



BRIAN HENRY

FROM "CONTAGION"

And stepped toward the wall.
The boy though upset was not broken.
The wall cracked at the impact.
And I saw the crack in the wall.
His mother rushed him into her arms.
I threw him against the wall.
And screamed and the boy screamed.
I picked up my son as he cried.

•

And fell asleep again this time with dreams.
Perhaps now you will speak to me.

•

He looked like no one I knew.
Out of him his mother would step between.
And when I tried to break them back.
My own words when he heard them.
As much as I had heard anyone to.

•

Was a way of being in the world.
Is the way I was wanted by the world.
Asleep I slept as I worked asleep.
But there is a lot I cannot remember.
I cannot remember lying down.



•

Cannot remember when or how.
Her love so far from where I was.
I wonder if she hates me now in death.
The water and dirt their semen and sweat.
And she knew why but said nothing.
And my wife knew where I went.

•

To enter a body spread next to me.
A boy to touch me to be touched.
And lost everything ends up in water.
I found many things at the river.

•

Or my father would kill her.
Told me I would be married that year.
Nothing wanted nothing or no one.
And I know they thought I loved him.
Wanted my mother to smell him on me.
The smell of him to stay on me.

•

And still I went to the river,
As another tried to finish me.
A group of boys and hurt me.
My wife not my mother.
Alone some nights I wished her.
There some nights I watched the water.
Even after he stopped meeting me.