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G A V I N C R A I G

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REVELATORPRESS

Nine Poems © 2007 Gavin Craig

Published by Revelator Press, <http://revelatorpress.blogspot.com/>

“Written on a Leaf” was originally published in *Oats*. “My Father Taught Me to Forget Things” was published in *Sometimes I Have Been True to Nothing*. “Nov. 12, 1998” was published in *Fully Clothed*. *I Have Been Sometimes True to Nothing* and *Fully Clothed* are publications of the Michigan State University Press.

Book design: Brandon Kelley

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Lines

Lines are unnatural,
unavoidable.
For example, now
you can't see the way my hand
runs across the page,
disregarding syntax and rhyme,
and
traces
the curve
of your
thigh.



My Father Taught Me to Forget Things

Birthdays, and distance in moments together.



GAVIN CRAIG

Written on a Leaf

A leaf knows what it is to fly,
just barely,
a gift of insubstantiality.
While we shoulder our burdens like Atlas,
hunched under
the weight of the sky,
a leaf flares and fades,
and finally,
brown, paper dry, lets go.

And for a moment, if there is a breeze,
it may know the glory of weightlessness,
and remember its days of unappreciated green,
when it looked unashamed into the face of a god
and interceded for those of us who avert our eyes.



Ode to my job

Not every bookstore
smells like fresh
paper. Some smell
like malls and
some dust and
old leather, but
mine was a
new book, unbroken
binding and sharp
pages, with newspaper
ink and hazel-
nut, for texture.



GAVIN CRAIG

Lunchbreak

We wax embryonic on our lunchbreak
in a seventy-two degree fluorescent room
with comfortable chairs.

We fight like domesticated cats in the afternoon
because like them
we have nothing better to do.

We drink coffee in the morning
but it never really wakes us up.



untended

abandoned daily
embraced
by wood pulp and cardboard
cloth and styrofoam padding
he devoured pages
like a worm
on a shelf untended
forgotten
met with surprise
when he emerged
fluttering
to join the others



GAVIN CRAIG

Love is a language of small words

You find
it in the
cracks
in-between things—
sometimes
a glue,
and sometimes,
as it
hardens,
a wedge.



Nov. 12, 1998

My sister swallowed
a half-bottle of
pills. It was
all she had.
I try not
to own a
gun.



GAVIN CRAIG

Blues

I had a beer with the Almighty.
He apologized
for all the things that had gone
wrong.
I told him
I wouldn't change a thing.





GAVIN CRAIG is a graduate student at Michigan State University, where he co-founded The Offbeat, and served as Editor from 1999-2001.

“Nine Poems’ minimalism isn’t austere, but intimate and guarded, like fragments from a whispered, feverish conversation. Each poem withholds more than it gives. You read them as you would read a bruise hidden under a shirtsleeve, guessing that the discolored surface signals a story that’s unlikely to be told. But there’s also something bracing and reassuring about their silence, their insubstantiality; the signs of secrecy, a shared moment, a conspiracy.”

—TIMOTHY CARMODY, author of The Bridge and the River

