

## Elegy of a Prisoner

For Ben

I knew a boy once who stole an anthology  
To read just a phrase from a line from a poem  
Over and over, the right hand fondly tracing  
The veins that veered like vines from the left.  
I knew a boy once of muscle and youth,  
Winsome, funny, forthright, and improper,  
And licking often the chip of his tooth.  
'Starry dynamo in the machinery of night.'  
Two years, then his casket was heavy.  
I'll advance the following theory:  
That souls don't float away, they pool,  
Filling their compartments up,  
Be they blood vessels, yew, or black suits of wool,  
Watching the delicious machine crumble.

Note: An earlier version of the poem "Elegy for a Prisoner" appeared previously in *Anti-Heroin Chic*, entitled: "Dope Sonnet." For reference: <http://heroinchic.weebly.com/blog/dope-sonnet-by-logo-wei>

The eighth line reads, "'Starry dynamo in the machinery of night.'" It is a direct quotation from the third line of "Howl," by Allen Ginsberg.

## The Surface

I fell—tripping,  
If you must know.  
Hit my head  
On a poem.  
The wound  
Got a stanza  
Of stitches. I  
Came home,  
Lay a biscuit  
& a book  
Of French  
Cathedrals  
On the face  
Of the poem.  
Then I tried  
Dictionaries,  
Old vinyls,  
New bibles.  
(Eventually,  
The scarring  
Smoothed, as  
If of its own.)  
But all that  
Custom grew  
Revolting—  
Or boring—  
So I sold the  
Wooden poem  
On Craigslist  
For a gift card  
& I was glad,  
For a while,  
With the worth.

Yusef

After "Ode to the Maggot"  
by Yusef Komunkayaa

A cloud keeps a possum, dead in the peat -  
Cradles it like a very good thing.

Yusef, I too wish to praise the maggot.  
I am helpless against it.

They mapped the spot in the human mind  
Set aside, selected to revere  
And to worship  
What white,  
Straightforward thing  
Comes after  
The living

On little feet.