

Megan Burns

["Oil may come and go at any time and it may not be visible"]

Sign at Gulf Shores, Alabama (4.17.11)]

Who is it?

It's me. (takes off goggles/ puts on goggles)

eyes stinging from excess fumes from the top of the water

I can't see a thing. I can't see any thing.

eyes plucked so there would be no witness

here, open your mouth this is what a tar ball tastes like/ never forget

hours closed up like bivalves

sifting/ /oil/ /from ocean

burn up these words if it means one saved

take tissue from bone

build me a sarcophagi with no inscription

my mind is a city
divisible burrows
streetways and savvy, where words wash off
chalked outlines, I glove the body
a section cracked in two also singed
or shingled,
tender morning

a bathing of dish detergents for feathers
softer hands handle domestic hopes
swallow pills and eastern deserts
a tree
branching memory
longer than the lifeline in your palm

in our lucky drawers: low pressure
thunders roll out after 1 o'clock
rain while the sun beats the devil's wife
Japan's recovery: normal called into question
and Haiti, what of their normalcy
and New Orleans, city soon to be extinct
erasures on the current maps

a woman statues her upright plane on a ball of marble
sweeping folds of dress in golds & greens
among the sweet crucified but only for carrion

how to exclaim our various mixed returns
on this discovery of Oil in the Gulf
for who has been looking and at what cost
in a tripling secret stage show
gold lover's freshly minted ores of delight
or to minimize this excruciating deluge
a fresh reaping that tears eyelids off dreaming faces

this nuclear winter: in preparation
we full circle back
in agrarian ancestry
try a bit of cloving or simple gingersnap
herb to contain memory
a nexus that charts water's least resistance

swollen segment of river

[drive by rows of brown corn where the waters rose]

[how to create
a magnificent crop]

resistant to man

a state of being//

about water

it took a combination of foolishness
and lines of irrigation hose

to turn this muddy into a careless, abandoned village of what was

when you could grow a dollar

or eat your fingers

[the diversion project]

open the Bonnet Carre spillway to increase the flow of water into Lake Ponchartrain and
then into Lake Borgne blocking oil found in Chandeleur Sound

clutch of pelicans/ sinking towards their reflection

dear private sector:

can you continue to shoulder the load
contributing to projects that wouldn't even exist if not for the excess damage
done by greedy corporations and federal neglect

thanks, Gulf Coast also know as Lower America
before / secession

Megan Burns is the publisher at Trembling Pillow Press & host of Blood Jet Poetry Series in New Orleans. She is the author of two books published by Lavender Ink & five chapbooks, most recently *i always wanted to start over* from Nous-Zot press. Her third book, *Commitment*, will be published in 2015.