

For My Closet
by Andrew Bligh

"[...] the onetime island would keep remorselessly encroaching, grinding down opposition, overwhelming the existing shoreline of Alaska or being overwhelmed by it, and no casual observer would be able to detect where or how the join of this new land to the old had been accomplished." ; - from Alaska by James Michener

I

You were the only map of my life waiting to be forgotten
to be simply space to sever and attach new terrains
You are the Alaska that Michener wrote about
A wooden train set boxed a microscope now broken
the slides are shards of small things minutiae things unseen
cotton polyester nylon rayon strung up and hung
the musty vitriol of people I could and couldn't wear is within
You always

homework leftover from 8th grade that once gave me armor a
teacher

someone to please to protect me when I wasn't able to
there is a warm breath vaguely absent within You
and no light for directions

the Southern Comfort the Cuervo

the joys in distance that You stored and told no one
You are the island that Michener wrote about
collecting countries islands en route
to the original continent made of many countries
forming a map with the bonds of love

II

"for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you." ; - Leviticus 18:27

These countries move and have shape in the
Wake of being of finding the lattitude in
the God and Heaven I savored at ten and twelve and thirteen
my "sins"; my self had no place with Him

God was a joy of all asking pleading
when I tried to make holy water ebb

from the fountain at Christian school
vitriol washing their mouths sluicing deep and wide
from their stabbed stigmata mutilating themselves others
their weapons gilded pages words only

I the Roman eyes Hadrian Antinous
vinegar and nails burning in their breaths my love
fucking their conditional unconditional God love
binding them to the dust streaming like sand
through His hands their bodies simmering
like crepe paper to a burning bush
this is another country claimed by mercy and
love

III

And if I say "i'm queer"; a sinewy cartographer of bone and
rhythm
a whittler of affects canned stereotypes strutting
with tickle-pink feet pestling high school mud with my boots
skirting frivolity can I still not have a real job?
shirk the priesthood? the hair salon?

the students walking with breaths and words eyelids
unhinging revealing a milky blankness
carping through bristly lashes dusting their sight
dusting this faggot undeterred tutoring at their school
not gyrating to top-40 with scissors and ammonia
resurrecting the phoenix from hundred-year-old hair

ruler-straight lines of desks reading of maps legends
of their straight own
a rainbow overarching the rocks and oceans
whipped by winds stolen by school books

the absence of just asking about their papers
of trellising them to the pen that showed me my self
with endless poems about Ophelia death wishes
the pen that was like a wood gouge making fistulae
in the alabaster meat that God gave me
punishing life my body Jesus with words and drugs
writing in a circle to keep writing releasing not moving on

sitting in tight plastic desks reading student writing
like intaglio with the ink dry

and I can't see the flowers

I can't see the lotus flowers the water-lilies in Ophelia's hair
I can't get the scene of that Olivier Hamlet out

as long as kids slip "gay"; or "faggot"; every so often
How do you connect kids to their writing--
who can't see the blossoms writing in the water