

Circular Breathing

All I see is snakes, all I am is curling
back on what's been said
as if I were the snake dealer
at Knight's Inn, out 26,
who piled them in glass,
who at the window would peel
back the blind, let you slip in
your cash, then he would meet
you with your serpent
at the meeting place. Caught
in the deadgreen the cop
camera made him all knife glint
& it was true he looked fit to
gut that fuck in the mirror of night
on the news. Before the dash cam
went black he sang out in single
pitch. No. If you had the cash
he would peel back the blind. The snakes
became what his wife would release
into the yard, a few months after,
to curl in our sewage grates, under
cars. No one knew
the names. They were what
was in the grass now like a
lesser thought, some small
violence. One day a red-haired cop
came around with a
black bag. Once I heard the snake
dealer sing Goodbye Booze. Dead
Flowers. I heard him sing
Cocaine & now we sing
Cocaine. Now a cop is on our porch
saying *I have the same demons from
those songs*. He's got an old snake
in his having bag. As if he
tilted back so much of the gold-
colored void the cicadas were
screaming for him, howling
that same loop, that boot-black
shine, that neighborhood
mind, New York St., Lafayette, IN,

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where there was then & will be
forever I guess that night noise
none of us could ever learn to play—
none of us have a breath to hold
a note so long.