

BOB HICOK

This shit's biblical

My brother's been fired again, he is jobless
Job a fourth time in two years for no failure
to perform his duties, I'm putting him to work
in a poem with some of America's best known trees
in my yard looking famous, here he is
holding an axe, cutting down the dead red bud
but not its shadow, dragging away pieces
of an oak for a ham sandwich, a bed, a beer
at the end of the day, finding it difficult
not to drive a screwdriver into his thigh, not to take
a full bottle of low self-esteem and sleep
through the early shows, the forged smiles,
another birthday for weather, to whittle his arm
into a flute and make at least a song
of emptiness for the woods to admire, where is Leviathan
when you need him, with eyelids of morning
and underparts of sharp potsherds
to herald the restoration by God of all
that has been removed to test my brother's faith
in capitalism, this poem's been brought to you
by words and being ineffectual and afraid
my brother won't live one hundred
and forty years and die an old man full of days
but soon and never having used
the words *pension* and *retirement* in a sentence
that doesn't begin or end, fat chance.