

*Dean Young*

## **My Own Recognizance**

Snow falls like torn Kleenex that day  
I sat quivering in the cell, obliterating  
tissue after tissue, the hawks above me  
ready to rip, me always hot  
to go on forever about myself. Perhaps

you are the only person I know who is  
scratching himself more violently  
at this moment. What is the self but  
scratching the self away? I hope not.  
I hope the herbs work. I believe in all sorts  
of stuff I don't understand. Like  
stepping on the gas. Acupuncture.  
Like my childhood love of tractors,

how misery turns to joy. So please,  
no more talk of winter and scratching  
and doomed childhood love, okay?  
Rivard told me about your dream  
of chasing sheep up the ramp. Lately,  
all my dreams occur at sea or within  
the sea's proximity, another thing  
I have to thank my parents for: those Julys  
on the beach while bees simmered in cans  
of flat Coke, planes towing by languet  
advertisements for salt water taffy. But

most of the time I'd like to trash my childhood  
like a grocery lost when I get home  
and start to chow. Oh, often begun in the car,  
joy of cookies and chips driving home —

we turn to each other with crumby approval  
 to be sharing such a moment, how, now  
 that we're grown, no one's calling us numbskulls  
 for ruining our dinner although

there's always those neural parents  
 tsk tsking in our brains like the bindings  
 of new books. Books we'll never read,  
 in fact our buying of them was crazy optimism:  
 did we really want to become someone in reading specs  
 who knows the importance of Hegel to any  
 reading of Thoreau? Here's a sentence for you:

The social hegemony of our internal system  
 of monopoly capitalism manufactures the  
 illusion of the individual within  
 a praxis of competing reifications. Not  
 only do we now feel it impossible to go  
 to any grocery store, scene of such  
 infant joys, we're not even sure  
 there's any us to go. Oh, my countrymen,

no wonder you've put all books aside.  
 Indeed the snow has turned to sleet like  
 a word's slide towards indeterminacy  
 but can't we still somehow reach in each other's  
 hearts our own vexed climb of the water tower,  
 that day love made us do all sorts of

corny and, now that we think about it,  
 dangerous things. We could have broken  
 our legs. We could have landed in jail,  
 lying on that concrete slab beside  
 the toilet with no lid, everything  
 backed up inside us like a rhinoceros.  
 But that next morning, released on our own  
 recognizance, handed our wallets, our keys,  
 our belts (did they really think we'd  
 hang ourselves with a beaded belt?),

it all seemed funny, our names listed  
under disturbances, the sun, forgiving,  
rising golden from her tub. It'd have to be  
a long letter home but what luck  
they didn't search us all that much.