

GREG GLAZNER

Sorry As We Are

1.

Brother out of our mind into the full-on
world we climb that shocking heat upon us
one hand up against the sun

an iron earthquake
slamming shut behind us on our doings.
Nothing left in the grass but glare
shaped like a door.

Had a cellar ever even been there?
Out of the hold and into the pull we
squint and make our way the oak stick in hand
and a bellyful of roving a pocket buzzing
as messages rush back in the phone.

Locusts
are loud at it in the burr oaks and the slab has been
dozered clean of a house save the cracks
and pipe holes—

walking it you feel
in your heel bones the hard featureless heat
where the rooms and dreams had been.

The sheen
is blinding if you face it and if you close your eyes
not even a whiff of dog or the ghost of wind it
once made wagging.

What good anyway
is a calling?

Just stepping down to the root-heaved street
starts up the knee that had gone easy all morning
on the throbbing.

But for well or ill kinsman I've impeded
my limp on yours and now we sweat and feel our way
and shine like slugs in the full-out sun.

2.

What say we slip off into the shade of this bait shop?

The door's long gone but the Coke machine's still on.

Finally get that heat off our head the miles off our feet.

It's dark in here but put your hand down in that concrete tank.

Even in the dry you can feel the shadows of minnows and shad that used to
shiver in the aerated water.

And don't a Coke taste as fine right now as tin cup water back at Trevor's well?

It's dark enough in here you could about be there in his no-window pump shack now.

Or be six on a dead-dark road about to light the sparkler in a Nehi bottle.

Or twenty with your eyes closed. Feeling her hair ease in all around your breathing.

Except for that sick that's in your face that shock or crazy or whatnot.

What say we break out the phone about now?

Light up some guitar in here some conspiracy politics. A little sexy stuff a little
Wrigley Field.

You can forget about that sick sometimes if you just keep scrolling.

You can look up roads you used to drive or friends you used to have.

You can post a photo of a big bright doorhole in a wall of dark.

You can touch here for help if you need to. You can phone home if you have one.

3.

Shuffling through the bar ditch weeds
soaked and rank already my head blazing
needing a ride and afraid to flag one down—

I can see over the fields a haze that's
come a thousand miles to show us
half the forest world's on fire.

The shed and silo waver in a blur I once
believed was only heat. Clouds to the south
swirl in on clouds circulating

hail and lightning working up their fury.
A zero's twisting in my belly and I can sense
what's troubling the minds of two whirlwinds

harrowing the furrows churning inward
suffering their smoke of sand inhaling
shredded ropes and sacks but what could ever

satisfy the hole at the eye of what you are?
The huge one blows on through the fence
a low roaring stays behind a tractor's

stopped where the air clears. The glassed-in
driver has the fierce gasping look
of a drowner and I almost call out *Brother!*

But he cuts the engine opening
the high door and I can hear hate radio
up loud in there as he steps down

all that sound behind him driving him
my way like a wind. I can't make out words
though I understand completely *Stranger*

I will shoot you if I need to. He yells out
Can I help you? and I don't speak or move
but I have my thumb out toward the road.

Then a flash is rushing over the weeds
a truck is idling and I understand—
the rumbling's come for me. I turn

and see the dark-haired driver two huge
mongrels in the seat beside him. He shouts *Abajo*
pointing to the empty flatbed. Back there.

The one approaching yells *Can I help you?*
The driver shouts *¿A dónde vas?* I close my eyes
feeling the way the oak stick pulls blurt out *North!*

jump up on the truck bed and crouch my back
to the generator strapped there the watcher
standing at the fence a long time as we roll.

4.

Wheat rows shudder by side roads blur and rattle. Anyone
with teeth and bones would understand the ground
has had enough of us all the way down
to the shale.

Sorghum now. A shack with a cow
half in it. Boot prints leading out survivors
staying one day's work ahead of famished.

All this brutal
wind that's worse than useless. How hot can sun get?

Maybe just hum a little and shield our eyes.
Maybe hold that feed sack on our head unless
we like it blistered.

Just rattle like that a while.
In the sack shade. The oat smell. Until it's nigh well
third grade again.

Nigh well high up on the rumbling
trailer next to you Ofelia and your brothers.
Sliding off at your shack's dirt yard. Straightway
to the roped tire to swing you

a gold girl over the cotton rows.
Your five brothers grinning skinny and angry
a shade of gold called brown. We all knew it was wrong
for a kid to be there white but not why.

Caramel eyes
quick at math you only stayed in school one season.
If you're alive I glimpsed you then I see you now
jarred and blistered with my eyes closed on this rig—

smaller than I was and brighter offering what you had
hot wind leaves rushing by your quick smile
and flying hair—

5.

What say we collect ourself here on the underpass's shady side a while?

Lean the oak stick on the concrete and mop our eyes and try to come to terms.

Lost now on the way to where?

Sky with all that high white smoke. Mosquitoes all over us. The ground rumbling.

Far off a couple of dogs. Not half a chance of rubbing their backs or handling their ears.

Maybe just duck our head a minute and give it up. Sorry as we are.

Who didn't have the sense to stay in out of a tornado. Who couldn't maintain enough wherewithal to feed our own animals.

And climbed up into all this again. The ladder wiped out behind in a crash of glare.

Lost here brother an overpass for a roof and thunderheads swelling in the southerly haze.

Dry lightning then the dim roar. In a while we'll flag another ride and maybe have a bed.

Don't believe it's traffic. Knowing all these houses are riding on a shuddering in the ground.

So shaky or not we get up from the shade. The low sun brutal in the haze.

And let our mind give in so the pull and zag have ahold of us. And the tremors.

And from here on find our way by glare and smoke.