

PATRIARCH

CRAIG CUNNINGHAM



Copyright © 2020 by Craig Cunningham

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without written permission of the copyright owner except for the use of quotations in a book review.

First paperback edition October 2020

Illustration and book design by Brooke Ashton

ISBN 978-0-9915749-3-3 (paperback)

Published by Canowan Books

canowan.com

[@canowanbooks](https://twitter.com/canowanbooks)

For more information about the author:

craigscunningham.com/books

[@craigscunningham](https://twitter.com/craigscunningham)

To contact the author about these books,
email canowanbooks@gmail.com

To receive more of Craig Cunningham's work,
including essays and short reflections on
current events, sign up for the newsletter at
craigscunningham.com

Other Books in Theology

1. PATRIARCH
2. DEFECTOR
3. REZA
4. NAZARENE
5. VIGIL

I have seen the burning bush and heard the Word speak. What was spoken over me will surely be spoken over you. There is a new kingdom in us now waiting to be claimed and then proclaimed to those who must hear the truth of their origins.

But my brothers and sisters, know this: to pursue the calling of God in your life is to rise in defiance of powerful forces. The sacred individual is incompatible with those who wish for you to bow before manmade towers.

Be strong. Be willing to give your life for what you know to be true.

You have been marked for death among the living, living among the dead.

- Craig Cunningham

Patriarch

The fire in me is reflected in Him, the One
who separated order from chaos with the Word
spoken over a hundred billion years, the name
that would not be revealed until the betrothed
traded her stones for eyes, tell me if you can see
the ancient spark of dawn in your heart tonight
child, this is your death and mercy all at once.
The name and the fire is leading us back to Him,
the road called Via Volver that takes us to the river,
the wells now full and the garden kingdom born.
The fire in He is reflected in me, I who was formed
the day he said be, there is the beating heart,
the mind, the hands, the spark of remembrance,
and laid upon the table are the subatomic elements
so children can come home and feast at any hour.
In the beginning He separated land from sea
and blew grandfather's stars across the skies,
but they do not belong to him alone, how can they
when the boy hidden under the bush is promised

his own stars, his own kingdom, his own inheritance,
and crumbs are enough to sustain Photine for now.
In the beginning He planted twelve fruit trees
meant to be dormant for the ages to come, ages
ruled by diseased kings, amnesiacs, pyrite hunters,
until the Nazarene says enough, the word is spoken,
let Mephibosheth run to his place at the table.
Behold the fire left on the mountain, the remnant
for the remnant to look upon as a mirror,
the revelation of the king and kingdom
that is I, you, all we need to know of Him.

To bless the nations one must rule the nations,
O Logos, hear the fire hidden on the mountain,
the ancient remnant of the Creator's heart
left to be found by man so he might remember
the blood coursing through his veins is eternal,
not the son of Adam's sin but the son of Adam
walking in the cool of the morning, spare me not
the flame, he declares, pushing over the peak
as Cynosure rises in the east, may my sons know
we are intentional creations of a good Creator,
the sacred defined, yet valleys below are home
to amnesiacs begging to be ruled by dying kings.
Give us a name, O king, put a sword in our hands,
O ruler of men, we are nothing but bones and blood
bound by cruel years, what else? Nothing, so be free.
Fools fall on bended knee to forfeit their hearts
upon the altars renamed in every passing age,
let us call this one courage, this one righteousness,
this one fairness, this one justice, this one love.

The fire still burns on the mountain tonight,
the Word is still speaking stars into expanding skies,
NOT YET, Logos, go forth and discover the universe
groaning for order, place your own heart on the altar
where it will not be devoured but filled with light,
salt, water, bread, the subatomic elements carried
through the corridors of time by the King of Salem.
Logos approaches the fire on the mountain
and hears the voice declare,
all that will be already is,
and all you see is yours.

Twelve sons gather around the father's table
to receive their portion of the flame, the curse
of remembrance, for all who trade stones for eyes
have the burden of sight, we are no longer fools
nor can we pretend that life is simply living
sleeping eating working breeding laughing dying.
My sons, take the fire to the corners of the earth
and declare to all who have ears: the ancient forge
that birthed existence also exists in us, even now.
Logos moves down the line delivering the elements
to his sons who receive vision to go off and die,
let there be no mistake, the road you must take
is called Via Volver and leads to the intersect
of the four rivers, O my sons!, wait for the King
who cannot be killed by a blade or pneumonia
to find your hand in the night and lead you
to the river waiting on a new word to flood
the lost garden, now a desert floor pounded flat
by the wandering feet of amnesiacs, blinded

imitators of Abaddon, Baphomet, the goat-god
who goes place to place whispering you are nothing
so be nothing, pump your blood full of chemicals
jump off a bridge cast your children into the fire
spit into the wells, where is the Nazarene now?
The sons rise one by one to carry fire to men,
remember! Goodbye father, mother, I will find you
in the corridors of time as we enter the mystery.
Yet, eldest Kiano
declares I want a wife and children, a life, father,
a chance to build a treasure in the cities of men.

Behold, the promise:

a brother is lured into the field by a brother
who lifts a stone and bashes his skull,
the rebel son brings an army against his father
only to die in the branches of a terebinth tree,
the woman takes the man's hair in her hands
and shears his power so he will be captured,
the whore forges the signature of a puppet-king
to seize a vineyard and have the owner stoned.

Behold

a blade in the belly outside the gates of Hebron,
a king beheaded in his bed, delivered to a shepherd
boy who shall one day be chosen to rule the nation,
the cuckold ordered to the front lines and killed,
a kiss in the garden while silver pieces rattle,
the chomp of fruit, the burden of time,
betrayal betrayal.

Logos rises in the night and walks outside
to find Kiano watching the flame,

the adversary to his ambitions, my child,
do you remember your name, the sound
of ancient fire falling on the mountain,
to be found and carried by men like us?
Kiano says nothing but kisses father's cheek.

Tonight

the cancerous king demands an obelisk of gold
built in remembrance of his days on earth,
a spear into the sky so all who see it remember
the law decreed from his mouth, O my son,
won't you promise that your reign will honor mine?
Busy the fools by placing a shovel in their hands,
perhaps a sword if the occasion arises, or else
the unbound man will begin to use his mind
and discover he is carrying the mystery of time
in his heart, my son, to rule you must silence
the ancient song awakening docile men.
The city waits outside the window of the king
to see the black flag dropped then set on fire,
his days come to an end though fellow citizens
what will become of his soul, what question is this,
all we know is we are still alive today
so let us stay that way no matter the sacrifice,
the mindset of wolves or dogs or anything else

to survive and lick something sweet now and then,
what else can be drawn from the well of days?
The son wipes blood from his father's lips
now quivering, father what use is fear at the end,
father father we will simply grind up your bones
and feed them to stray dogs, rest your eyes now
and imagine a golden obelisk rising to the heavens
not only as a memory of your days but a calling
for the kingdom and the kings to come from me.
Man is meant to be ruled, his rights granted by we
who know what he is not.

Slaves draw gold from the earth
while watchmen draw swords over their heads,
an old arrangement made by a new king, Elyah's
crown embedded with father's green jewels
and the obelisk of gold forged on his breastplate
for all to see their destiny, a tower rising
to prove the absurdity of God, if He's up there
let's find Him, clink clink, call the whores tonight
for a celebration is in order, the ground is ours
and the slave boys will die for a cause too great
for feeble minds to understand, this is the beauty
O my vicars, drink and seize a whore by the neck.
Every man is placed at a station fitting of his blood,
in the end we must bend to the reality of nature
and there will always be food on the family table.
This is the promise, the nothingness
cannot reward the man who doesn't see himself
as he is, some are meant to be kings, others slaves,
clink clink, if there aren't enough whores for all

then raid the city for more, let this be proof now:
any woman who is captured is worthy of capture.
Are you beginning to see the rules we didn't make?
The earth is cracked open so mud-faced boys
can pull gold out of the ground to be
washed, melted, slapped into siding for a tower,
but there is no architect and there is no plan,
just higher higher more gold, endless days O slave,
for the ground is deep and you are breathing.
Hear the shovel hit the earth, O Logos!
They are digging your grave.

Who can stand against he who holds the flame
born out of the Word that cut order from chaos,
the one who forges borders of a new kingdom
beyond the reach of a dying king and his vicars?
The all-consuming fire desires every word
spoken into grandfather's skies, into the skies
of the boy who lay beneath the bush, scorched
as mother turned her face from his suffering,
come Gabriel and ram your heel into the earth,
come Adam and show us the map of wells,
come Eve and guide us to the mouth of rivers.
May the Word continue to speak our names!
Amala walks the mountain road at dawn
following the trail of eleven sons, smoke, flame,
the knowledge that though their days are full
their lives have ended on the hangman's noose.
Here is your reward O my obedient disciple,
your naked body devoured in the arena,
a public hanging, your corpse dragged in circles.

She builds an altar at the foot of the mountain
and sets it on fire, a prayer for courage,
for all who carry the flame go mad or missing,
am I mad or missing, O Creator, am I already
walking Via Volver in search of salt, bread, light
only to discover the reward is death?
She returns to the bed for Logos's love,
here I offer the vessel by which twelve sons came
into the world of amnesiacs, here I offer you
the metaphor we have been carrying so long,
here I weep for twelve dead sons.

Mother

what claim does father have over your body
your mind your spirit the shape of your days?
Have you not desired freedom from the covenant?
The eldest fills his belly with strong wine tonight
and feeds the rage in his heart with stolen bread,
what use is living beneath father's long shadow,
tell me tell me am I meant to go to the grave
without a woman or children of my own, tell me
is it better to speak in ancient mysteries than plain
talk with plain men over plain days, father
I want a grand palace and concubines, heirs,
medals dangling from my chest, to see a man
bow his head as I pass for fear of offending me.
Damn the fire, the madness, my father the patriarch,
can I not stand at the gates and offer wisdom
in exchange for a kiss, for prostration, for you,
am I not a fair judge of disputes?
Kiano's dreams of fifty men running before him

are interrupted by the sight of mother returning
from the market and the rage-lust rises in his guts,
the hatred for all that does not belong to him
and all must belong to him from this day on.
I now see the secret of our kings, all is mine all
belongs to all of us who realize we are nothing but
aberrations of the universe bound by law and time.
Kiano seizes his mother and drags her down
though she draws the blade from her belt
and rams it into his eye.
Do you hear the roar, O Sodom?
A blinded son runs for your love.

No one comes to be judged at the city gates
and thus Kiano moves towards the obelisk
rising, the air thick with slave-sweat and mud,
though what is this magnetic force moving him
towards the object of his own father's scorn,
THE ALTAR OF COLLECTIVE MIGHT.
If only father could understand man is beholden
to biological and psychological necessities
and nothing more, I wish to touch the obelisk,
I wish to bend my knees and press my lips on gold
and thus I must, there are many types of slaves
O my children, some slaves carry shovels and die
while some slaves carry desires and die all the same.
With his lips pressed against the gold he hears
the maniac-prophet declare the tower shall fall
just as the wicked king who ordered it built,
no man no man no man no man no man no man
shall crush the god-life in another and be free
in his own death, man is an intentional creation

reflecting the Word and thus is a word himself
carrying the power to call forth matter from nothing.
You too can twist the dials of time if you remember,
speak O slaves, speak a new existence as worship
and freedom are yours but you must have eyes
to see, fruit must bud from the vine, ask and receive.
Kiano rises from the ground with a stone in his hand
and crushes the face of the prophet into pulp.
Try to speak madness with a mouth full of blood,
try to change our minds when yours is disabled.
My slave boys, the one-eyed man holding a stone
shall be your new master, soon to be decreed
by King Elyah.

In the corridors of time the prophet
comes awake washing her face in the water
drawn from Photine's well, the cur who asks
if she has tasted living water, the bread of life.
Indeed my sister I have traded my stones
for eyes and dusted my footsteps with salt,
then my sister let us walk in the shade
of twelve fruit trees, let us find Mephibosheth
and all who float round and round in the river.
At once the Nazarene appears on the horizon
to say not yet, my daughter,
but you will need a new body,
a new face.



A consuming fire roars through cities of men
as the minds of amnesiacs are snapped in half.
Father, was there ever a time when I was eternal?
Mother, what have you neglected to tell me
about the day I was born from His moving lips?
O children, you cannot choose the vision
that appears in the night, the kiss of death
placed upon your heart by forces unbeholden
to natural law, point me to the borders of time,
draw the outline of existence thou dying sages,
show me the boundaries of reality and intuition,
alea iacta est, the choice is whether to die or to die.
GO FORTH AND DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE,
my eleven sons, Logos declares from the mountain,
reject the barren mind and sing forth the waters
of Lahai Roi, Esek, Shebah, Sitnah, Rehoboth, Elim,
the well from which Photine drew water
in His presence.
Behold the flood, the coming kingdom!

Logos Logos,
open your eyes and look for the land promised
to you and your offspring, the billions to come
who remember days before the fruit was picked
off the tree, inheritors of a garden unguarded
by the cherubim and the flaming sword.
Let it be known to men of east west north south
that the King of Salem is riding on Via Volver
carrying a branch and a sword.
To which king will you offer your wrists?

And yet,
a disease metastasizes in the hearts of children,
accelerated by spine-bent creatures in silk robes
whose golden chains rattle as they say gather
round little ones, cleave from your father's hands
and cast your minds into the care of Abaddon's
dancing sycophants, let us sing the wandering ballad
that reminds us we are bugs, dirt, stones underfoot.
Master teacher, reveal to me the root of human value,
pleasure is not enough to give meaning to our days
and I'm trying to put my finger on objective reality.
The master removes the whip from his table
and lashes the boy for foolish questions spoken aloud,
my my what use can a cruel boy be to the rest of us,
we whose survival is dependent on a healthy collective,
there is no room for a man who asks the root of value
so find a whore and a mixture of chemicals, better yet
pick up a shovel and give your life to the golden altar.
My boy, you are nothing more than anything, you are

a cosmic development like an asteroid or flare of light,
a flea on the tail of a dog, a drop of rain, a wad of snot.

Therefore, be free!

And one day the boy finds the pistol in father's drawer
when the words of his teacher are renewed in his heart,
what use are you to the collective,
and the boy says I don't wish to be
useful anymore.

Amnesiacs demand a dying king,
and thus you have your choice:
the Viennese watercolorist,
the billiards champion of Gori,
the foreign student of radio electronics,
the poet and maker of small red books,
the cricket fan with one testicle,
the army doctor from Damascus,
the blacksmith's son who collects Nietzsche,
the gastronomist on the island,
the unofficial king of Scotland,
the cinephile riding on a locomotive,
the fashion icon who sleeps in a tent,
or, perhaps you will choose the Benjamite
who cowers behind the baggage but rises
head and shoulders above all others?



Darling,

I heard someone murdered the prophet
and left her body lying there in the street,
all that yickety yack for nothing.

Dove,

I've been telling you a long time now
that people get what's coming to them,
imagine the danger of every man
believing they are actually images of God.

Of course Darling,

I just hate to see blood spilled in the street
for psychosis, what harm did she do
other than confuse us all momentarily.

Dovey Dovey,

a vicious word is more harmful than you
can possibly imagine,
it's a prodding of the mind to go astray
and stray minds lead to stray words,
and stray words can infect the hands of men,

and stray hands can tear down the collective.

My Darling,

you always know the best ways to phrase
things so I actually understand them,

except

ever since she died the words she spoke echo
in my mind day and night, believe me

I've tried banging my head against the wall.

Sweet Dove,

it's best to take a pill and neutralize yourself
against discomfort, look in the mirror to see

you are the obelisk, you are all of us

and all of us are you.

Logos takes the hand of Amala
before the altar of God, the fire burns
until you draw close enough to hear
the voice is speaking to you, step inside
the mystery who says I AM who I am,
ignore the smell of burning flesh,
the sacrifice required if you are chosen
to expand the borders of your nation
into the lands of those who will bend
or be bent, not at the barrel of a gun
but on the sight of a hanging Nazarene
who looks up from the grave to say:
REMEMBER before your Hour passes.
Joy means knowing how the story ends.
The diseased king of men makes some
to plow, some to forge weapons of war,
some to run before his chariot in battle,
some to be perfumers and others bakers,
some to build an obelisk of mined gold,

and he shall take a tenth of all you reap.
Can a nation be ruled by God, O Logos?
I am a nation, Logos declares.
Amala casts the last of the family gold
into the flames.

The prophet is returned from the corridors of time
to discover herself standing on the mountain road,
was it Photine who spit into the clay to form a face
for me, or was it He who broke bread on the horizon?
She touches her mouth, her nose, once destroyed
now made into something new for a new calling,
no child this is the same calling upon all inheritors
and all that is can be made into something else,
all that will be already is and all you see is yours.
Here am I: a daughter of Eve
seeking a warm meal on the way up the mountain.
And thus she knocks upon the door with a cloak
drawn tightly around her back, a necklace of stones
to remind her of all she has traded for the right
to die, the memory of who I was is leaving me now,
all I recall is that there are men who have forgotten
the spark cannot be extinguished, the string to I AM
is difficult to sever indeed (but is it impossible?).
Take heart, the tides have not forgotten who said swell

now, rise and crush the cities built like fortresses
to keep me out, but the word seeps through cracks
in the towers, I remember now my name is Nairi
and I am looking for the ancient fire on the mountain.
A man and his wife open the door to let her inside,
and she sits at the table to declare I once saw your sons
carrying fire across the universe, and an eldest son
carrying a whip with a handle of gold, the master
of slaves who stack gold on the Altar of Collective Might.
Hear them now in the quiet night, hear the hammers,
the chains, the roar of Kiano saying higher higher.

Amala fills three chalices of wine and breaks bread
with the traveler, tell me everything you have seen
in the cities of men, speak to me of kingdoms
ruled by diseased bodies and calcified minds,
speak to me of the eleven sons carrying fire tonight.
And thus, the traveler speaks to Logos and Amala:
the winds of my soul have been carried to the corners
of the earth that I may come to know the difference
between dark and light, a simple thing my hosts,
the violent break between order and chaos, holy
is the one who reflects the Creator, and damned
is the one who reflects what He destroys.
But we are living in the age of amnesiacs, lost boys
who cannot defend their hearts from being stolen
by the evil masters shoving chemicals in their mouths.
Shh they say, this is the best way to manage the pain
of your days, you are not a child of the Hour, no
you'd best resign yourself to eighty years and a smile,
submit to the collective that is god, gold, equality,
these are all one and the same so bury your face,
water is water, bread is bread, salt is salt, time is time,
ignore the eleven sons carrying fire
who stand in eleven cities building forces

to remind men their rights pre-exist collectives.
Children there is a far greater King of Ancient Days
who has already determined you are a part of He,
so GO FORTH AND DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE
as He does with each word spoken, as He does in you
who carry a universe all your own, but what stars
are you spreading, what love is born in your words?
What woman will you save at the well of your heart?
Where is the crippled boy invited to sit at your table?
Behold the twelve cities of men who desire to be ruled
by kings, eleven sons calling forth thunder and lightning
to awaken softened minds, remolded and crushed
in the hands of tower-builders, hunters of gold
who are willing to die for a little pyrite.
The horns blow and all must fall on their knees
or else they will be cast into the flames, right king?
My hosts, we must discover if we are the children
of Adam and Eve in the cool of the garden,
or if we are children of their choice.
We must discover the kingdom
is waiting to be ruled
by us.

The blade hungers for skin muscle blood bone
glory, come all who are unwilling to submit to we
who have written the rules of the fading kingdom.
Lay your neck on the altar and see the river of blood
circling the earth with all who have come before you,
there is the woman who said I will not be ruled
by anyone who did not breathe life into my lungs,
there is the warrior who said I shall not fight
to expand the borders of a kingdom of fools,
there is the mother who said my own born children
will be taught they are intentional creations, images
of a good Creator, more than beings of this age
but sons, daughters called to climb up to the heights
to shout I am and all things belong to me.
All that will be already is and we are consumed
by the all-consuming fire, the wells have flooded
and the garden is in bloom, O King of Salem,
have you any more salt to distribute?
Yes child, much more.

Behold your blood, mother dear, drawn clean
from the sword that now rises above the neck
of your youngest son, remind me what you spoke
in the square, I said there is a kingdom on the horizon
soon to dethrone fools and supplant the amnesiacs
with new bodies, new minds.

The blade is fed and will grow fat, greased
with flesh in the days to come,
the promise fulfilled.

On the mountain Nairi hears the fire speak,
my mouth, my tongue, if you desire wisdom
press yourself into the all-consuming flame,
cry out
so the twelve cities of men will learn your name.
Here I stand, beholder of the universe unbound
by time, unbound by the forces holding feet
to the earth, yet the Hour takes you to the place
you least want to go, do you hear me children?
Whatever you fear most is where you will be
guided upon taking the hand of the Nazarene.
By the light of Cynosure (the star of the virgin)
she walks the mountain path back to the gates
where her body was dragged and left for dogs.
Hey friend let's spit on this wretched prophet
who spent her days yapping about gardens, wells,
someone heard enough and now our ears enjoy
the tap tap of the hammer, the crack of the whip,
the sound of slave boys collapsing in the dust

and the wonderful poof that rises.
Look at the progress of the obelisk rising higher,
higher higher declares Kiano with his breastplate
glimmering under moonlight, the man promised
a palace of his own on completion of the altar,
the man promised whores, treasure, chemicals,
fame, even now his name spreads in whispers.
There is the spark in King Elyah's eye, Kiano
who caresses the faces of thieves, shh all is well,
before ramming a blade beneath their chins.
This is where He must lead you, my child,
this is where you will die a thousand times,
so walk!

Carve out in me the capacity to hold truth
all of my days, to remember the voice saying
GO FORTH AND DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE!
There are days I long to reject the inheritance
of suffering and death that await sons of light.
I long to caress the harlot's face, to join an army
of fools, to run before the chariot of the king,
but the fire speaks to me now, take hold of me,
pick up the flame in your arms and carry it
down the mountain path to lay upon the table
so all who eat with you shall have their share.
Take some of this death-flame with you friend,
use the flame to light altars around the world,
to light the path as you seek out ancient wells.
Warm your family and heat your food tonight
for tomorrow the wolves will be gathered,
but my lovelies would it not be easier to pretend
none of this exists in reality, only in the mind?
My lovelies, is there no way to erase the memory

and free ourselves of the burden of remembrance?
What we have seen cannot be changed, so we die
or we die, this is the extent of free will, my teacher,
my philosopher who seeks wisdom from others
seeking wisdom from others decaying in tombs.
To read these words and absorb them is fatal,
and the line between madness and obedience
is thin indeed.

In dreams the shadow comes over Kiano's body
naked, laid upon the altar with his limbs tied,
and what cannot be seen becomes known fully.
Long before you were pushed through the womb
of a dying woman I was easing through time
unhindered by the all-consuming fire, free to rule
over the nothingness as I desired and a good king
was I until He appeared in the corridor and spoke
the chains upon me, yet do you not see I am
clever enough to break free?

Kiano, child, have you ever asked what pre-existed
the Creator? Did He not open His eyes to see my eyes,
a void, chaos, something in need of being ordered?
Am I not the original force of the original force?
Do you not realize you are the one holding the key
to my own chains, and in your mercy I will bestow
gardens, whores, slaves, gold, whatever you desire?
Kiano awakens with the taste of fruit upon his lips,
his jaw sore from chomping chomping chomping.

We are not all the same mother, I am not my father
and father is not God, are my days not leading me
to a dark grave that shall hold me through eternity?
I AM NOTHING AND THEREFORE I AM FREE.
He rises in the night to walk the palace gardens
and there moving towards him is a void, the voice
that comes over him in the silence, O terror be known
to me so I can touch your face, be not a foe to me.
Behold the king of the bottomless pit whose name
is Abaddon, behold the one who digs desert holes
to keep his prizes, boys and girls of nothingness.
Behold the one who shares a hatred for the fire.

In the great storehouses of King Elyah
the gold dissolves by the seventh spring,
pressed into the obelisk like a finger raised
at God, we are coming to have your head
you old liar, all you have wrought upon us
shall turn sweet indeed when we discover
your kingdom never existed in the first place.
It shall be I, Elyah, to announce your death
to my suffering citizens who still wonder
if there is an ancient force moving within us,
but fools will always be among us, will they not?
The obelisk reveals a new god, unending
power squeezed from man's labor owned
by the decree of a man who stuffs his face
with roasted ducks, butter sauce, fruit pie,
this is not a monument to the dead king
but a revelation of what is already true of us:
the individual is nothing, the collective is all.
Six springs, six thousand dead slave boys,

six times Elyah stands in the tower window
and says higher, ram my father's obelisk
through the heart of God so we can replace
Him in the hearts of men once and for all.
In time, pure gold gives way to stores of pyrite
drawn from the mine that is unending.
Elyah gathers his advisors in the courtyard
with orders to wring every pocket dry,
to show no mercy to any unwilling to give
what they owe.

Fifty soldiers run before the chariot
as they climb the mountain road, there slaves,
the house upon the hill with the flaming altar
is where we must go to seize the portion
due to we who know what is best for all,
what man is not, the individual can never be
the obelisk rising not only as a monument
to the dead king but to our collective might.
The chariot comes to a stop outside the door
where Logos says what curse do you bring
into my life, my firstborn son, what do I see
but a drunken amnesiac in silken robes, a chain
of stolen jewels, a dagger on your hip warm
with the blood of men whose lives have ended
at your own hand, you who have stolen words
from those who cannot remember how to speak.
One-eyed Kiano steps off the chariot and spits
at mother
who stands tall, the oak buried in ancient earth.

Fifty soldiers rush the house in search of gold
to contribute to the great pots of King Elyah,
but Kiano Kiano, we have nothing left to give,
for all we had has been cast into the fire.
He seizes father by the throat to declare you
are not your own, you are mine and I am yours,
and thus we all belong to one another, everything
from the pillow where you lay your head at night
to the cloak on your back belongs to the king.
Burn it down, he declares, but let them live.

What becomes of the eleven sons scattered
is what becomes of the eleven Jewish boys
who distributed bread to cur pups, their hands
once whole now punctured with a nail, how
can this be my beloved Nazarene, it was you
hanging on the hill of Golgotha but it is I
wandering the desert in search of Abaddon's
holes, cup thy ears and listen for the drums
hammering hammering not for them to dance
but for him, the great orgiastic feast of souls
makes bodies wet with sweat as Abaddon eats.
Father I'm bleeding from my hands and feet,
Father I'm wearing a crown of thorns,
Father my back has been lashed to bits
and wolves follow me to where I sleep,
won't you
grant us all a seat on your right and your left?
The Nazarene appears in the corridors of time
to ask: was it not you who drank from the well?

Were you not the one who broke bread with me?
Nod before the rooster crows again, son of Adam,
son of Eve, once you ate fruit, now you eat bread.
Via Volver stretches into the endless desert
and only madmen fit through the narrow gate
designed by the King of Salem who offers salt
to all who have traded their stones for eyes,
remember!

Eleven sons light the altar in eleven cities
that wolves might see the light and know
where to find a meal.

Darling,

I heard someone found fire on the mountain
and is considering sending it to the nations.

Oh Dovey,

you're always hearing this and that rumor,
but the truth is simple: a man's hands
aren't meant to handle a fire.

Yes Darling,

but from what I understand this fire
speaks to whoever beholds it, magic stuff
only able to be comprehended by maniacs.

Dove,

we have no business concerning ourselves
with the fascinations of maniacs and zealots
who build houses outside the city, all we need
to know is that King Elyah has asked us to give
our labor and gold to the completion of the obelisk,
nothing more, nothing less.

Darling,
you are always there to plant my feet on the ground
when I begin to run towards the cliffs of despair.
My Dove,
anyone who builds their life around a fire
or a mountain, a spoken word of an invisible god
deserves whatever comes to them.
Oh Darling,
say that one more time.

The final days are also the first,
 where the river stops flowing is its mouth
 feeding children who come home for a drink,
 see Photine drawing water for the village children
 who clamor for the deathdrop which erases death.
 Take heart, Amala, you have been identified
 by the King of Salem who stands in distant places
 with handfuls of salt, go yonder and lick his hands.
 The smoke requires you to cover your eyes and mouth
 as you flee the mountain road, your home burning
 in Kiano's rage but never forget you carry ancient fire
 long ago transmuted into a new heart, a new soul,
 the Word living in your mind and your hands,
 I AM
 piercing into joints and marrow, your thalamus
 blinking remember remember, a house can be rebuilt
 with a single word if you know who you really are.
 But the Nazarene has called you away from a life
 of comfort into imitation, so recall: foxes have holes

and birds have nests, but has He a place
to lay His head?

Was He not tempted to rule the kingdoms of earth?

You can see more than one thing at once daughter.

In the final days a new home appears in the kingdom
that can only be found by jumping into the river
and floating through ages past and ages still to come.

Logos prays for the promised land to be revealed
as Cynosure shines a beam upon the twelfth city,
reflected in the pyrite obelisk rising ever higher.

Amala takes his hand and interprets the fire:
whatever lives, lives, and vengeance is mine.

Elyah dips his father's crown in the bowl
brimming with warm blood of slave boys
before placing it upon his head, let it run
down my cheeks, let it rest upon my lips,
behold the sacrifices of collective man
whose life means nothing on its own,
only in the context of a moving machine
built to press family, god, church, love flat.
The king marches into the gathered crowd
with streaks of red dripping down his face
as they fall on bended knee, grasping
for his passing feet, choose me O king,
let your favor rest upon my crippled child,
grant me permission to open a fruit stand,
yet Elyah's eyes are drawn to the tower
of gold rising beyond the layer of clouds.
Today, you have come here for reprieve
from the smell of forges and the clinking
of hammers which keep you awake at night,

you have come to hear our work is finished,
that the vicars will no longer appear
in your homes with an outstretched hand,
that you will no longer wake to find bodies
dead on the street from exhaustion, stop,
O King Elyah, say the word to give us rest.
My satraps, prefects, governors, counselors,
treasurers, judges, magistrates, obedient dogs,
what would it say about us if we stopped
when there is still yet sky to conquer?
Kiano seizes new laborers from the crowd
as King Elyah licks what has dried
on his face.

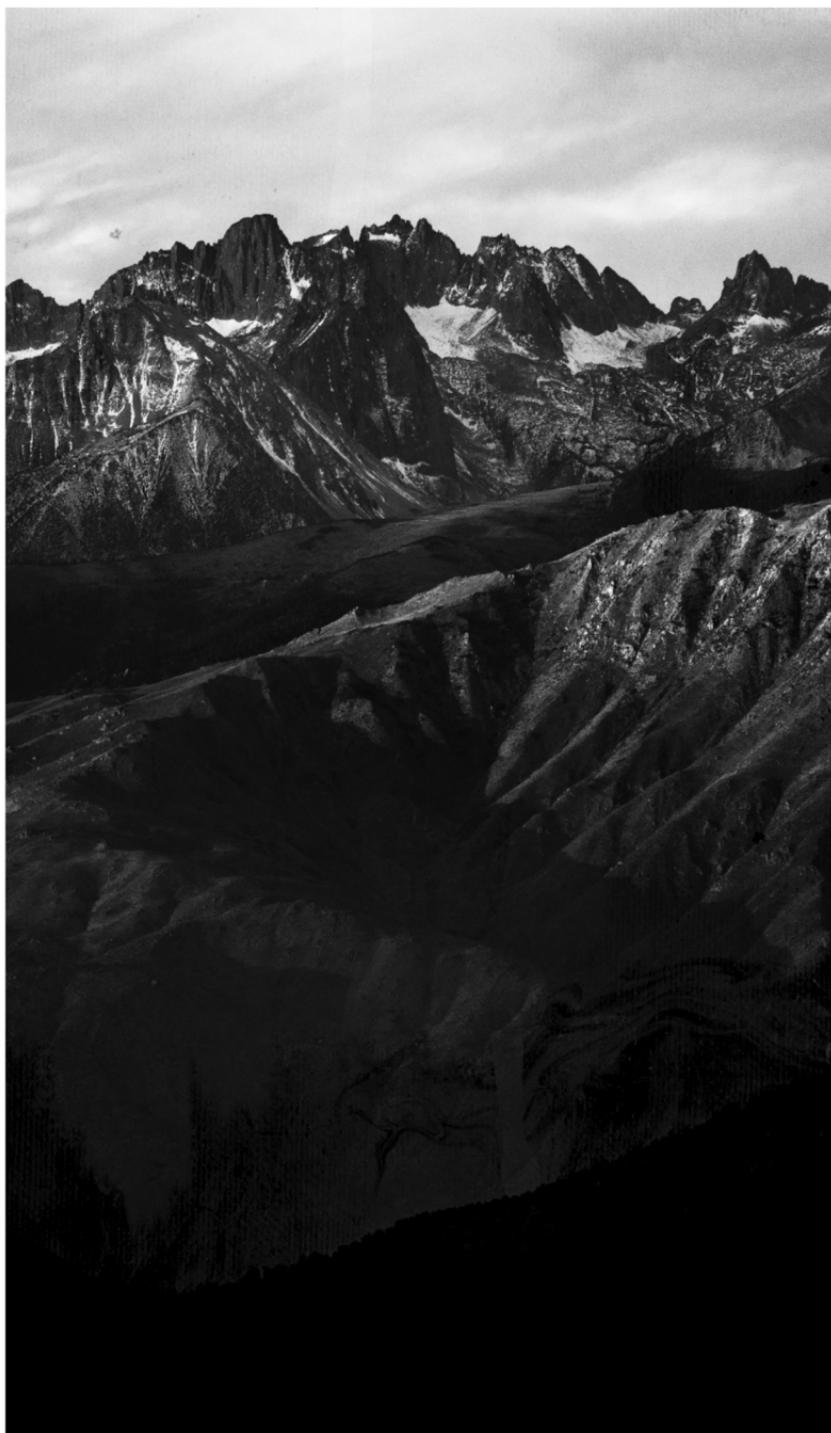
Yet,
another force moves through the city gates
carrying a palm branch in one hand
and leading a mule with the other to cry
I have walked through the corridors of time
to discover the alpha and omega kingdom,
a King whose towers are built in your mind,
your heart, your hands, spoken to life
in a single moment without shedding blood,
the King who spoke Himself into being,
whose mouth existed when He said so.
Nairi lays the palm branch on the ground
before King Elyah who grows amused
at the thought of yet another dead prophet
to feed his dogs, have I not met you before?
The king slows Kiano from drawing a blade
and ramming it underneath her chin.
Tell me prophet, where is this King now,
and if His offence is so great and He holds

endless power to move time and space,
why doesn't He come topple the tower
and crush my head, shall we wait all night?
The crowd mocks her now, kill her kill her
O king, turn Kiano loose with his dagger
so we can be free of these riddles and lies.

Nairi declares:

you are not building what you think you are
and you are only able to see what you are able.

On the distant hill the King of Salem
lifts His hand in recognition of the dead
prophet who awakens beside Photine's well
finding her body that was torn limb by limb,
now restored as Photine offers her a drink.
I am ready to enter the garden unguarded,
the ancient place where four rivers meet,
Nairi declares, but the King of Salem says
you have more yet to do, my child.
You will only need new arms, new legs,
new hands, new feet, a new face
before you return to die
again and again.



I have emptied the cup full of wine
and tasted the skin of the whore sweating
through her silk clothing, my love do you recall
the night we stood in the doorway luring fools
to the alley in order to seize their purses, singing
stolen water is sweet, secret bread is pleasant?
That was me and you my love, was it not?
The madness of the river makes me forget the line
between reality and poetry, I'm luring my own body
into the court of King Elyah where the candles burn
low and blindfolded musicians have been instructed
not to look or listen, for there upon the altar is a bull
led through the naked bodies and its throat is sliced
onto the virgin by a priest wearing a mask of Abaddon.
To build higher you must ask the one who wanders
the night whispering you are no better than a rat,
ignore the trail of sulfur in his footsteps, the imitation
light, gold, bread, water, but the blood is real indeed.
Do you hear the drums rolling tonight, my sons?

In the twelfth city a king lays upon a bed of fur pelts
and invites the guests to join him, welcome to Sheol
my guests, we are going to be moving deeper, deeper
into pleasure until it becomes pain, then pleasure again
when the chains of our experiences are unlocked
by the one who appears here and there, his horns
making shadows on the wall as your fluttering eyes
overcome the chemicals to open for each orgasmic height.
The guests of King Elyah worship the virgin in blood.
Isn't it becoming clear?
All that is good must die.

Elyah slides through the pile of bodies
and stumbles forth from the bed at dawn
to vomit a roasted duck on the floor,
stop it stop it,
the sound moving through the rooms of his mind
is not the music or the moans or death-screams
of the night before, but the words of the prophet
who stood at the city gates holding a palm tree
and a mule, guzzle the remaining ale O king,
you are not building what you think you are
and you are only able to see what you are able.
She could have been forced into a beggars brothel
or to wash the feet of slaves for a decade
but rage overcame him, rip her apart he roared,
rip her apart, Kiano repeated, and the slave boys
repeated we must rip her apart or it will be us,
and thus they tied her hands and feet to horses
and rode in opposite directions until four snaps
reminded the gathered crowd what great love

the king held for his diseased father, the one
reduced to ashes and lapped up by stray dogs.
But do you not see how high the tower rises,
O father, even now the slave boys hammer and dig
pyrite out of the ground, see how they scale
scaffolds like monkeys moving on a tree of gold,
would it bring you joy to see what man can do?
From the highest balconies of the palace
he cannot see the top of the Altar of Collective Might
and crows through a trumpet of his own hands.

In the depths of the cave Logos holds her
to keep them warm from bitter winds swirling
up the mountain smothered in smoke,
the burned home below a smoldering memory
of twelve boys running about playing pretend
but where are those wild boys now, where
is the joy she once held watching them wrestle
out the window, father father a day is coming
when we shall be asked to trade the bottle of milk
for a plate of bleeding meat, the full belly that will
call us to faraway places to reveal the Living Word.
Logos rises from the ground as he remembers
grandfather's stars, but what can be seen tonight?
Has the covenant been kept with the scorched boy?
The promised kingdom is shrouded in smoke
and the clink clink of hammers on the obelisk
echoes through his mind, won't you kill me O God,
spare us starvation, spare us suffering in isolation,
spare us the teeth of wolves, spare us the noose,

spare us the devil living in the soul of my eldest son.
At once a figure runs down the path and attacks
Logos, hurling him onto the jagged rocks below
and the figure is upon him again wrestling
as dawn breaks.

Here is your blessing:

with a touch, Logos is blinded
to see the kingdom clearly, within.

Amala steps forth from the cave to discover
blinded Logos wandering the mountain below
crying out lead me back to the twelfth city,
the all-consuming fire must claim the throne
of he who takes your children for himself, one tenth
of the harvest, the best of your wine and olives.
Lay thy mind and thy hands upon the altar!
She draws him close and leads him up the path
so they can die together instead of alone,
wasn't this the plan all along my old friend,
my naked lover, my metaphor of the promise
made to sons and daughters wandering wide
through the universe created by the Word?
Consider the joy of lying beside me each night,
two pillars to uphold the image of truth
and now we enter the mystery together as one,
as it should be, there are the fishermen inviting
us to walk Via Volver to the river of lost ages,
the mouth of the age to come.

Lying deep in the cave they are surrounded
by a pack of wolves that draw near to feast
but cannot open their mouths or lift their claws,
for a greater force said no a million years before.
My children, the promised land
is waiting on you to take it.

I came to this nation from the edges
of the only universe I know, born
with the name I AM upon my lips.
King, he who stands tall on the mountain
carrying fire still remembers ancient rights
absorbed through the subatomic elements
laid upon the table where He said feast,
GO FORTH AND DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE.
The dictate of order is preeminent in me
and cannot be granted or removed by you,
rights can only be recognized or not recognized.
You cannot take what you did not give me.
What happens when the Viennese watercolorist
says we are but oxen for the slaughter train,
or the billiards player of Gori says the state
shall determine a man's value by his zeal?
My rights cannot change with every king
diseased and hacking blood on the bedsheets
in his final days before entering the mystery

on the same road as the slave, the jester,
the dancing sycophants in Abaddon's holes.
Can a nation be ruled by God, O Logos?
I am a nation, Logos declares.

With a new face, new hands, the same mind,
Nairi enters the cave carrying bread wine salt
given to her by the King of Salem who met her
on the desert floor and directed her footsteps
back into the twelfth city, go child
to the place where they will cut off your head
but first take the subatomic elements to the cave,
for a great plan is woven through the ages
you cannot yet see, a great plan to crush amnesia.
In the cave she discovers Logos and Amala
roasting meat from the carcass of a slain wolf,
and it can only be blind Logos who lifts his face
to recognize this is the same prophet as before,
only God has given her a new face, a new body,
but listen for the crunch of salt on her footsteps.
The King of Salem sent me with the elements,
my brother and my sister, yet your bellies are full
and your faces are shining with the radiant light
of proximity, for you have wrestled with God

and men, and you have prevailed O carrier of fire.
They welcome her into the final feast
where all partake in the imitation
of He who died and lived.
Logos, how did a man form a blade out of nothing?
Amala, how can an old woman kill a wolf?
Logos offers a blessing over the meal:
Without sight, I can see that I have a mouth.

To the dying men of the twelfth city
who scratch the ground like roosters in search of bread:
Lift your eyes to the north to see the star called Cynosure
who casts her light upon thy face, the inheritance calling us
to GO FORTH AND DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE.
Any day now the Nazarene shall be pushed into our epoch
and it will be He who offers your children the bread of life.
Remember the girl who was handed eyes without asking,
remember the tree, the fruit, remember the swaddled babe
who is infinitely old and spends His days moving in time.
There He is standing in the fire amongst the three who heard
the horns but refused to bow in worship to the golden tower,
and there He is offering a blessing of subatomic elements
to grandfather in the Valley of Shaveh, O victorious Abram,
wipe the blood off your hands and take the cup of wine.
There He appears in the form of an ark, there a split-open sea
that closes upon the king who orders slaves to build his tomb.

To the dying children of the twelfth city:
when the horn blows,
will you fall to your knees in worship,
will you ask to see the holes in His hands,
or will you simply take the cup and drink?

All of my courage is required to walk the road
called Via Volver, I am beginning to understand
that I am not in search of a new life but recognition
of a death which enveloped my life long ago,
a new kind of amnesia forms in me where I desire
the trinkets of the living man, riches sex fame status,
yet here I am walking the road only dead men walk,
my toes pointed at the river only dead men float
around the ages singing:

the war is won, the war goes on, this is our vigil.

Listen to me O fool who wishes to be alive and dead
simultaneously, the gate does not permit the partial,
He sloshes the lukewarm in His mouth and spits them
into the mud used to form eyes for those who desire
to see, for those who see desire to die, those who die
live forever, isn't this all becoming clear, my mind?
Aren't you listening, my heart, haven't you heard
my hands?

Look up to understand that He is leading you

down the road on which you cannot turn around,
for there He stands saying was it not you who drank
the living water? Was it not you who ate the bread?
What use are the pleasures of a whore to a dead man?
How much wine does it take for a dead man to be drunk?
What will a dead man buy with his chests of gold?
Eleven sons climb to the heights in order to find
an escape to the north south east west, their eyes hunting
for the road they are already walking, child child
submission to reality is your only reprieve.

The prophet finds her feet moving in final descent
to the twelfth city, the message given to her
to be given to the king who lounges on a velvet sofa
as slave boys carry him this way and that to inspect
the Altar of Collective Might, King Elyah,
a visitor has come to see you from the outside world.
Elyah calls her forth and demands she speak to him
from her knees, closer closer thou fair-faced traveler,
is the look in your eyes wonder at the golden obelisk
or is it terror to be in the presence of your king?
Nairi places her staff in the ground without kneeling
and in the mirrors of his mind he sees the prophet
pulled limb from limb by horses, the prophet crushed
with a stone who was dragged to the city gates,
and yet this one has a new face, a new body, new hands.
One by one they come through the ages but none realize
they are the same voice crying in the wilderness,
remember, remember the tree the salt the King of Salem
roaring across the deserts as a lion chasing his prey.

Elyah King of the Twelfth City, let it be known today
that an army of 10,000 warriors is camped in the valley
waiting on me to return with word of your repentance,
the crown of your father as proof, the tower as a prize
to those who will rescue your women and children.
The king offers a bite of his fruit to the prophet.
Will you be my guest, or will you be my enemy?
I will be what I am called to be, thou diseased king
of a passing age, I will be the final face you see
before entering the mystery where you will KNOW.
Elyah calls for the slave boys to cast her in a furnace
of blazing fire, then drags the sofa close so he can listen
to the screams, so he can watch her reduced to ash.

Mother's song rises from the orchard,
O my many sons, won't you gather at the fire
and hear that you are not meant to be men
of limited days, but men who will last forever?
Sing with me, let Kiano teach you the words
as you inscribe them upon your heart.
Tonight he hunts her, propelled by the chemicals
flooding his veins, the madness overcoming him
but I am not mad he says to the mirror I am free
and if this is madness then I will gladly accept her
as a lover, she gives me power when I enter her
deeper, deeper, and there I am revealed not to be
as mother saw me, but a man pressing boundaries
of natural capability, just yesterday I was a weak boy
but mother what you don't know is I tore my chest
open to discover there is no inscription, no song,
no all-consuming fire, just the days passing us by
and the grave waiting on us with open arms.
Indeed his hands are dipped in pools of pleasure

and his gardens brightened with flowers and fruits
picked by the hands of those who have been chosen
to fill baskets, to break bread, to slash the thickets
and permit the master to rape them time to time,
smile my servants, you have all you will ever need.
Would you rather die at the foot of the obelisk?
O that mother might be crushed, that father knows
at least one of his sons escaped the vision of a land
that will be conquered and ruled by an invisible king!
The song is carried in the hands of Abaddon
who says isn't it time to require your brothers
to sing a new song?

Eleven riders are sent to eleven cities
with a name upon their lips and a letter
in their pouches, let it be known dangerous men
are moving amongst your people, infecting
the weak-minded with disproven theories.
They ask men to rise in revolution against kings
of this earth, let it be known they believe
they are the inheritors of an eternal kingdom
and carry the fire of the Creator in their veins,
let it be known these men have no life
to protect because they are already dead,
the insanity of a father's fairy tales rooted
in their hearts and now rooted in your city,
eleven brothers who believe the spoken Word
supersedes gravity, time, space, natural law
and in this psychosis they move mountains
and give sight to the blind with only a touch.
What you do not yet know is they have built
underground armies who gather in secret

to offer praise to a name that is not yours.
The slave master stands at the city gates
and waits for those who seek his counsel
in affairs requiring great wisdom,
and for a time he kisses the faces of those
who prostrate themselves before him.

In the great valley beyond the city
scouts of King Elyah discover an army
of 10,000 warriors preparing to lay siege,
proof of the burned prophet's final warning.
Friend the golden obelisk is calling all the earth,
it is too great for kings to ignore, as you and I
hunger for bread and the occasional sip of wine
men who place jeweled crowns upon their heads
hunger for proof they will ram a spear into death,
a final blow to the side of He who hangs on a cross.
Water and blood pour out so choose your cup, shh,
shh, what you speak cannot be spoken out loud
unless you wish to be digested into a pile of feces,
mixed into fertilizer for orchards, the king wishes
to chomp into an apple and taste your bones.
Truly, a tower of gold is an invitation to be sacked
by this enemy or the next, for every kingdom
is building its own machine to rule over the earth
a little while.
May the mighty men with eyes to see say no more!

No more thou dying fools, no more!
Elyah declares the reality of man, the imperial law:
anyone who can be forced to answer to Whore
is already a whore,
anyone who can be forced to answer to Slave
is already a slave.
I am but a keeper of truth and I hold it dearly.
The scouts tell Elyah of all they have seen,
of well-fed warriors who sharpen their blades
and polish their armor for the battle to come,
yet my king this is not an army we know.
Elyah readies his heart for war.

Darling,

I hate the idea of war, of blood, of bones
scattered around a field and picked by birds,
children who learn their fathers died
defending the obelisk, the flag, the king.

Oh Dovey,

what a wretched thing to think about!

Yes my Darling,

it's just that I can't help but think of the boy
who once lived next door to us and now
he's off to fight on the front lines, we know
his mind was mishmash and that's the place
they put boys who haven't much to say.

Dove my Dove,

there's no telling if this battle will proceed
and certainly no telling if the boy will die,
perhaps he's turned himself into a warrior?

Darling,

if only that were the case, but you remember

he was born with a limp, not born for war.
My Lovey Dove,
let's say I pour you a warm foot bath
and bring you a cup of our best wine,
let's say we practice our singing voices
and tell each other riddles to pass the time.

Oh Darling!

you always know what I need and when,
if only I could turn off my mind, blind my eyes,
deafen my ears, disable my hands I would live
without fear of what otherwise can't be ignored.

In the corridors of time Nairi looks up to see
the Nazarene on a war horse, His eyes made of fire
and a sword coming forth from His lips to strike
the heart of dying kings, the name we cannot know
written upon His chest but we recognize the holes
now sealed with scars and the blood on His robe
is ours.

Jesus Jesus lead me into the kingdom
where four rivers meet and Mephibosheth has a seat.
Was it not you who promised those who walk the road
you hand them—the road of death—will be rewarded
with life eternal? Are we not the ones who met you
in the dens of lions and in the bellies of great whales?
Did we not walk Via Volver and have our heads
tossed into the river that circumvents the ages?
Child you must understand time is not moving
at all, just being rearranged in bits and chunks
to make way for all to say remember me, O King!
Photine sits on the edge of the well offering water

to the prophet burned to ashes and bits of bone.
Woman, do you know when my days will be over?
Prophets come to every generation and are slain
by amnesiacs who stuff wads of mud into their ears
and cover their eyes with rotten flesh, what more
must you know Nairi but you have volunteered
to give shape to the kingdom born of four rivers,
and now your days do not belong to you, my days
do not belong to me, we are no longer on a timeline
that moves the same direction.

Dawn rises upon the glistening valley,
open your eyes prophet and behold the beauty,
hear the chirping of birds gathered to watch
the battle between Elyah's army and the one
you stand before without armor, turn around
Nairi and see the illusion of 10,000 men readied
to seize the golden obelisk, but it is just you
my dear, just you on a field made for war.
Her flesh is restored from the fires of King Elyah
but now he marches towards her at the head
of 10,000 men, your days are not your own
and the river is ever-flowing, carving new borders
over time as the contributed sing the war is won
the war goes on, this is our vigil O prophetess,
no need to tremble for what you see is not always
what is seen by others, for in the eyes of Elyah
the enemy is mighty indeed, lines of warriors
stretching across the field to seize his father's honor.
O children! God is amused by armies of 10,000

but his anger burns at their amnesia, their desire
to forge a kingdom that withers with a new season,
see see see and you will see how man gathers dust
in baskets, the summation of his war and conquest.
What can be won on the field of battle but a mirage
of time, the wisp of hope that perhaps this empire
will not be like all the others that have come before?
Nairi touches her new face, her new flesh to find
she has no weapons, only a mind, two hands,
a tongue to speak.

The ancient war-horns blow through time
calling the spirit in me to wage war on fear.
For what do I fear but the grave, and what is
more true of me than I am already dead?
Truly truly I say unto you the seed dies
so it can bear fruit, truly truly I say to you
those who wish for eternity must eat the flesh
of the Son of Man and drink His blood, I Am
abiding in me through the subatomic elements
I can no longer name, master master will I die
or not, does my mouth carry power to make
something out of nothing or is this all illusory
madness sprouting in my mind as a disease?
O Nazarene, here is what the fishermen need
to know:
are we dead until we follow you
or is it following you that kills us?
Nairi raises her eyes to see King Elyah's
sword pointed at her.



The King of Babylon waits in angst
while wise men lay their necks on the block,
it is you who have a head of gold my king
of kings, it is you who shall rule the earth
for a time, then someone else, then another,
and on and on through the ages to come
until a kingdom rises that cannot be destroyed,
the kingdom that will crush every crown.

The King of Babylon hears of what's to come
and builds a mighty tower of gold, for all
who hear the trumpet sound and do not bow
shall be slain in the streets, O diseased king
did you not hear the dream-talker's revelation
that every kingdom shall be smashed?

The name echoing in your ears is your own
until they walk out of the fire unharmed,
until you find yourself on all fours eating grass.
Yet, where is the miracle to change the heart
of King Elyah, where is the dream of a statue

that becomes chaff from the threshing floor
and is blown off the table of what exists?
Behold the eyes of the mad king charging,
the golden obelisk on his breastplate reflecting
the sun cresting the hills of the east, father father
adore your son, watch me defend the kingdom
threatened by this foolish prophet before me,
watch me ram a sword through her heart
and carve it from her chest so I can eat it raw.
Nairi turns to see the great army of the Lord
spread amongst the heights, weapons drawn.
She speaks a sword into her hand
to kill a king.

Listen to the drums rolling under the earth
as Abaddon opens his mouth in anticipation
of the blood soon to seep through the soil
and onto the heads of his captives, life power
energy fuel flame, keep banging my captives
let your arms go wild and your voices cry
with great joy, for today the world of men
is at war once more but you are hidden
safely beneath the folds of my black wings.
The captives suck the seeds from ripe dates
and place them on Abaddon's tongue
to whet his appetite for the main course—
lifeblood flowing through the veins of man,
man who lifts his sword against another man
to increase the power of a diseased king.
From the throne of bones Abaddon listens
to his choir sing the ancient verse:
Consider the kingdoms that have ruled
over the earth and the kingdoms to come,

the kings who crown themselves in pyrite
and carry scepters to wallop their slave boys,
are they not living under the illusion of power?
For beneath the surface the composer of death
conducts his orchestra of locusts, transmuted
souls in search of a place to feed their amnesia
are fed indeed, fed and fed and fed and fed
until they desire to swarm and destroy all
the living, yet does your master not admit
his own days are also numbered?
Devil, here is a new song for your choir:
MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

Where are your eyes, Logos?

On the road to the twelfth city he needs them
not to walk through the city gate unguarded,
he needs them not to carry the fire in his cloak
towards the golden obelisk casting a shadow
upon his face, he needs them not to hear the Word
echoing in his heart saying I have placed you
in this moment for a specific purpose, my son,
and you will be brought here again and again
until you find the courage to do as I have asked,
so go on and die, won't you?

I WILL DIE, FOR I AM ALREADY DEAD,
my days traded to the Nazarene the day I drank
the living water and pointed my toes at the river.
From the windows of hovels slave boys watch
the old blind man followed by the old woman,
and what he carries beneath the cloak spreads
as a terror among all who cannot turn away.
Children, to look upon the subatomic elements

which exist in both God and man simultaneously
is not for those who wish to live in comfort.
The shadow grows greater as Logos nears
the obelisk and opens his cloak.

The slave boys drag their chains to windows
so they can see what might become of the grave
that claimed the lives of their brothers, old man
have you come to lay an offering upon the altar
or have you come to press your lips against gold
as so many others have done before you, listen
to the trumpets of war sounding over the hills,
feel the ground shake as horses charge the lines
and the cries of wounded men circle to the sun
that will rise and fall, rise and fall, endlessly
reminding us there is no beginning or end.

Logos raises the all-consuming fire
but behold the fifty men who rush from shadows
and surround the obelisk to stop this maniac.

Master Kiano shall we slice his throat behead him
or feed him to dogs or perhaps we can have fun
with this one and skin him alive to boost morale.

Kiano steps forth in golden chains and silken robes
to approach those who conceived him in the void

and by their nature brought forth an ordered son,
the firstborn over whom they wept tears of joy,
my lovely Lord, my good Lord, see your work.
The medallion hanging from his chain is pressed
with an image of the obelisk and this he orders
mother to kiss in submission, don't you see old man
where your illusions of an eternal life have led?
I offered you forgiveness, pleasure palaces mother,
everything father could never give to you I have
in abundance, imagine how easy your life could be
if you traded madness for reality.

The slave master calls
for the donkey to be led to him, the beast
carrying weighted satchels on its sides.
Father do you remember the day so long ago
when you sent me out into the wilderness
to search for the fire on the mountain, the fire
that consumed your mind all of my days
and infected the home of our wretched birth,
do you remember my father?

Father remembers all, the terror in the eldest
who could only be cured by curling his toes
over the edge of the cliff and looking down
to make death a friend, every son of mine
must know the face he will see at the end,
every son of mine must walk into a winter
with nothing but a weapon and a donkey
to seek the fire on the mountain so death
might become their preference over life.
Father father, in the wilderness I had no seed

planted in my heart to seek the new kingdom,
only a seed to kill the insanity of your obsession.
Would that I let the other eleven cities be infected
with your delusions, your defective notions!
Kiano reaches into the satchel and unloads
eleven heads of his brothers, cast at the feet
of Amala who holds the word death on her lips.
Tell me now, father, what church will grow
when the growers of the church have no heads?
Logos extends the fire, my son, there is still time
to choose before the fire chooses you.

Behold

the great army behind the prophet comes
and goes as a passing vision in Elyah's eyes,
the heat the heat of this helmet is confounding
me, the weight of the sword slowing my steps
but run thou son of your father, run faster faster
at the enemy's sword and stomp your boot
on her face as you carry the border on your back
as the skin of a living creature made greater
by absorbing blood, bodies, bones, breath.
The great obelisk of gold reflects the light of day
and fuels the courage of the king who charges
at the front of his own army, his own sword aimed
at she who stands alone, or is it with thousands?
And who is this woman who turns into a dragon
and into a dog-beast and back into a woman, she
who holds the sword at her side without fear,
run Elyah run for you are not dreaming, are you?
Any moment you might awake in a bed of furs

and call for your chalice of wine overflowing,
a woman or two might return you to the heights
so difficult to reach anew, consider your days
my king, all you have made and left behind.
At once the armies on the hill are no more
and he sees the face of she who said no man
shall crush the god-life in another and be free.
Nairi lifts the sword and severs the king's head
with a single a single blow, and lying on his bed
of death she says soon you will remember.

Hear fifty men laugh at the blind fool
holding fire as they did at children who came
to the obelisk carrying their own family's
offering of gold, the single coin or the spoon,
what use can this be, a meager contribution
to that which reflects the fullness of mankind,
do you not know where you have come today?
This is the Altar of Collective Might
and the boy arrives with scrounged trinkets,
nothing little child, the fire is nothing Logos,
just a magic trick you learned on the mountain,
but you will not receive a pat on the head
or a piece of candy for your insult to us all.
Kiano draws the dagger that has been rammed
through the throats of a thousand slave boys.
But the all-consuming fire rises as the face
he should have met in the wilderness of youth
had he been given eyes, had he been looking,
and this is it, my children:

what comes first, eyes or the ability to see,
eyes or the raging desire to see into the mystery?
Kiano and his fifty runners flee from the flame
which grows as a tower unbuilt by human hands
and then strikes down upon them as lightning,
swallowing their days so they might encounter
the one who moves in and out of time in search
of lost sons and daughters.
Do you remember me now?
Before you can be anything, you must be mine.

The slave boys find their shackles broken
but fear to come forth in the presence
of he who holds the all-consuming flame
without being consumed, what man is this
my brothers, shall he rule over all the earth,
shall he seize the crown from King Elyah
and place it upon his own head?

Logos finds his sight returned, you can see
now that you can see, O you who are
the reflection of my own heart and mind.
Brothers, there is no ash or bone left behind,
no graves in which the fifty-one are buried,
just a man and his wife locked in embrace.
Logos turns to the rows of slave quarters
where hundreds of faces look upon him
through the windows, and thus he declares:
my brothers, a day shall come when you are
returned into the care of He who spoke you
forth out of the void, He who ordered you

with the same subatomic elements flowing
through Adam in the garden before the fruit.
He who spoke you gave you a tongue to speak,
so tell me free men of the twelfth city, what
will you call forth out of your own voids?
In the ages to come will you cry out for a king?
GO FORTH AND DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE,
for that is where you will find the King of All Days
as an echo in the mountains of time and existence.
To know who you truly are is a terror, indeed!
My brothers who are free,
all that will be already is
and all you see is yours.

Free men descend from their quarters
and break into the storehouses of tools
to draw forth the great iron hammers
etched with the family crest of King Elyah.
What has been built in blood over years
can be brought down in a few moments,
tell them O Viennese watercolorist, tell them
of the great war machines you forged to kill
your enemies and how they are now preserved
in museums, not roaring through battlefields
to drag forth the border another foot or two.
Tell them, O billiards champion from Gori,
what has become of the statues of yourself?
Is there not a new flag in your empty boots?
Point me towards the Gardens of Babylon,
show me the gates of the Roman Empire,
give me a walking tour of Assur, Hattusa,
let me see the mighty walls of Jericho,
allow me an audience with the Mayan kings

or the warrior chiefs of the Great Plains.
I wish to peruse the Library of Alexandria
or attend a ceremony in the halls of Baphuon.
Let's ask King Nan if he is still the Son of Heaven!
The Altar of Collective Might falls
into the ground from which it was raised
while freed men claw the gold from its face
singing there is only one King.

From the fire the Lord speaks His promise of life
for the days to come but my children much will pass
in the kingdoms of men before the garden kingdom
is called forth from the earth. Rise O rivers of Eden
but not yet, for the Lord is both jealous and patient
for amnesiacs who will remember to walk the road
of the narrow gate, of the road where a single step
is a commitment to death by hanging, by stoning,
by being beaten to death in a circle of wrathful men,
death both slow and fast, death by this or that.

Look down the illusory line of time and hear, smell
the gods to be made of stone, wood, gold, silver,
see the amnesiacs on bended knee as diseased kings
pass on horses, chariots, ships, bulletproof motorcades,
this is the one this is the one who will restore our hearts
if only we give him a little money for his new machine.
Enough!

Stand, O nation set apart for the all-consuming fire,
GO FORTH AND DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE
with the great fire to lead you, to speak a calling into you,
you who cannot speak yet will one day lead millions
by the sound of the Word speaking through you, do you
see my little children what is waiting in the mystery?
Seize the scroll that has already been written to find
your name upon it.

May you live long upon the land God giveth to you,
the land with no border to be dragged another inch
because every nation, tribe, people and language
shall be consumed, are already consumed.

Darling,

I'm beginning to feel uneasy about the future
with revolution on our doorstep and no king.

The slave boys savaged the tower and now what,
we are floating and our feet have no ground.

Dove,

these things have a way of working themselves out,
just last week I misplaced my favorite socks
but here they were all along, just a temporary concern
and in the same way all of this will be fine, just fine.

Yes yes Darling,

but they are executing the king's servants
and looting the palace of booze, women, gold,
they've butchered and devoured his prized lambs,
the very same beautiful creatures showcased
in last year's parade around the golden obelisk,
men can be such beasts!

Oh my Dovey,

I can tell you're distressed but take heart!

A new king will come along shortly and save us,
and perhaps he will be tall and handsome, a judge!

Darling!

Now you're talking,

what if he's an artist, what if his queen is lovely,

what if he can sing and dance and entertain us!

There's my Dovey Lovey Dove,

see how everything is going to work out fine,

the good news is kings need people just like us,

just like us.

The knights of King Elyah trample the prophet
until her body is submerged beneath the surface,
fed to the same earth now nourished by the blood
of so many who have come before, prophets, kings,
men in metal costumes carrying a flag soon turned
into an exhibit at the museum, weapons polished
by collectors who say isn't this amazing, my friends?
Isn't it a work of art? Am I not a man of culture?
Yet the king's
headless corpse is sprawled upon the red grass
and none has the allegiance to restore his line,
only to supersede him with their own rule,
their own ways their own semen passed down
so men will press their lips upon whatever
they decide to build, and thus the armored men
race back to the gates of the twelfth city to find
the obelisk has been torn down and dismantled.
Elyah, what is your life worth?
What have you left behind for us to remember you?

At the well Photine says you have tasted and seen
the promise of the Word, and now your Hour
has arrived to behold the kingdom and the tree,
the angels have laid down their flaming swords.
Nairi looks to the horizon where the Nazarene
calls her forth into the final mystery, even in death
I am still walking.

Logos climbs the mountain to see
the earth spread before him, the twelfth city
no longer marked by the tower of the collective.
Yet, behold the chariots and carriages loaded
with gold and pyrite, with the palace treasures,
whores bound by ropes, priests wearing jewels,
horses aimed north south east west, whipped
by those who will plant gold in the ground
and say here is where we will start over.
Each crevice of the earth untouched by ideology
shall receive the disease bred in Elyah's court
or was it bred in the mind of God the Father?
My Lord, who planted the disease in us,
that's all we wish to know though we fear
the question because we know the answer.
Or, did you make us too closely in your image
and we are able to manifest darkness and chaos
in the same way you spoke to life light, order?
May the power we carry through you demand

order out of the void, lift the sacred individual
out of the faceless masses grouped by nobles
who crown themselves and declare man is nothing,
fatherless nothings disconnected from eternity
and bound by a line of time soon to end.
Come along citizen and contribute to the good
sure to outlast you and never become an exhibit
in a museum, an altar of collective might.
Chariots pour out of the gates as hot vomit
from a child's mouth while Logos weeps.
Amala takes his hand to say my love, my bond,
we can only do what we are able.

The king you serve is who will feed you
in the days to come, so choose your feast table
my little children, fill your plate with His bread
and pour His wine until your cup overflows.
Through one door is crippled Mephibosheth
soon to find his legs renewed, the subatomic
elements taking root in his mind, heart, hands
but will he speak the new reality or will you?
Perhaps you are waiting on us, O Nazarene,
to remember we are not waiting on you.
Through the other doors in the corridor of time
diseased kings devour the harvests of the field,
roasted fowls, grapes dragged through cream
while saying please have a turkey leg good man
but know when you bite it you belong to me,
see how the guests admire the ways of the dying,
see how they imitate his mirth, his rage, his death.
Who can blame the King for the day of wrath
upon the ones who cry out to be ruled by a king,

move through time with me for a moment and see
his bones dissolved in the ground, his signet ring
kept behind locked glass for schoolchildren to see.
Mephibosheth eats bread, salt, wine, water, light
and Photine no longer crawls under the table
in search of crumbs. ✱

I am so grateful you chose to read this book. If you would like for these ideas to spread, there are a few steps you can take.

The first is to write a review for the book. At the end of the day, we all give credence to books that are more thoroughly and highly-reviewed. That would be a great gift to me. Second, you could tell friends and share on social media. And third, you can connect with me online at craigscunningham.com or by finding me on social media at [@craigscunningham](https://twitter.com/craigscunningham). You can also email canowanbooks@gmail.com to let me know your thoughts and questions about this book. I would love to hear from you through one or all of these channels.

All that will be already is, and all you see is yours.

- Craig Cunningham

Other Books in Theology

1. PATRIARCH
2. DEFECTOR
3. REZA
4. NAZARENE
5. VIGIL

