

## The New Penology

What is forgiveness in this world?  
To lie you down, whisper *I am sorry*.

Overhead drones watch over us all, silvery angels  
drilling through roofs and take you

apart, bit by bit, *I am so sorry*,  
the damages were not intended

collateral property laid against loss,  
forgiveness's shrapnel

biting plaster, to be without  
(a home) is to be

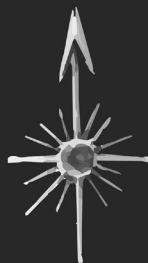
a criminal: in the new penology  
cell is no longer the unit of housing, but

beds are how we count, row by row you  
across the skin-smooth cement floor

in the field of florescent-white hum  
fraying each sentence, *I am* no

longer *becoming*, but a body laid out  
row by row, housed, an allotment

bed to bed, where what you have  
reached is not your destination





We are always crossing, the line seeps into  
The air, the ground

The line runs through our hearts, through our sleep  
Around the moon

Cutting each letter into squares, orchards  
No one returns to, the fruit dropping

There is no way back, only the compass's spinning  
North or south, west or east

Where the hummingbirds arrive from,  
The trail of ocelots through the thorn-bushes and dry

River-beds, the sand swallows our tracks  
The desert follows the desert

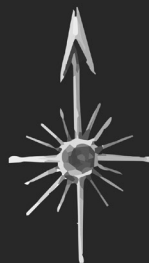
Sand shifting the line, what is on either side  
Is the same, life, death, god, sand, time

A gray sheen on the horizon, rain  
And here, shadowless, the sun above

The line a furrow our shadows sleep in,  
Waiting for seeds to be dropped and covered

A road north, the air pulsing with senses  
Feeling who you are and how you move,

Moving on, wrapping us, cordage, chain,  
Stitched, the sky our only covering





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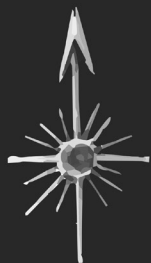
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We could be you  
if our names were different,

if their meter, stress and quietness following  
like the waves of the sea

were exchanged, like goods,  
properties, like horses on the steppes, golden

hummingbirds in the cloud-forests,  
but in this world, that you have

crossed to, unwanted, we will  
house you with all the forgiveness

bundled into warehouses, bar-coded  
and scanned into systems,

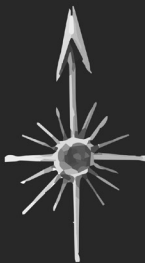
*I am sorry*, nothing can be  
retrieved, it's a numbers game we're locked

into, running them down to all zeros,  
down to dry bone and sinew,

and then  
we will chew on your forgiveness, for this

is the system we built just  
for that, don't be

deceived, the desert is a grave  
and this is all we are happy to offer.







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