

Written on a wet page.

Tommy O'Rourke

I could spell it out
in eyelashes but the invisible
boa constrictors that spring out
from your pupils
to strangle and decipher
every scribble are too busy shedding
their scales to sound out "delicate."

Under this sheet of paper,
a salmon slides shut her gills
& doesn't speak
nor blink nor narrow
down a list of synonyms.

A salmon out of water with her gills slid shut can only stare.

Feeling uncomfortable, I
wrap her in a music
staff paper sheet of
treble cleffed syllables &
whole note semantics.

*What harmony is this?
Which war?*

The strictly literal
fish and snake did not once have
a chance to escape
the Technicolor nets

cast from plastic
nests of 'perfect pitch' asphyxiation
& flawless grammar.

Do not forgive a thing
that calls you by name.

A house of mirrors is a home
of nothings to sing
alone and lose yourself in.

Forget the Other
animals conjugate
"be"
as you see fit.

Am is
the subtlest theology.
A cracked wall-
clock caricature, a second-
hand annotated gospel. If
such margins could speak,
they'd say
there is no god but now
yet they remain
the chapped lip silence:
the white space
between
these letters.