they'll have to, too, because He looks at them
From His eyeballs, the clouds.

The bow-bumps-the-violin-string sound of chains.

So He can pay back babies for their daddies who've been slain.
So that they themselves can year-up and scribble poems. Hell,

Deliver me the message of the fewness of my days.
Don't ring The Supper-Bell.
In Your beginning, Lord, the seas You babbled.
Your own hands pulled the rain over Your face.
Your hands will grow old like a garment.
They'll change my days like sheets. And I'll be changed.

—S.B.

PSALM 102

The prayer of this man: rich in trouble—faint with it—free with his complaints.

God please don't look elsewhere. I vocalize this, urgently, emotionally. But also politely. So You know it must be bad. The day You made for the sun looks like dark down here—there are obstacles—they do roll in—and down here's where I'm calling from, so I propose You pick up.

For my yamim are devoured like ashan, and my atzmot burn like a University boiler.

I am struck even in my striking. I fry like the roof-lichen, I spit out what I find in my mouth.

By reason of symptoms like spitting, striking, frying, and politeness, I'm skinny. Look, skin the hanging subject now and who knows where the flesh is going.

I chase the flesh to the midbar, which is like the desert but not quite, like the wilderness, but we have problematized the wilderness, it's like a smooth plain I would love and love, owls live there, bald as the moon's cheek, all those acne scars. The moon was young once. Gold-dead and young. I am lonely.

Watch me how lonely. I'm the bird who loves the roof who loves the lichen.

Enemies mine, they say to me, yeah, you are a bird.

They say this for reason of my griping, and for my sounding like a catbird, the dumbest of birds. I wash my dumb face. Which is ashy. You can tell I don't take my iron. I am a 33-year-old and when I cry it gets in my cup, I still drink it. Lord I'm a Man. Isn't it Your fault I'm crying? Stand me, sit me, I do it to You, anger.

O my days are in the long dark, I grow pale there, I grow the owl, the lichen, we are old together.

But back to You, Lord. What's together mean to You? You who reign and reign, even Your name does something like *reign*.

Your favorites You own. They love Sion. Specifically, it's rocks they love.

They love Sion's rubble its plaster its mortar its ore, its rubbish. Heaps of it. Ashes. Dirt. Look we cheat, say dust thou art.

And the gentiles, dusty indeed, they too favorite You. Saying everyone *suspend your disbelief*. Sans serif they say this. Definitely they're worried about the word *Zion*, what it's like for kings.

However the Lord, you recall, is still reigning, which means He is tasked, which means He is Rex with a Sion built up, words or dirt, He's heavy with those. He owns them.

Meanwhile the poor pray and He listens, He doesn't not listen.

Tell your grandkids.

He's looked down from His Word which is a height of at least 6 feet (reader, 4 cubits), and which is a lot like a tabernacle, it does not have to be gold but it does have to be heavenly, if a man then wow a heavenly man. Behold a heavenly man.

And even through all that Alternative Country, the Lord will hear groaning, He'll know it's the prisoner disclosed.

And everyone will be left to dialogue about it. All the kings, assemblies, Sion, the AAR, leave not out the SBL, gentlemen, Jerusalem, Palestine, Jesus and his certain brothers, sisters, I'm not saying cousins, everyone in town knows that. Everyone in town serves the Lord.

He cowed my strength in the doctrine. My days got dark, and there seemed to be fewer of them.

I said Lord, don't strike me here in the mid-dark, I'm alive. Why don't You want me alive? You Who watch us generate.

You generate us. This was years ago. You made all this Country referred to above, Alternative, also Contemporary.

You stemmed Your firmament with Your hands.

All that gets old, though, like a moth eats scarves. Old pants. Like Your own You will change them and they change. Like vestments You can don them, You can shuck them right off. We're talking about the stars in the dirt.

You, post change—tell me what You made Your years for, why Yours still go when ours don't.

You own Your favorites, and Your less favorites, and You own their generation. Generate me then. Lord, I live.

—E.D.

PSALM 130

*One of the gradual psalms,
Sung as the Temple of Solomon went up, sing it again
And it will go up again, one step of the ladder
Of monks, which one that's for you to decide,
From the void I have cried out to you, oh Lord*

O Lord please agree! Fill my prayer like a liquid! May your ears become a voice!
Listen—! And bend how I'm bent:

If you really see my sins O Lord O God O Master if it's true you see us trembling
like shellfish at the tideless bottom of the moon. Why do you cry?

I humiliate. I am the worm stuck to this calcium pod. I can't even scream I
definitely can't "psalmodize."

Because atonement means coming to your house. Knocking at the door.
Walking upside down through your piles of white writings until I get to you.
Kneeling down at your feet. And pressing my face into the floor at your feet.
And saying By your law-sweet sap alone I am nourished I am quickened by
you alone. And my shadow subsists on these words.

From inside the Lord's bright typed room I O shadow of my shadow have sat
down in THE dust and prayed. *Speravit anima mea in Domino.*

By the custody of dawn all the way until night's hound pulls up. We the cattle-
trampled know well the belly of the Lord.

Because Mercy's blank sits in God's lap. In that thick codex that grape of
Salvation. May He make Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Educated at Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Where he studied a double-load while simultaneously taking courses at Harvard
University

And completed his B.A. in Architecture in just two and a half years despite
taking a break to fight in the Yom Kippur War

Stop Sinning.

But what do I know I am a clam. I don't even have knees to bend. Really I
dream of

Grabbing God's purse just before the gate slams shut. YES.

—T.T.

PSALM 130

A Canticle of footsteps ...

I've owl-howled from the Zero
 Of the cave for You, Lord. Lord,
 Can you distinguish my low voice
 From the night's? Lower
 Your earhole to my owl-howls
 Which ward off prayers somehow, I'm
 Joking? Do you see the naked night—
 Like a cave, that's its arms, and *Dominus, Dominus*,
 Who do I hold? Because I've been sneaky
 Past You, I've stepped as snow-landing-quiet as the breath
 Between Your Words; my January breath
 Does roach pirouettes in Your Words; Thy Spirit
 Who sparrows in the Lord—why aren't You
 Sleeping? From the winter hour of Matins
 Into the starry ultrasound night without
 Interpretation, promise me,
 The moon of a moon, the Lord...
 Because with the Mercy of the Lord
 And the Lord's Yes Dollars, I've bought
 The Moon back, and the Moon Itself—
 Yes, I'm talking of My Lordship—buys back
 Its promise with a photo of His nakedness
 That tonight—should I look, Dawn?

—S.B.

PSALM 130

It was abyssal, where I shouted from, Lord, down there in the rope of Your earth, like a ruminant.

That's probably why You couldn't hear me. But Lord, hear me. Basically, I'm in deep, and my supplications want ears.

You cast stones. You use Your Lordly Arm, but I can dodge them.

I don't though. What I don't— . Because of Your law. Your law turns the soil and turns us, the fearful, in it, and I for one stay put. I won't move until You do. Your word alone moves.

And when You move, you look like it. Your Word! All those tannins in Your dirt. Let me read on You, You must. I hope on You. I trouble not with eunuchs, I am poorly catechized, You're Okay. I look for You everywhere.

That's what I'm doing over here, watching like a watcher who waits, hoping for the dark to move.

But even more like that. I breathe. My breathing does the waiting.

Israel, the Lord breathes, and He moves in the dark too. Bet on Him.

Neoplatonists we aren't, I bet, but we'd agree. Mercy Immeasure. Interminate. Analphabet. Poretic? He's over the top. Mercy Compulsory. Perfect island peat-systemic in the minds of medievals.

You want evidence? It's in the protoliturgy. O move the sin in me.

Do what You do, Redeemer. But You do it already. I know You Will.

—E.D.