

knowers of unspoken secrets
users of signs
crouched behind the fires
we have been given
no words
though the Word
was made flesh
whose flesh?
who suckles and bites?

the world must eat.

Mark Svendsen

COUNTRY BURIAL

(In memory of Kurt Gordon Svensen)

They will come, in the morning.
I can see them, now
like cattle to a well known place
they will wend, my people.
Uncles, slaughtermen, aunts, fishermen, fathers, mothers.
Like calves with hides seared at branding
they will suffer pain to darken them.
They cannot end it.

I see them in the cemetery sway fenced,
unwelcome yard,
where only curlew speak:
Without hats or pleasantries
and awkward feet.
They will pray like dumb cattle,
that nudge their dead calves and call in the unkempt voice of emptiness.
They will have no answer, but they will call.
(even in their dreams they will call.)
They will take earth in their hands,
letting it drop in anger at senselessness;
hope bewildered, commonsense.
They will come in the morning.
Yearning will draw them, an old fence keep.
As lovers ache their arms fold grief,
each to each.
Misshapen animals suckling warmth,
from life, from fear, from black continuance.

ANNIE SHAW

On the beach of my mind you run,
skirts rolled,
and dent the wash
and kick the squeal—full child delighting sea.