

Genesis, Declension, and Vision: Josh Fomon's *Though we bled meticulously*

By Guest Contributor

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Though we bled meticulously by Josh Fomon
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120 pages / [Black Ocean](#) / [Amazon](#)

In Josh Fomon's electric debut collection, *Though we bled meticulously*, the anthropocenic and apocalyptic world becomes monument to everything lost and not yet fallen, asking readers to "[prepare] yourself to flee / to say / you need saving." Breathlessly awaiting some disaster to come, Fomon writes,

*[and] the energy
was spoken painted upon*

*the page. We changed our flocks
began to quiver.*

*We took our fields and
buried them from fire.*

*The flotsam destruction jar
—there were many slaughters
many containments.*

Beginning in the middle of the world's undoing, Fomon meditates on the infinite, envisioning "an infinity together / one whole precipice," wherein possibility is cause alone for hope and celebration in the face of destruction. Fomon self-reflexively treats the page as a container for *possibilities*, and though at times the speaker is "full / of an inconsistent rage / a malfunction / in sight," this possibility endlessly tethers itself to the beauty of language:

[when] we opened to another language

we found the drooping prayers

*like a wet book**overspilt of ink.**We narrowed our salve
what we could**compressed
in our selves.*

Throughout *Though we bled meticulously* the poems lusciously inhabit a defamiliarized “other language,” offering a framework for coping with death, apocalypse, and failure. Fomon writes, “[the] pastured throat not furtive / all the bonesack what I yell / subsumes / in deep collapse.” The speaker’s voice, at once lyrical, cerebral, and confessional, summons a foreboding future landscape waylaid with doubt and struggle, but also love. This collection unfolds an emotional terrain that knows that some relationships, like throwing flames into the void, burn out as soon as they’ve begun, or simply become lost over time. It is the moment of love, however, that contains everything. The speaker and their beloved “not / immediately . . . bond the bawl together,” and it is this insistence on “not / immediately,” the precipice before the fall, on which the entire book leans. Fomon implicitly asks, how can we save one another from falling? From ecological demise? From burning the world down? Fomon insists that we still have time. With immense desire and insight, these poems fight for language and love which, like poetry itself, never cease to show us “a way out.”

These poems reveal a deep connection to poetry’s individual craft and cultivation, the hours put down on page that map our sores and breath, our passion, inhabiting what one can only describe as a bildungsroman that quite literally builds, unbuilds, and re-builds itself. Fomon writes,

I spent the entirety of my youth ministering to my open sores. The grid underneath my skin maps a breath in motioned time. Pulsar invariable. The stray passenger between lives and people—beginning to drone. Wet, dark warm. It was all flowers blooming in the veins. Pure quadrants of direction—solstice of orogeny. I connected my selves to other selves and the dark things they do. It was here between the arts I took my first bride and buried my vows on my forearm.

Showing us the seams and laying bare its own making, this collection brings us close to what it means to grow within and through poetry, solemnly vowing to hold the heat and heart of the arts in ways that border on the visionary. Simply put, these poems *taste* good. Fomon writes that “[the] preternatural / feast in your fettering palm. / Come here and glisten. / Yet still the deer stare / through my eyes,” and that

*i think i tried to kill, with noose,/ my poetry, perused what dripped/ off, licked it with (my) tongue:
found use/ dilapidated, full (and) lipped,/its present (state) void of misuse—/its space
open () (frayed and ripped).*

In *Though we bled meticulously*, the doors of vision are awe-inspiring and visceral and at times bloody, ripped open right in front of us. And what’s beyond these doors is spectacular and terrifying, sublime. Fomon writes that “[our] doors perceive our actions () a threshold of completion or conceded failure.” This is the story of a burned garden whose open gates have led us to a greater experience and understanding of death, failure, and faith. Even in the midst of flailing, these poems implore readers to keep the promise of possibility, that eternal carrion bloom:

*[and] one thing is for certain: I was not dying,
yet I was not accustomed
to flight. The high omission of death
halve the day, unplant the world.*

*Our silenceable memory
we have been shaping to open*

*In summer, the mountain has a tone.
When she says repeat the bloom
I pour out generations.*

Generations reveal themselves under the mountain of time, and here in Fomon's collection—if only for a moment—a glance, final instant—we will never die.



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