

# Holding Down The Laughter

Bad Books

Styrofoam cup of mud in my good hand  
Disembodied voice of God in the trash can  
Eyes in the ashes, feeling for the future  
Sleeping through the stake out, researching the rumor  
A mile, a motor, a mattress, a memory  
At first you were embarrassed  
But how could you not be?  
Tangled and teenaged, her mom at the movies  
Your voice ran out of words  
It was awkward and holy

The gospel in your belly  
The ache a little lower  
Back into the breach  
You spoke as its owner  
A syndicated sermon you sang from the rafters  
Anchors in your pockets  
Holding down the laughter  
Tearing up your mind  
Your lust and your ego  
A screenshot reminder to speed your libido  
The parish goes to jelly  
Blissful and wasted  
Your Vishnu eye slips open  
And pictures them naked

In complicating your worst mixed message  
You built then burnt a bridge  
Then scattered all your crumbs at the cliff  
"If she wants me, she'll swim for it"

Brother, can you spare your alms or your arrows  
The thunderclaps are rising and I think that I should  
go home  
To the basement back on Jumel Street  
1996 and you're waiting there to tell me  
"I never died - you dreamt it, you dreamt it  
I am as alive as your best good intentions  
I'm sorry that I tricked you but you had to focus  
Put yourself together and clear out the garbage"

But for all that effort  
That slow burn struggle  
You forgot where you lived  
She swept away the clues from the cliff  
You're lost now  
Remember it  
She swept away the clues from the cliff  
So you're lost  
Now, remember it.