

"Joliet," she says, "is the darkest part of a man"  
It's angry and slick  
Into her letters writes  
through herself each time  
she thinks of him

Trips her way down south  
into mystery's mouth  
and he follows her there  
It's what she doesn't say  
that makes you want to stay  
and try to comfort her

I talked to the cousins of people who knew you  
I asked them the questions they expected to hear  
Like maybe a killing went down in your town  
Maybe it's the prison  
or the birth of barbed wire

"Joliet," she says, "is the darkest part of a man"  
It's shaped like liberty's bell  
cracked and common law  
and stretched out over its flaws  
like an ink-less well

The hanging judge in town  
records her comments down  
she saves the crowd the truth -  
and deals with it herself  
Fills that hollow well  
with nothing left to prove

I talked to mountains and streams that pushed through there  
I talked to the trees that had no fruit to bear  
to the colorless people that sat there  
beneath her  
curled up, stared

I talked to the cousins of people who knew you  
I asked them the questions they expected to hear  
Like maybe a killing went down in your town  
Maybe it's the prison  
or the birth of barbed wire

Joliet