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Odin

My friend is forgetting
me, his mind a tree blooming
with bagworm, the gloss slipping
out of once green leaves.

I visit his study
at home, books piled
in ruins around us. His wife
brings us coffee (to grow
cold in its ceramic walls),
while he searches my face
like an engine straining to turn.

She tells me later
how she found him
in the breakfast cereal
aisle, transfixed before
hundreds of cartoon eyes,
and how she locks the door
at night to keep him from looking
for some ghostly home.

Thought and Memory are two
crows. Each dawn Odin

lets them loose to search
the earth for what is there,
black wings painting
frost in long strokes
of shadow.

The old man waits
in the cold throne room.
The crows will come again
never.

Trampoline

My father hauled junk,
when there was no other work, lugging
broken remnants of skipped out tenants:
garbage bags of sheet-thin clothes, bits
of broken baby furniture.

Our only asset
was empty space. He dumped the stuff
behind our barn, a ghost
town in boom with broken jars of pickled
okra, lawn mowers missing wheels,
a row of lidless washers hoarding
rain,

and, once, a chest of drawers stuffed
with translucent white nightgowns, the top
drawer open, dropping pale lace petals
into the wind.

I thought nothing
in Lincoln County still worked. At school
I took my beatings from an older boy dropped
back into our grade

and went home
prowling behind the barn with a lead pipe,
swinging down on vacant screens of dead
televisions, to feel a jolt run up my arm,
to hear the crack.

We cleared the dark
bones of a burned-out trailer, burdening

the flatbed truck with charred two-by-fours
and aluminum siding. My father's cigarette dropped
white ash on blackened concrete.

I loaded
a mattress burned to bare springs and browned
by flame, knew the trailer was home
to the boy who beat me.

We all knew his father
was a drunk. Some said he torched the house
in rage, others that he fell asleep smoking.

I confess
to not caring much and to dragging that night
those mattress springs from the pile, brutal and—God
help me—happy as I jumped.

Benjamin Myers
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Benjamin Myers' second book of poems, *Lapse Americana*, will be published by NYQ Books in February 2013. His poems may be read in *Tar River*, *Nimrod*, the *New York Quarterly*, the *Iron Horse Literary Review*, *Borderlands*, and elsewhere. His first book, *Elegy for Trains*, won the 2011 Oklahoma Book Award.