

## CAESARIAN

I was born wrong.

I did so much turning inside of my mother,  
when I came out, the tube  
that was meant to feed me had become a noose;  
broke my legs, nearly strangled me.  
Julius Caesar was born this way.  
there was something wrong with him too:  
he believed he could generate law through conquering  
We're not supposed to dream that big.

When I grow up  
I want to be Saturn  
because it looks fast  
and almost as exciting as the wind.  
I never said I wanted to be The President  
when I grow up, but,  
I would make an amazing First Lady  
It combines all my favorite activities into one:  
I could fly around the world to humanitarian efforts  
and hug a lot of people, making stirring speeches  
about jazz and baseball, referencing  
slightly obscure characters from the American Revolutionary War.  
At night, Abigail Adams comes to me in my dreams.  
She tells me,

*Brian, stop making excuses for your fathers.  
They had it all wrong:  
the voice, the vote and the bondage.  
Maybe its my fault,  
maybe if I were a man they would have listened to me.*

Abigail — I know how you feel.  
I've wanted to be a man my whole life,  
but the closest I've ever been able to manage is Saturn.  
Like all planets, I turn in my sleep,  
I've been doing it since before I was born.

My body is a nightmare.  
It hurts me every day.  
I've been taught to resent it by boys  
trying to forge themselves righteous through conquering.  
They knew there was something wrong with me,  
it was explained through hands  
that spoke only in exclamation points

Just because we do not see them with our telescopes,  
doesn't mean new genders aren't out there.  
We know so very little  
about the Sky.  
When I grow up,  
I don't want to be old.  
I don't want to be young either.  
I don't want to be the age of fifty-six, sixty-four  
fourteen, eighteen, twenty-one or twenty-five  
I am the way I feel about the nature of law.  
I am the way I feel about the nature of the human heart  
and the connection between those two things.  
Just because my strength is not vast and fat like Jupiter,  
I was supposed to be fast.  
I was supposed to be quiet.  
But me and Abigail,  
we're through with being quiet.  
I was born with broken legs,  
you'll excuse me if I stand.

## WHY I DO NOT PICK UP THE PHONE

My father bellowed from across the house  
for me to pick up the phone.  
It was never for me.

When telephone numbers still meant a place on the map,  
the voices on the other end  
wanted to know if my father was home,  
Cordially at first, and then,  
with greater and greater venom.  
Credit Card companies, collection agencies,  
the IRS. Their voices were starched white  
Ironed. You could hear their closely  
cropped haircuts, the fluoride rinse.

The same customer service representatives  
would keep calling back,  
trying to outwit a nine-year-old  
burgeoning storyteller.  
They would grow angry, then solemn:  
claiming to know more about my family than I did.  
As I tried to hide all of my father in my voice.

I'm still holding him in here.

I pretended to be everything that I am not:  
stupid, obedient, and shocked  
by the severity of adults,  
I left everything I wanted to tell them  
stranded in my book-bag sized chest:

I hate your teeth.  
Your college education,  
your faith in this game of money,  
that you have no idea that,  
it will one day turn on you too,  
and it will still mean nothing.

Winning and Losing are two words that both mean loneliness.

You're breaking my father's heart  
and you don't have to be here when it happens.  
He used to be one of you.

To this day, I still call him  
my father.  
To this day, I'm still surprised when the phone is for me.

## DANCE DANCE DANCE

Maybe it was a vacuum cleaner  
or, a mop.  
If you were unlucky, it was middle school.  
But if you were lucky —  
there was a wedding.  
Your dad, or your uncle  
has an old buddy with a nephew getting married,  
you are twelve years old,  
at the edge of the parquet at the reception,  
when you realize that you  
will never have to meet  
any of these people  
ever again...  
Jamiroquai comes on. And the cauldron  
of your hips begins to stir...

The first time the dance took you.  
The first time you ever exploded in one place.  
That first perfect dance partner,  
maybe it was a chair,  
maybe it was a pole,  
maybe it was the collarbone of Venus.  
Baby, I saw you out there,  
your skin looked almond sliver thin  
and twice as sweet.  
You looked like you had  
the inside scoop on burn,  
like you knew the middle name of ache;  
of shimmy, of thrash, and step and twist and clown.  
I heard that you have the Electric Slide's phone number  
and Boy Howdy do I know the moves.

When we let the rhythm in  
and the abandon out ,  
there is no way to do this wrong,  
there is no way not to be beautiful.  
Maybe you haven't eaten all day  
and you're broke  
and you live in your girlfriend's dorm room,  
but you have a boom-box  
and a tape of Bell Biv DeVoe  
and you are Birth.  
You are a dream the Sun is having  
and it doesn't matter the music  
because when we go,  
All we can hear is spotlight.

Remember that a bead of sweat is a sacred circle.  
That sweat is the last honest currency of sinners.  
This is the sycamore grove,  
The burial ground of kings.  
This is the sexiest thing you can do  
without touching someone  
and if you do this right,  
you will never hunger,  
you will always be wealthy.  
There are five people in your life  
who will make you feel like this  
and if you fuck them  
it doesn't count.