

POEMS OFTEN CONSOL ME

ELISA GABBERT

for Sam Starkweather

The hook goes here. Meat hook
that is. Of language. Into my eye.

Not a love of learning but a lust
for meaning keeps me reading

when we're each of us alone
in the woods w/ meteoric streaks

in the peripheral sky. Lest
the whole shebang seem pointless,

I get down in the dirt,
I manufacture a li'l epiphany

from a skull & a shovelful
of earth. The future can't say

that we never freaked out.
Going back over it now,

it doesn't even feel phony;
it's thinkable.

POEM WITH A REFERENCE

Toxic information. Best stay away
when I'm in an absorptive phase.

Don't worry baby—
it's not my blood.

Give a line direction,
it becomes a ray. A laser gun.

The poetics of destruction.
(Put this line in your mouth.)

For further reading, see
Thanks for the Machine.

You will fuck a towel,
you will submit nonplussed

to your destiny.
(You are free.)

THE TRAIL

WITH KATHLEEN ROONEY

Before about 1900, everyone ate "local-organic."
But the past is the past. Distant & distancing.
I have no cultural memory so I revoke my culture.
I can't see myself as "hunter" or "gatherer."
Siphoning water from the kidney-shaped pool
brings back my unsatisfiable thirst. Which is worse,
progression toward death or no progress at all?
The slides in a carousel go around & around.
If you do deer ears, then you can really hear
what a deer would hear, alone, in the woods.
Nature sounds. & the voice that's your brain.