Gerald Rice

YEAR 10,000 BLUES

Save our lives,
We are sinking,
Waste-deep inside

Garbage, we haven’t
Heeded the warnings
But now we have

Tripped over the
Final final notice;
The line has

Been crossed and
Closed, though we still
Wait and there is

No sign posted, Out
To lunch and
No hours of

Operation, everything has
Broken, yet our fingers
Mercilessly tack away,
Eyes blinded by black
Screens, English has
Lost its usage, we speak

In New Caveman Tongue
Life is a wound;
festered and rotted

off, falling forever
without two weeks’ notice,
our minds cradled in

electronic aether, jacked-in and designer-DNAed,
Birthed with an

internet connection
and anemic ichor
Trickling in our veins, sipping at

Empirical complacency
With death-stars in our
Eyes we spin away in

Space, the futile struggle
Abandoned, our curtain call
Ignored, we are overdue

For hard-reset, but
No one will return
after the flush.
ON DOOMSDAY

I’m figmented
On my own imagination . . .
I stay drunk
To hold logic at bay,
What a terrible place to believe in
Where you have to think
Yourself up to be real,
Death is my habit the Devil
Speaks my cousin-tongue,
Burning on instinct
My ear dry to reason,
A left-handed break
Explains the child I shot down dead,
Lick the bullet
Meant to be my last,
No man’s called me nothin’,
When I grip unrelenting, iron difference,
I think I’ll have a shave this last day,
They think I’m shot, luckied, but
I’ve only had enough.
I.

Mother, 
Why did 
You raise this 
Stillborn heart? 
What things did you 
Drown to keep 
Safe from me?

Mother, 
You are the dream 
I have forgotten 
I forgot, 
Kissed the stone 
That weaned me, 
The wheel that broke me,

Mother, 
What of 
The life not 
Mine to take?

Mother, 
Every village was 
Filled with eyes not mine 
My heart gave up looking,

Mother, 
What will be, 
If I get swept away 
From the river 
And carried out to sea?
II.

Son,
Did you
Live?
Has something good
Surfaced inside you
Since I breathed life
Into a secret?

Son,
You are the dream
I see in someone
Else’s mind,
Curse the womb
That blessed me,
The breast that reminded me,

Son,
There was a
Life not
Mine to keep,

Son,
Every soldier’s eyes
Were hollow like mine
Their aimless souls blinded,

Son,
I will be
Waiting in the river
Drawing the tide in to carry
You back from the sea.
UNTITLED #84

“Fuck you,
“You’re here for rock
“bottom, you horror of a
“human being.”
Loose the tide of agony,
Hot-palmed, upturned in supplication,
ready to wave off this flame
And belly crawl a Sisyphus path
To heaven. Old wounds—
Tattering the soul in retelling—
Healed, like jagged lines of unwritten poetry.
Fire taught trees yield the fruit
Of ash, learning hopelessness—
Mouthful by mouthful—
gray bitterness. The highway is
Long and fevered with the never-ending furnish of the sun,
Be selfish with your memories of water
The barefoot sizzle should remind you
Of what’s been come for,
The angel on your shoulder slaughtered
With a wink of an eye,
The thing cooking inside you
Boils life from your eyes
And rolls it down your cheeks.

Give, my Pavlov Pretty,
When silvered tongues ring
In the bell of your ear.
Distance cannot shape shift you
Fast enough to fake away the pain.