

from *How the Temple Was Built*

Prophesy against the King of Tyre, God says.
Ezekiel turns and the wind
turns with him. A king washes through him,
blur of greed, god-of-a-city,
what else! Slave-traders, who plucked Judeans
and sold them to the Greeks.
That city leaning out of the sea
and spiring up in distance, each tower
claiming a cloud. His words like a storm of buzzards
take it apart, rock by rock,
the glittering stone, the dust
into the sea for all the centuries.
Syllables nitpick into the backs of armies.
God stretches out and waits.
The best way is man against man,
and a human voice
to stand the truth up and make it run.
And Ezekiel speaks and speaks, the words
form themselves on his tongue.
His brain lit with God's fire is still his brain. Between couplets
he squeaks with marvel at himself.
And God invents death (again).
How it slows, the loss, the giftedness
dissolving in the gift, the man
less and more and less man.
The King of Tyre, every rock like a cell from his body.
Spins in his own created darkness, one layer from heaven.
Something is killing him, his crown
floats above his head, out of reach. He stretches, hears
a silence growing in a storm.
The jewels pulse on his body like the lights on ships
winking into the harbour. O what
will bear him away, what will come for him,
what of his people burning,
and his mind like a soft sift of black grain.
He slides through it, death. And lands
again in the extinguishing darkness. Closes his eyes.
Feels the hair on his hands, his warm nails.
That thing, his selfsoul, that was always there around him,
within him (opens eyes), feels that, as comforting
as a desert, the strict sandy wind on bare eyeballs.
Soon his advisors will come, and bring light.