

CROW-BLUE, CROW-BLACK

CHIP LIVINGSTON

NY
Q Books™

The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc.
New York, New York

NYQ Books™ is an imprint of The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc.

The New York Quarterly Foundation, Inc.
P. O. Box 2015
Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10113

www.nyqbooks.org

Copyright © 2012 by Chip Livingston

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of the author except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

First Edition

Set in New Baskerville

Layout and Design by Raymond P. Hammond

Cover Illustration: "Duality", 11" x 14" oil on canvas
©2009 Deb Kirkeeide | www.debkirkeeide.com

Author photo: ©2012 Gabriel Padilha | www.gabrielpadilha.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012933644

ISBN: 978-1-935520-57-3

Contents

CROW-BLUE: south turns north

POEM^x (THAT I THOUGHT BROKE MY HEART) / 15

CORVUS & HYDRA / 16

TO REMOVE ANGER / 17

ST. FRANCIS IS A VERB / 18

POEM TO MY BOYFRIEND'S HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY
VIRUS / 19

SHEDDING / 21

OCTOBER CITY / 22

GREENWICH AVENUE / 23

JOHN WAYNE'S OLD PORNOS / 24

EVOLUTION / 25

COME TO THE DEN OF MY HILLS / 27

YELLOW / 28

QUANTUM LEAP / 29

MISTAKEN IDENTITY / 30

CELEBRITIES ON GREENWICH AVENUE / 31

L-M-N-ATION / 33

CARDINAL CROSS / 34

ON THE WAY TO BROTHERHOOD / 35

23 / 36

DAD JOKES AROUND BEFORE DEFINING AIDS / 37

VENUS RETROGRADE / 38

HOLIDAYS IN ABU GHRAIB / 39

MERCURY IN URANUS / 40

NORTHEAST KINGDOM / 41

YESTERDAY. TOILET. FLUSH. / 42

IF NANCY WAS AARON SMITH / 44

FOR THE DOUBTS / 45

FOR TIM (*WHO SAYS HI TO DAVID*) / 47

GOOGLISM FOR: JOE BRAINARD / 48

CROW-BLUE, CROW-BLACK / 51

CROW-BLACK: north turns south

THIRTEEN CROW FEATHERS / 55
HOW IS IT? / 56
MIXED-BLOOD AT CATHOLIC SCHOOL / 57
TO SING A MAN'S LOVE TO YOU / 58
MEDIODÍA / 59
SPIDER MEDICINE / 60
HUNTING SON / 61
EXTERIORS / 62
WHO'S PRETENDING? / 63
A JOYFUL NOISE / 64
THE TITLE OF THE PAINTING IS SAINT THOMAS / 65
PUNTA DEL ESTE PANTOUM / 66
ST. NICHOLAS / 67
ANÓ GRANDE (YOU COPYRIGHTED YOUR NAME AND NOW I
HAVE TO PAY YOU TO SAY IT) / 68
GOOD DOG / 69
TRUMPET / 70
MARS CONJUNCT VENUS / 71
BITING ON GINGER / 72
ST. SOLOMON AND THE REPTILES / 73
MISIONES / 74
POSTCARDS FOR KENWARD / 75
SEPTIPUS / 77
MAN COUNTRY / 78
SNAKEBIRD / 79
"WE OURSELVES SEE IN ALL RIVERS" / 80
INSPIDERED / 81
IEMANJA / 82
MIRROR SONNET / 83
A PROPOSAL / 85

END NOTES / 87

POEM^x (THAT I THOUGHT BROKE MY HEART)

Tell the Mississippi I'm a drunk vigilante
and there are more than x ways to skin a cat,
more than one Godot, more than radical
departure from someone else's last concerto;
there is corpus luteum in prenatal mouse ovaries,
for instance; there's my jumpy sister all legs,
but that's a cockroach in a different pissing contest,
and I'm behaving this way for a couple of reasons,
no longer manipulating the lower case x ,
not tag editing the game to a stranger's equation
where $x < (y \ x \ y \ x \ y)$.

I was actually thinking of going Catholic
until the saint switched his appetite, went cable,
got oiled like a ladies man in follicle merriment.
And this is the first reason I have taken the compass,
followed the drinking gourd, why I have given up
the tendency for false false sorrow. The second
started in water, in Apalachee brotherhood,
where x was big, bloated, obsolete—a con
out of prison, and with minutes to the masquerade.
Ignorance was pollinated by small country wings.
You were tail paint, a dead tongue witnessed
and reliably unhinged; but I found a grackle of truth
in my Etruscan slumber and your sleep woke me hoarse.
I'd found something that I couldn't tell the night.
There is fly breath, there is magic, there is beautiful.
There is the x inverted, the x imaginary,
and the x as a negative number.

THIRTEEN CROW FEATHERS

In my grandmother's kitchen hang reminders
to my uncles we have to eat what we kill

I have grown up by squirrel by opossum and once by canary
an awful tasting story really so think about venison

We were bird clan therefore cannibal by religion
talon keychained to our turkey beards

My mother will tell you about dangerous
blue jays to leave babies alone

A fall is sometimes a jump sometimes a push
Survival is sometimes rehabilitation

Roost together in groups Identify your kin
Press against each other Defend your territory

A PROPOSAL

I am a young man, Fire. You
are a young man, Wood. Listen,
I will go with you. In the air,
I enter, ancient. You in the smoke.

Kingfisher just kissed you.
The green frog, he just kissed you.
The dragonfly, wood, water, stone.
Choices are frequently made through inspiration.

A cloth, a chair, a walking stick.
Various symbols to elevate you.
The little white dog made footprints.
You and I just hold up the stars.