



**TRANSFORMATION  
POEMS OF BECOMING**

Marius

Mason

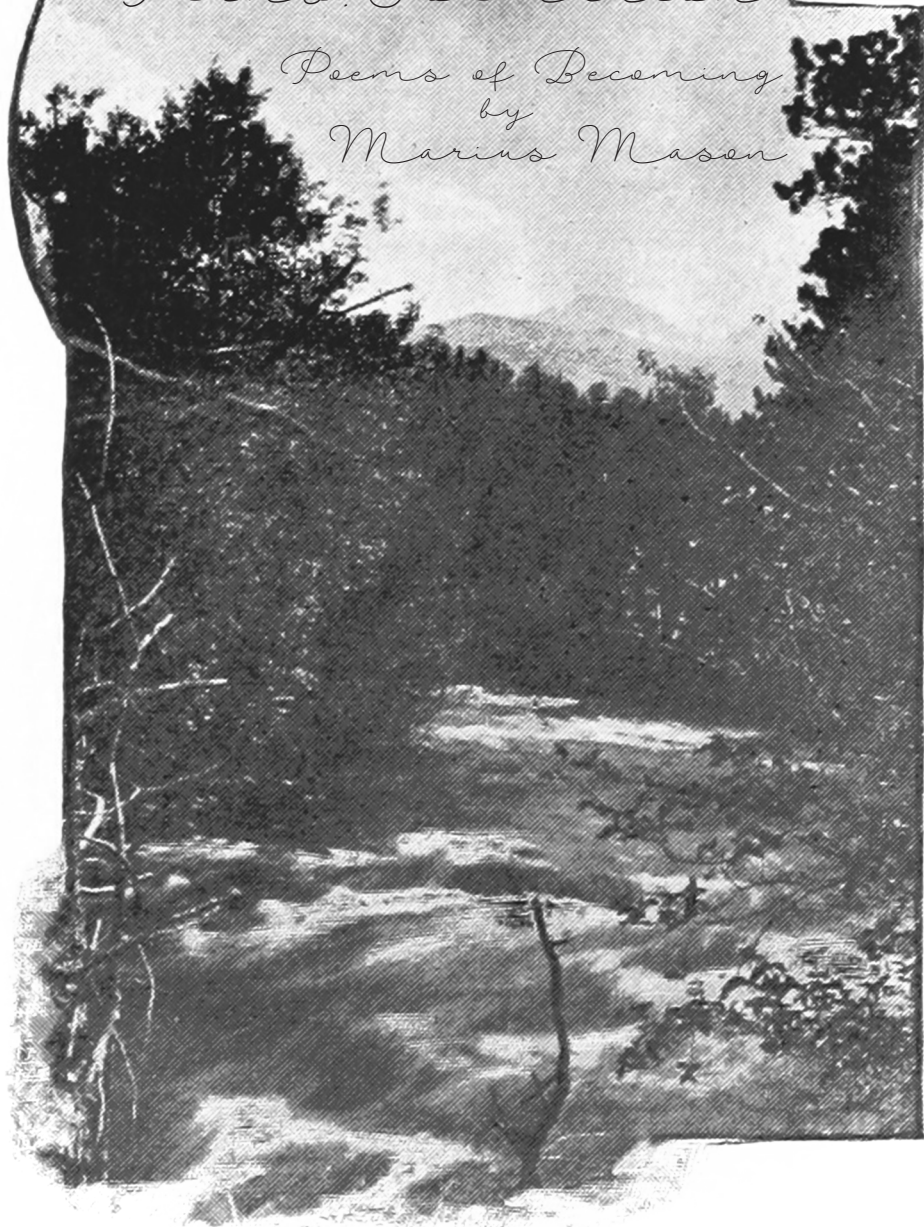
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by Marius Maser*



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*Trans. Formation*

*Poems of Becoming*  
*by*  
*Marius Mason*



## *Introduction and Notes on the Text*

In February 2009, Marius Mason was sentenced to nearly 22 years in federal prison for two acts of resistance: an arson at a Michigan State University genetics laboratory and an arson of logging equipment in Mesick, Michigan. As part of the plea agreement, Marius also admitted to dozens of other attacks against ecocidal companies, animal exploiters, and other purveyors of domination and control. Prior to his arrest, Marius had been involved for decades in the anarchist, environmental, and labor movements, participating in eco-defense campaigns and union organizing, among other projects. He is also a father, a musician, a painter, a journalist, and, as you will find in the following pages, a poet.

In 2010, Marius was moved to the Administrative Segregation Unit of the Federal Medical Center at Carswell Prison in Fort Worth, Texas. The move separated Marius from his friends and family, and has resulted in restrictions on communication and repeated disruptions of mail. On June 11th, 2014, Marius announced that he is a trans man, and in August 2016, after years of fighting for his autonomy, he became the first known trans man to be allowed to pursue transition from within the federal prison system.

Marius, despite the heavy restrictions put upon him by the prison authorities, despite the curbing of his autonomy over his body and expression of self, despite the many attempts by the state to bury him, has never stopped speaking for and with the earth, animals of all species, and the struggle for liberation of all life. The forms Marius' speech has taken – song, communiqué, poem – exemplify the constellation of subterranean languages available to rebels striving to undo the master's world and unlearn the master's language. The communiqué is words joined with concrete action; the song is words joined with the body; the poem is words trying to unravel themselves from the snare of domination. Destroying this world will require much of us: concrete acts, but also new ways of speaking which put us in communication with the irrepressible wildness flowing beneath our domesticated armoring.

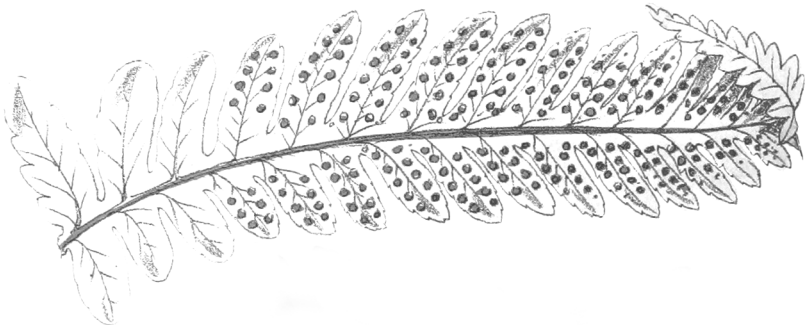


Prisons are defined by what they keep in (our loved ones, our friends, our comrades), but also what they keep out (communication, creativity, beauty). We should not overlook the fact that Marius is held captive in an acutely-repressive prison, where beautiful things are beaten back and any sun that shines brightly is crushed. Faced with blank walls which mangle the imagination and chain link fences which impede the marvels of free life, Marius has not surrendered his inner world to the enemy. Every free breath taken in this hell is a revolutionary act; every word that escapes is contraband.

It would do us well – as revolutionaries, and as human beings – to aid our imprisoned comrades in dismantling the fetters placed upon their tongues by the state. It has been said that no one should be able to go through their day without hearing the words of our prisoners. Much remains to be done in order to make this reality rather than rhetoric. This publication is one step in that direction.

We must continue walking the difficult path toward a free world. Marius and all of our comrades deserve nothing less.

1967





# Poems

Knowing our own, Knowing the other - Page 1

Prison Visit - Page 2

The Griffith Flaw - Page 3

Entropy - Page 4

Untitled 1 - Page 5

It's Like Aesop Said - Page 6

Lion - Page 7

Sex and Revolution - Page 8

Isle of Widows - Page 9

Untitled 2 - Page 11

Pain - Page 12

Pattern - Page 13

Untitled 3 - Page 15

Help - Page 16

Still and Yet - Page 17

The Blues are Older Than Memphis - Page 19

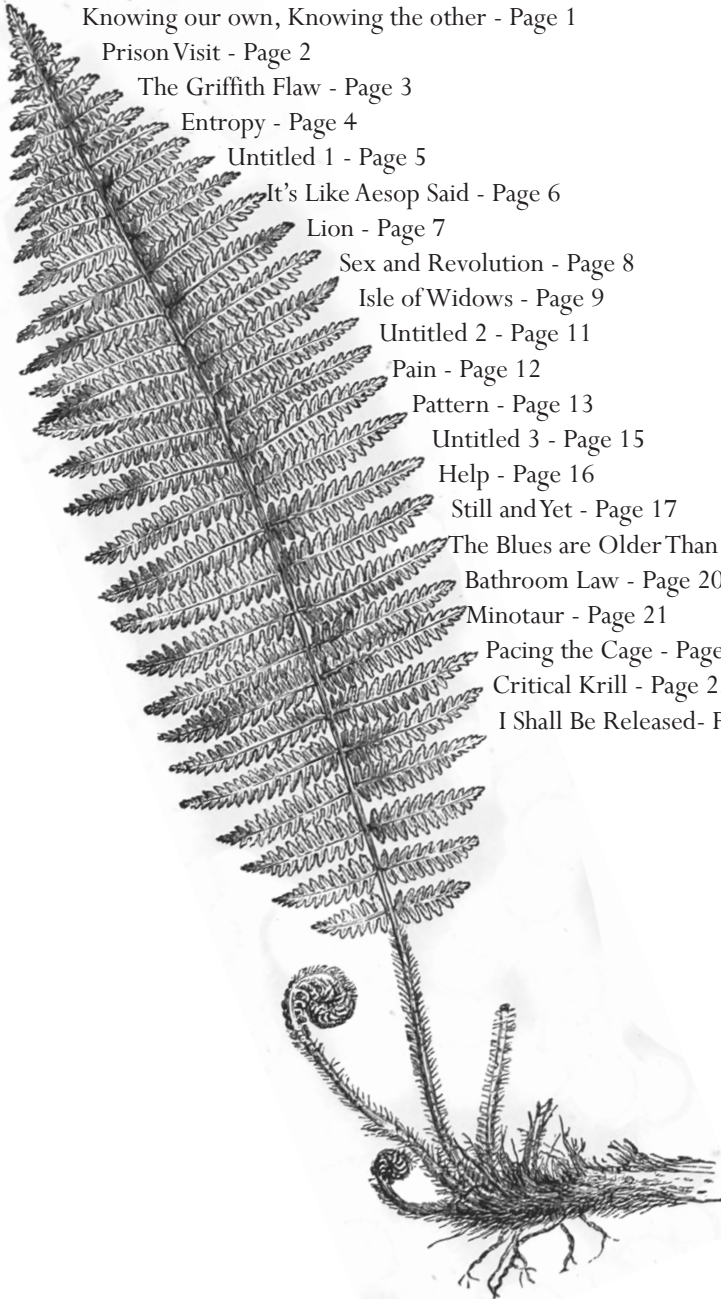
Bathroom Law - Page 20

Minotaur - Page 21

Pacing the Cage - Page 22

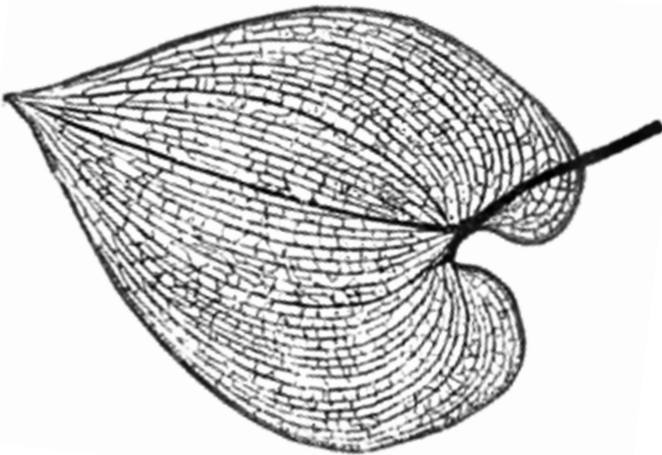
Critical Krill - Page 23

I Shall Be Released - Page 24



## *Knowing our own, Knowing the other*

All places have their own untouchables  
Legions of the silent wraiths who carry away the nightwaste  
The wrathful ones who dig the ditches or dream outside the lines  
Whose livelihoods are distasteful  
Whose demeanor is deemed the same  
Averting eyes, you might avoid contagion  
Move quickly into the light if you can  
And the Empire is yours- privilege  
The detested take the shadows, the alleys  
Stroll slowly to be over-taken  
Murdered, myth en-misted, shame veiled  
But parallel lives entangle like  
Electrons in distant universes  
Quantum physics struggles to explain  
The mystery of separate but conjoined lives  
Particles or souls  
All illusions of distinction fall away  
If we accept this insight  
Knowing our own, knowing the other





## *Prison Visit*

Prison is  
Hushed and heavy  
Like water near the Ocean's floor,  
Then loud and bitter,  
Like fractious storms lashing the sky  
Everything cement and nerves  
And too many years gone by...  
The heart requires a place to rest  
From all its maddened wanderings  
The raft of the Medusa tossed  
And trembling in the sea.  
Or just this table here  
And you across from me,  
A sunlit sail  
And I this aching castaway.  
I cannot touch you – it is not allowed.  
Our eyes hold  
Hanging onto words  
Until a hand falls upon the back  
The narrow hall, the clanking keys  
The door, the cell  
And under.



## *The Griffith Flaw*

When I lived in the world  
Of laboratories, glass, machines and noise,  
A white-coated novice in  
The delicate chemistry of mixing things,  
We were warned of the Griffith Flaw in glassware  
The crystal lattice structure bruise  
From bouncing, banging, bumping  
A thousand times on unforgiving surfaces,  
Heating and re-heating beakers  
In repetition just to prove a point,  
Until one unexpected day  
The slightest touch of cup to countertop,  
It pops.  
The shattered pieces propelled out  
At last revealing an atomic dysfunctionality,  
The reality  
Of things rushing towards entropy  
As just this morning, likewise  
Brushing teeth and peering in the mirror  
For the billionth time this life,  
I couldn't see me anymore,  
The damage of reflection done  
And pieces flown away,  
What was left, was changed  
In ways I could not say.



## Entropy



What do you see  
In this Winter face?  
The imminent decomposition of the unbeautiful?  
Even so, even in that  
I see that all my pieces  
Have their own story.  
My hands have worked a brand of  
Entropy  
That is much more sociology than  
Physics.  
My body has bourne children  
who fly away from me  
In becoming of themselves.  
This body burned and burning,  
Flies apart in exothermic birthing,  
Molds again in endothermic coupling,  
Touches ground and stretches to the sky,  
Dissipating heat.  
My hands move across the page  
With words this time,  
The taste, the sound of them  
Drips, mists, rains in torrents,  
Common-tongued as a storm on a street corner;  
Cursed and shared and necessary.  
Fingers pushing colors from my eyes into images that speak,  
Or pulling the taut metallic strings of a guitar,  
And waves flowing between notes  
Falling from my lips  
Joining with the air,  
Streaming rising, molecules  
Dispersed to dance,  
Becoming something new,  
Somewhere else,  
Again.



*Untitled 1*

An evening like this: summer sunset  
cricket song, peachy sky  
reaching up the vaulted ceiling, cathedral clouds  
clouds shaped like mountains along the Yangtze River  
improbable, fairy-tale bubble domes, drifting closer  
stilling to stalagmites all along the stretched horizon  
quickly darkening to throw this garden into bas-relief  
The air no cooler than my blood, and still, so still  
The tiny humming of mosquitos hovering in my line of sight  
I will remember this when I cannot see  
the sun for days on end.







*It's Like Aesop Said (an Election Year Cautionary Tale)*

Oh these silly frogs, all day long they cry  
God tossed back His head, annoyed, with a sigh  
They pray for a King and don't want to be free  
What shall I do for them, why can't they see?  
A King is a dangerous thing  
To have or to be  
An idea came to Him then, with a smile  
Alright, alright, He shouted down to them, just wait a while  
I'll make you a 'leader', let this praying be shushed!  
Now get out of the way, or else you'll be crushed  
From the high vaults of heaven, dropped the prodigious log  
Crashing into the waters of the little frogs' bog  
It settled, all sturdy, a place in the sun  
And the frogs all jumped up to sit, one by one  
An evil-eyed pike cruised the shadows and pouted  
I can't get you up there, not at all, he shouted  
With a flick of his tail, he swam away fast  
The little frogs sighed, safe and happy at last  
But quickly grew bored, as little frogs do  
Oh this log is no King! It can't say what to do!  
Their cries rose to Heaven and managed to reach  
God's angry ears, and a lesson He'd teach  
Oh very well, I will send you a King  
One made in Hell, I guess that's the thing!  
Enough of your whining, your foolishness dooms you  
Here comes your King, you deserve him to rule you!  
A black silhouette blocks the sun and the glade  
And the frogs all look up from their place in the shade  
An imperious heron, a beak sharp as a blade  
Feathered pompadour floating, with tons of pomade  
Has come to be King of the frogs

## *Lion*

I have been a lion on the plains of Africa  
Matching sinew against sinew,  
Timing, speed, all considerations  
In the meditation of the possible  
Measuring the balance,  
Risk and resource,  
Gain and gamble,  
Life and death.  
Now I am a lion on a fabricated rock,  
Dozing in and out of dreams  
Golden eyes reflecting faces  
Indolent and gazing,  
They at me,  
Me at them,  
Shadows of ourselves  
No longer wild.

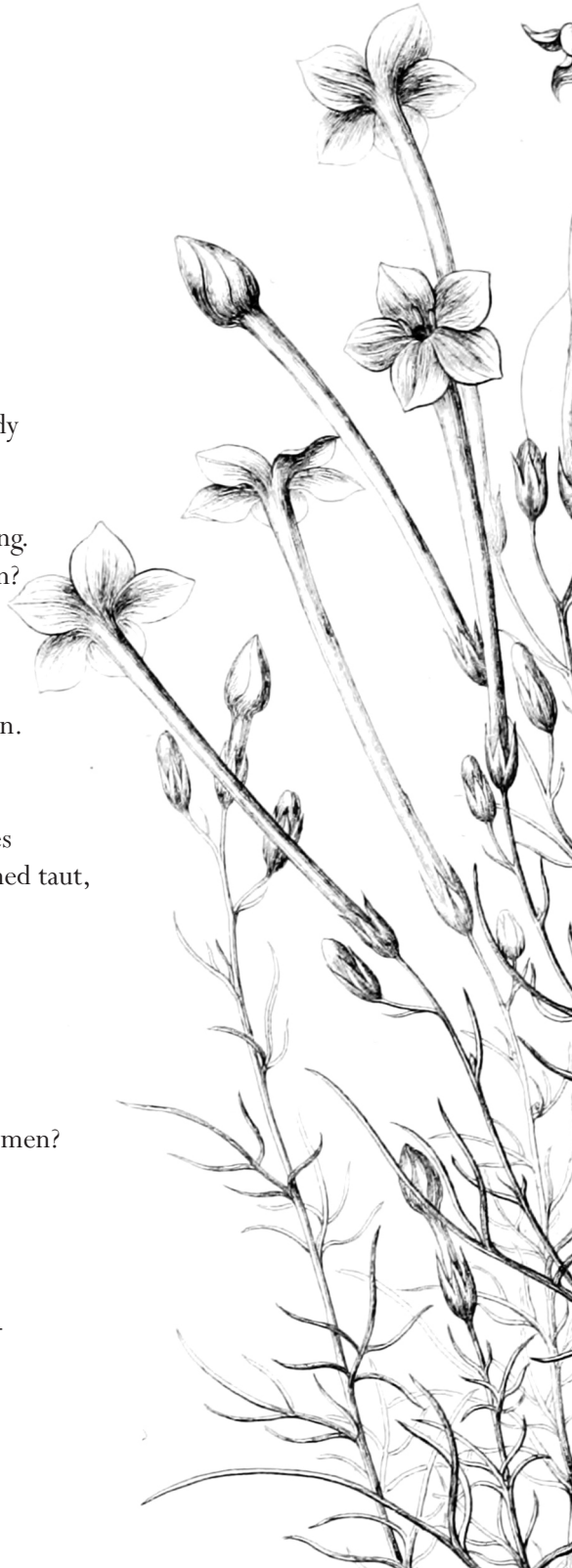


## *Sex and Revolution*

As I move my hands my lips across your supple  
body blending everything becomes bewildered unpretended  
in these moments of ecstatic rhythm  
reggae sweat your breath so still  
lingering upon my lips  
your body mine the last of the wine  
spilled between us in a kiss  
an offering not offered to some other god  
but shared  
these moments of ecstatic rhythm writhing  
in abandon Dionysus could not have taught me  
mysteries more powerful than making love  
all acts of pleasure consummate rebellion  
all conscious nakedness can shuffle off this mortal coil  
and by expanding span the growing chasm between  
Self and Not-Self  
eliminating borders to abandonment's continuum  
a communion of surrender and resistance  
which is survival and our happiness  
think this: distances are dangerous  
illusions of distinctions are conclusions of  
extinction  
we must be in love with the world become it  
to save it from our own self-hatred  
lover, I caress the whole in you with every touch  
turning us away from sure destruction  
bring your lips again to mine  
and seal our sweet conspiracy of sex  
and revolution pleasure is our bread and wine  
and Anarchy our paradise  
chaos comes into the inner heart surrounds the world  
around just at the moment we dissolve our barriers  
against it in these moments of ecstatic rhythm  
we become the everywhere and everything  
at last, uncontrollable and free

## *Isle of Widows*

The Isle of Widows, Nicaragua  
The heat rises, steam  
Moves  
With the breath of trees,  
Into the air  
Haunted eyes speak  
Their questions of a mystery  
The men of science come to study  
This embarrassing plague  
This withering away  
That leaves the widows wondering.  
What is the science of oppression?  
Dr. Mengele knew,  
Lurching through the labs  
Of a past that keeps repeating.  
One watches without compassion.  
One takes notes.  
Hypothesis:  
Can we demonstrate that decades  
Of muscles, tortured and stretched taut,  
Dessicated and starved,  
Both trees and men  
Carved  
To pull the juices out  
That make the wheels  
That run the Machine –  
That this is what makes husks of men?  
Hypothesis:  
The delicate dust, pot-pouri  
This chemistry  
That drapes the trees  
A veil for the bride of industry –  
Is it reliable to say  
That this is why the kidneys  
Fail?







How can we conceivably equivocate?  
Data must be reproducible  
After all,  
We are concerned with methodology  
Not murder.  
But by measurement,  
We engage and change  
The very thing we measure.  
Heisenberg knew everything.  
The possibilities of multiple hypotheses  
Obscures the issue  
Like a miasma rising from the  
Fermenting swamp  
Of colonial relationships.  
Old at nineteen  
The bones pushing the envelope  
Of brown skin  
Internally imploding  
One the Isle of Widows  
One boy wants to know why he is dying.  
So they take his blood,  
Then shrug  
And send him home to die.

*Untitled 2*

I am filled with the need to do something sensible  
I am filled with the dread of the perceived inevitable  
I am fired with the passion of a love unconquerable  
I am filled with the poetry that runs a blood river  
    Deep within me, moving through me  
    Coming out in ways where I've been wounded.



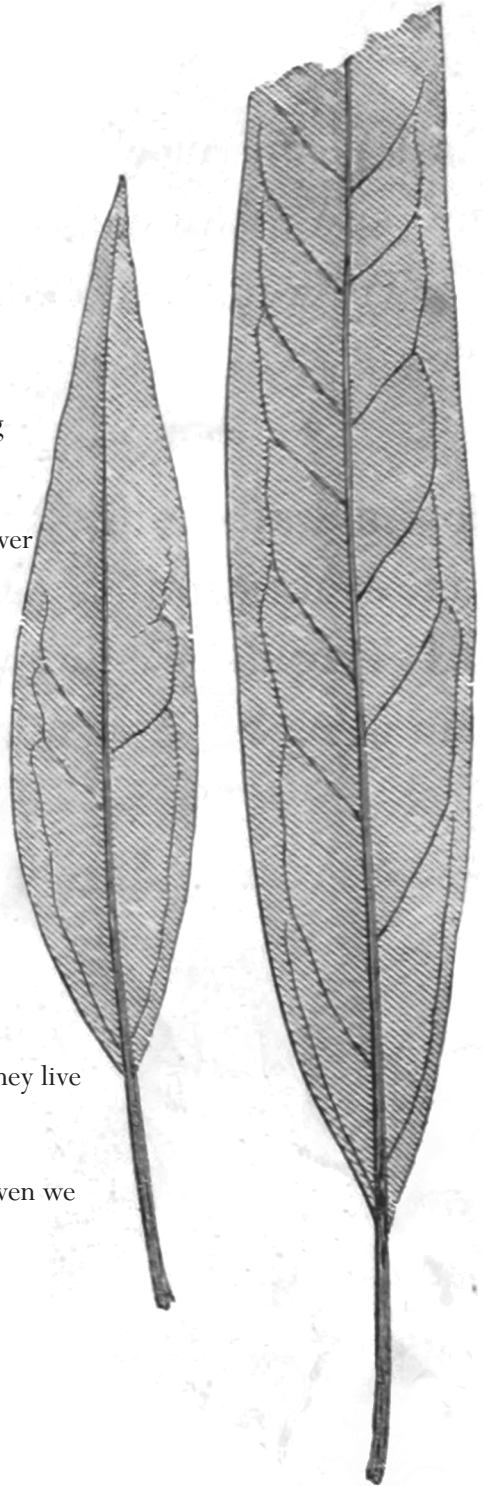


## *Pain*

I bear a present witness to the face of misery and madness,  
Tortured souls who across my eyes and sweep the soul aside,  
Collectively to hide inside the anus of the body politic  
Drenched in offal, horrified, the soul forgets itself  
Remembering nothing of its shining, lofty ways upon the wind.  
It weighs terrible and heavy, a constant painful witness to this misery and  
madness that  
We embrace as “civilized”  
But we are better than we are, and once we were  
This pain deforms us, even as we hide in it  
Oh, let it be a chrysalis and not a cage!  
As we remember once again together our constant and true nature –  
Forever Wild & Free

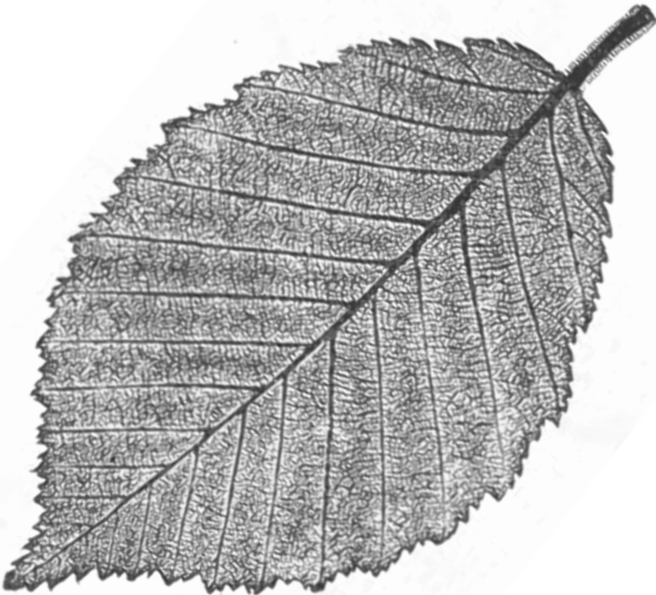
## *Pattern*

What lies within, still ties without  
One flowing through one  
From one into another  
A filament of Spirit  
Spun spider fine  
And finite  
Just enough to touch us all.  
Tying tiny threads of possibility  
Tangling in the warp and woof of being  
Of beings that combined begin to be  
A Pattern  
My blood a river running through forever  
Traveling through Time to be, to die  
And yet again to Be  
A Pattern  
And even so, it is illusion  
Everything that is and is not  
Solid matter moves in mini-galaxies  
Of energy, attraction and repulsion  
Particles partnered and divorced  
In constant cycles  
Spiraling out from tiny orbits to  
The constancy of crystals  
As they form a myriad molecules  
Then break free to form another form  
Until the forms are so expanded that they live  
Like nations  
Sovereign and undivided  
A wolf, a man, a mouse, a tree – and even we  
Are only parts of something whole  
Portals to an entity that seems  
Complete, complex  
And yet  
Spins within the galaxy of  
Planets





Space yawning cold between  
And all in turn in motion  
Moving as a single Universe  
A Pattern that is, is not  
And is again  
Only the most dangerous and  
Arrogant of soul insanity  
Could dictate that the thread  
Be cut  
At any point  
For we are tied  
One to another  
A filament of Spirit  
Spun spider fine  
And finite  
Just enough to touch us  
All.



### *Untitled 3*

stagger drunkenly towards truth  
meaning circles in a dervish spiral  
spinning, coming closer to the center  
reaching out to grasp the bigger picture  
beneath this night sky, blackened and still  
blanketed with stars  
what hand moved this chaos into beauty?  
each point singular, unique and self-sufficient  
but collectively, contributing its own fire unto the  
whole  
and all of it so huge past understanding  
a wonderment of firmament proportions  
rooted in the Earth, my toes dig in to hold me  
stretching up to touch this light  
with hands aching to be more  
I am a tree, the bridge between,  
And revelation slams into perception  
like a comet skipping on the edge of atmosphere  
And She is there in pieces  
within me and without me  
She speaks to me in stars  
you are the everything and nothing  
of your own desire and detachment  
be with Me  
and We  
are Beautiful.





## *Help*

“Refuse no one the good on which he has a claim  
when it is in your power to do it for him.”

-Book of Proverbs, Bible

“Refuse none help that cry for it”  
And it is celebrated virtue  
So exhorted for a thousand years,  
But still the trees are mystified  
That in their general innocence,  
Their generosity and grace  
That lifts us all,  
Their cries for no more help  
Than to be left alone in endless peace,  
Each Bodhisattva bridging Earth and Heaven –  
These cries  
Fall into the graves  
Of human ears  
And seal our fate,  
Entwined.



## *Still and Yet*

Still, the mid-wife's jar  
sits in a corner of a solemn room  
ready with the herbs, ancient and almost reliable,  
for cleaning house, a tug within  
that leaves & black hole, gaping,  
hungry  
for the time when we will have our freedom

freedom not pulled out  
bloody on the hook of a hanger  
illegal instrument high jacked  
for a purpose larger than life  
Or children slapped away,

Mothers catatonic and despondently cruel at the dead-end  
Of the spectrum, parent and child alike robbed of nurture, famished,  
Babies thrown in garbage dumps and children,  
Sight unseen, snatched away by grasping, greedy  
hands, the wealthy parasitic class came to claim the prize  
or fainting, standing at the health factory, daunted by throbbing hordes of vigilantes,  
Or inside waiting to be counseled into dropping  
\$300 bucks and a fetus  
Into the corporate bucket  
Of commodities and dreams

Or hand out ready, shaking a bowl  
At the government  
Aims to terminate a life  
With no other script than conscription  
Clutching Uncle Sam's knees  
Perpetual multitudes born already  
ploughing, eyes cast down  
Living small in the belly of the beast  
Belly broadening, a serf to Greed Incarnate

I am sick to death  
Of men forcing women  
To have babies  
Denying gender gifts  
And raping their own issue,  
Be family these enforced new lives

And I am sick to death

To lose babies  
Emotional blackmail of abandonment  
In convenient and slippery denial  
Is this progressive?  
And once again the woman bears  
Or bears responsibility and risk alone

Until it is no more  
A question of financial obligation/devastation  
Or external pseudo moral pressing down demand submission  
We do not have our freedom  
Until it is an unencumbered choice  
To live one's life without entanglements  
Accomplishing the hearts desire  
We do not have our freedom  
Until the balance zeros  
For every woman, every time  
The fact of imminent potential issue  
Must be faced  
We do not have our freedom

Until we complete the circle of community  
Where all ways of living joyfully and harmless  
Can be practiced in the light  
Without impediment to any path

We do not have our freedom  
Until the balance zeros  
For every woman, every time  
The fact of imminent potential issue  
Must be faced  
We do not have our freedom

Until we complete the circle of community  
Where all ways of living joyfully and harmless  
Can be practiced in the light  
Without impediment to any path  
We do not have our freedom

And we do not have our freedom yet





## *The Blues Are Older Than Memphis*

From mem'ries of Eurydice  
The living Orpheus retreats  
In agony condemns  
His gifts and disdains life  
A lyre that fills with song inspired,  
By grief beguiled  
The breathless trees lean in and fill  
With silent, watchful birds  
Who  
Bearing voiceless witness, sigh  
This love denied  
By death and second chances lost  
Entangles all  
Who hearing,  
Are enthralled  
In most exquisite and  
Connective pain  
( 'cuz everybody loves the blues)

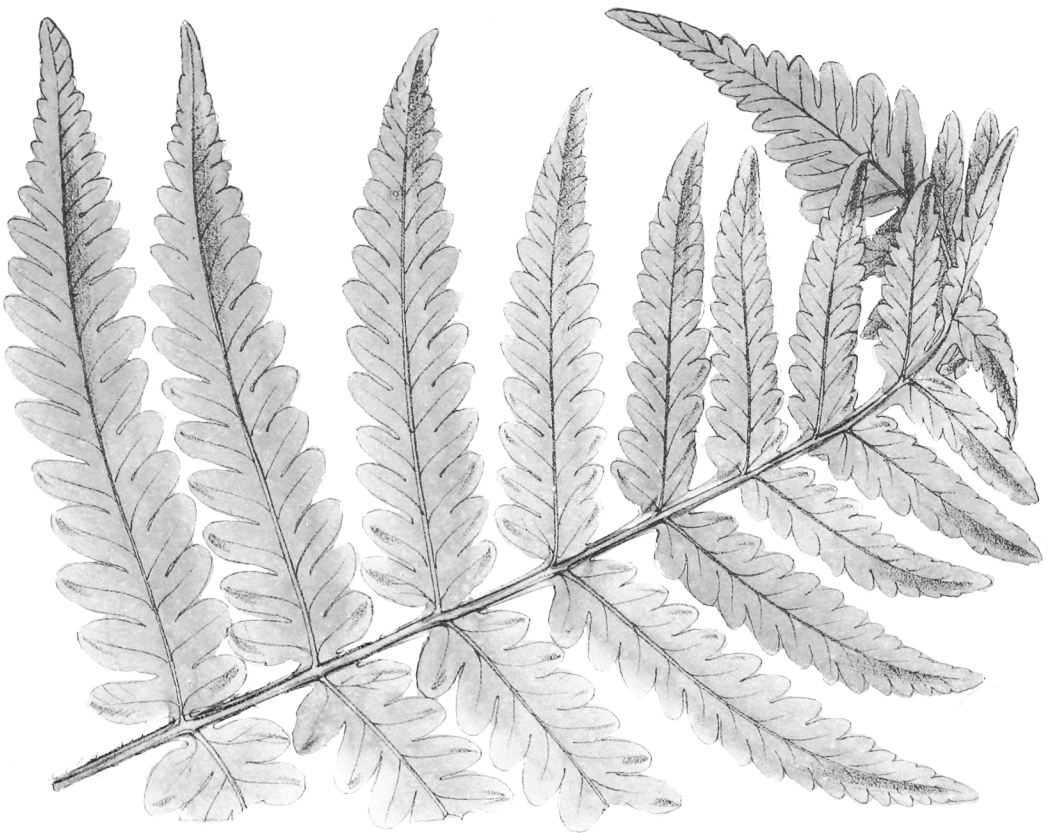


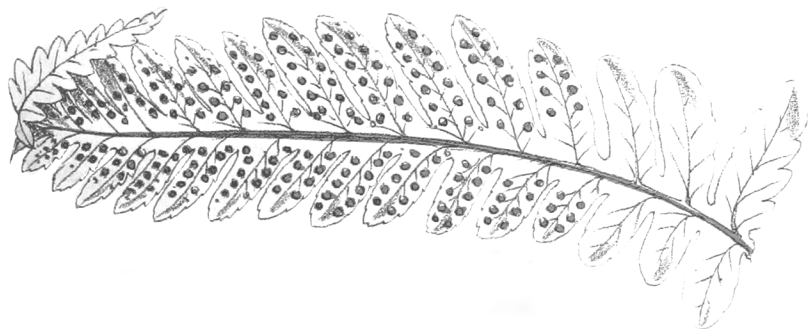
## *Bathroom Law*

I am in the middle of a shit storm without a scrap of toilet paper  
Trans and token and barely tolerated in Texas,  
Though way past school-age  
The news these past few days like a Jerry Springer marathon on one topic  
Unhinged angry-faced bullies, Rainbow hearts and brave allies  
Accusations and absurdities fly around the room like spitballs  
All about who can do what where in the bathrooms at school  
We all gotta pee, it's a commonality  
In history, predictably, there's always the backlash  
Every tortured step forward in civil rights progression towards equality, humanity  
Is met with tragedy  
From battered Medgar Evers' body  
And Billie Holiday's strange hangin' fruit  
To secret sailors flung overboard at sea and  
Harvey Milk gunned down for being gay  
How many years of little white signs on Bathrooms, drinking fountains, busses  
Throughout the taciturn South  
That said that to share this American life as equal citizens  
Was to be contaminated  
Those thugs worried about safety, too  
They were protecting Southern womanhood by killing four little girls at church  
What a load of crap, a tsunami of filth  
A backed-up toilet of ignorance, no less dangerous  
For its lack of common sense  
But here's the clincher  
We all have skin in this game  
No matter what color you are  
We all gotta pee, it's a commonality  
and just like those wily old Nazis  
Who knew to go for the edges, then cut to the middle  
If they can make laws shaming and blaming and curtailing the rights  
Of people like me, now  
Then they can make a law stick to your sore spot, too  
It's all about power and precedent,  
And really, we all gotta pee  
That's just human

## *Minotaur*

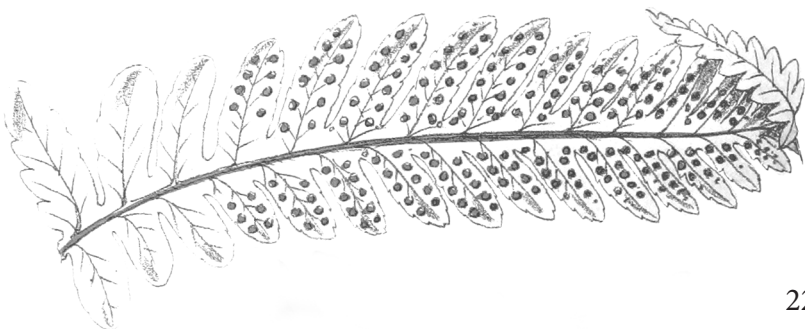
Bull-headed, yes  
That's what I'd say  
Crashing around the world like in the proverbial china shop  
All those broken pieces left behind  
No wonder it was the Labyrinth for me  
Still, my fingers touch upon (from time to time)  
A silken thread in the half-dark  
Winding through these endless, circling halls  
And somewhere close  
I smell a torch that burns

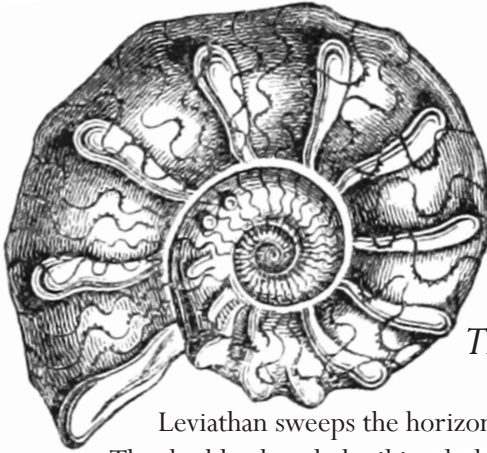




### *Pacing the Cage*

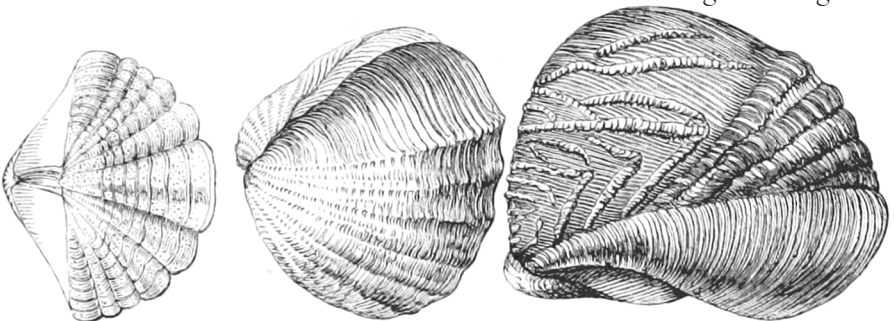
Clicking like a June bug's coat  
 Against the window's glass  
 Smash and smash and smash  
 Each sharp sting separated by a bout of drunken flight in helpless swirls,  
 Like how I put the colors on a cardboard plate  
 Forming an idea, but monkey mind is  
 Off and running, endless leaps and lunges  
 Tethered, tempered, tested, defining territory in resistance  
 Just like I touch the metal fences  
 As I run the corners of the yard  
 Like some ancient Irish seventh son  
 The expendable one  
 Who sounded the alarm  
 And marked the boundaries of home  
 And where the war begins





## *The Critical Krill*

Leviathan sweeps the horizon, beloved behemoth  
The double-shoveled tail implodes the space between  
Water and air  
Seen from space by busy satellites  
Passing past Greenpeace zodiacs,  
And cruising trawlers, stories high  
Scraping the ocean floor with nets so wide and deep,  
Everything on such a grand scale that words like  
Huge and monster are beggared by the truth  
A world away, a billion mouths in a hundred lands  
Gape and gulp at the riches of the sea  
And fancy themselves the masters of the Universe  
With all the world their table, spread with delectable's  
That once were lives  
And all those grand illusionists could not exist at all  
Without the tiny, glassine, fragile, impossibly fringed and fancy crustaceans,  
The critical krill,  
Hidden in the dark waters  
But holding all the light.







## *I Shall be Released*

It may be years before anyone sees me here at all  
My transition is a conceptual art installation  
A work in progress – with no progress  
These are mean times, in the meantime  
There's a rhythm to my heartbeat that's  
Faster now than it has ever been  
And I speak to my heart in meditation  
The self selling the self  
Try to whisper an apology  
We are not at war  
The flutter of my breath on my lips tells me  
I shaved today  
Though I realize that is not wisdom, I should be less aware of that  
Thinking, I am thinking  
And not meditating  
(which is failing to meditate)  
But for one fragment of a space between breaths  
I am off, I am with, am not alone as I  
As such, per se  
Reprieved of this iteration  
And can believe (perhaps, tentatively)  
That I will be released.



To get updates on Marius please visit  
[www.supportmariusmason.org](http://www.supportmariusmason.org)

