

# Riding with Destiny

by  
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First Edition

Set in New Baskerville

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## The Crowning with Thorns

he leaves much to be desired  
at table  
never finishes a sentence.  
crowds come to drive nails through  
the designated holes in his hands.  
—a modern cross, like a disposable lighter,  
is propped against an altar—  
someone takes bets.  
the crowd cheers as he mounts the cross  
a crown quickly position'd on his skull  
he takes each thorn swallows it.  
he holds the crown in his right hand  
it changes to a mirror.  
he spits thorns into the crowd  
the cross dissolves  
the crowd disappears  
he folds the altar  
into his pocket  
& is gone.

# Managing Gravity

*for John Thomas*

Death taps me on the shoulder this morning, and says  
“we need to talk”

“indeed we do,” I say, & stare him squarely in  
the jaw. “What have you been doing with  
yourself,” I ask

“managing gravity,” says he, “speaking of  
which you’ve been avoiding me”

“averting, not avoiding,” says me

“that’s semantics,” he says

“You see me, I see you. I’m okay with being  
mortal—why can’t you accept defiance—  
why must you constantly stand over me while I work  
you make it hard to focus.”

“You’d have no work were it not for me,” says he

“Who died and made you god,” says me.

I move close enough to smell his

breath, and tell him he doesn’t stink like Dostoyevsky said—

“You’re not the hot shit you think you are. Keep your hands off  
my Aunt Sally—keep your hands off

poetry—what makes you think you can mess with

poets—stay in your corner, keep out of mine.” He asks

“Why do you move around so much—do you think  
you can escape me?”

“As long as I have moving parts, I’m going to keep moving &  
I’m not going to stop even when those parts give way.”

## **a bird**

there's a

bird

chirping

outside

my

window

someone needs

to tell him

a storm is

coming.