

JAMES OWENS

Neither Speech nor Silence

I will love you then by saying your death.

Is this a gift, your death

a failing gesture in the voice?

Awake in the early still-dark,

I will beat hollow a grave

inside my breathing to bury

your death, the frantic muteness,

the hallowed word your name

to come to void here,

a finish. No other rest then,

I will be like those cursed

who flee when none pursues.

A black draft your death

will be is already my aphasia.

I can barely speak this now—

but then you will break the wires

between words and their

referents. This blankness

is the cost of touching your

death: *tree river stone*

love body light, meaning *impossible*,

forever a gasping toward

a no, no room to shape

the air into a denial, no shape,

words fraying from the mouth,

no space for them to travel through.

HERON TREE

31 May 2015

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ABOUT JAMES OWENS

James Owens is the author of *An Hour is the Doorway* (Black Lawrence Press 2007) and *Frost Lights a Thin Flame* (Mayapple Press 2007). His poems have appeared in *The Cortland Review*, *Superstition Review*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, and *The Stinging Fly*. He received an MFA from the University of Alabama and edited *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review* from 2000 to 2003. He lives in Wabash, Indiana, and Massey, Ontario, and blogs at *ein klage-himmel* (circumstanceandmagic.blogspot.com).

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