

Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

Volume 11 | Issue 1

Article 29

June 2011

Systemic Syndrome

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Recommended Citation

Faught, Rebecca (2011) "Systemic Syndrome," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 29.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol11/iss1/29>

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Faught: Systemic Syndrome

SYSTEMIC SYNDROME

**REBECCA
FAUGHT**

Days ago, I saw the shadow of birds,
but no birds—just the deep V
on the lake's slash of glow, edges definite
as crayoned wings, an angle
I couldn't trace back to the sun.
Everything has become suspect.

When my grandfather worked
the strip mines, he carried a buckeye
in his pocket, protection against the high-wall
in the dark, against gravity, the forward
momentum of a front-end loader. He knew
the exact ratio—fertilizer to dynamite
to length of fuse—for crippling a hill, its bones
broken, a body that could be carried away.
He knew where to stand not to be that body.
He still kept that seed next to his keys and knife,
the functional jingling of his pockets; the land
was always flattened, and he never was.

It's wet this year, and late in the season.
The buckeyes have all rotted on the ground;
I never could reach them still limbed.
I agreed to pills instead. The doctor promised
they would reset the world to the physics
of if a, then b, but the bus I'm on came

out of nowhere. There is a tunnel
just ahead, a fifteen minute train hurtling over it,
and any second, I will disappear in there. I remind
myself all that bridge knows is push back, its electrons
holding a shape exactly against the attraction
of iron and carbon to collapse; and wish
I had put the pill in my pocket instead—
something to hold on to, waiting for the fall.

REBECCA
FAUGHT

It was the first time I had
felt so alone—just the deep
of the lake's dark to glow, edges defining
as a cloudy—egg, an angle
I could trace back to the way
the world has become quiet.

When my grandfather worked
the ship must be carried a package
to his pocket, protection against the light
in the dark against gravity the forward
movement of a front-end loader. He knew
the exact ratio—weight to distance
a length of four—two—eighting a bill, its force
meant a body that could be carried away
the force when to stand out to be that body.
He will keep that seat next to his feet and smile
the fundamental of his pocket, the land
was always halfway, and he never was.

It was the year and the in the season,
The surface now all rolled on the ground,
I never could reach them still imbed.
I agreed to his instead. The doctor woman
that would read the words in the phrase
it's a work but the loss in a line.