

## Notes from the Body—

JACQUELINE VAUGHT BROGAN

Is it over between us, before it's begun?

We talk, several times daily  
at great cost.

Something spiralling between  
our vision—naked trees,  
grey light, flashing storms,  
reddest aspens  
of the fall

You're afraid of your job.  
I'm afraid of the world—

what tree, what sister,  
felled again  
whispered her last  
syllables this night?

And did anyone hear?

My neighbor, pregnant,  
with a two-year old child  
was murdered.

Someone tried to break in  
to my house, twice in one week.  
(My children were asleep—with only

one staircase: no escape.)  
I could go on.

I try to go on.

Listen: the air is hurting  
like a person  
who misused the once sacred  
tobacco  
water is phlegming  
like a person  
with too many years  
of too many medicines.

If I can't say this  
to you, whom I know best  
of all, how can I speak  
of it, of us, at all?

Today, *that* man was lonely,  
on my street,  
dressed in a heavy overcoat,  
hiding something cheap—

and the river, St. Joseph's  
only looked clean from the street.

Children are dying  
at 74 degrees heat  
from hypothermia (starvation)  
a whole continent is dying  
(global warming) Antarctica

And we've all lost our names.  
And the map stays the same:

in every war

someone always rapes a corpse,  
 someone pisses in a flagging  
 mouth  
 someone puts out a cigarette  
 in a frozen eye  
 someone always cuts out a tongue  
 not knowing why

Is it over between us,  
 before it's begun?

I never bore your children  
 nor danced in the sun-  
 light upon the waters  
 Austin, Oahu, wherever—

this spiral, this spiro-  
 graph, even spies of my own

keep nudging me, saying  
*separate*

and not because I've quit loving you—  
 aspen smells  
 flannel voice  
 leathered whispers  
 silk and skin—

but because I'm becoming afraid  
 of just how much  
 I really am  
 learning  
 to hate