

[What could eat her up?]

from The Coincidence Machine*

Devon Wootten

What could eat her up?
her mouth full of her own stories.

making real selves
And the long sorrow of the color red.

That music. takes the breath away!
What will I do now, with my hands?

unlit and unfulfilled.

You come in the myth night hour.
I dress in a brand-new self.

It took him years. As it does me.
o. immortal baton keeping time.

try. the flag of that new nation.
craven and dangerous, in the heavy red.

still awake. the disobedient cross the line.
or. on their way home. sweat gleaming just beneath their skin.

glow that said don't look. Leave him alone.
I don't know why, either. memories, are bones.

which he took...in their innocence).

It will be still. still
capable of bleeding.

bolting with life.

* The poems in this project are composed using only the last letter, word, line, sentence, or stanza of every poem that appears in *The Best American Poetry* from 1988 to 2013. The ordering of the lines has not changed, nor has their capitalization or punctuation.

Though oft-derided, *The Best American Poetry* series functions as a fascinating year-by-year snapshot of “good” American poetry. By appropriating the last line of each successive poem, I hope to perform a sort of poetic archeology. Ultimately, these poems examine poetic convention by asking, “How should a poem end?” and reframe the concept of creative finality.

Devon Wootten teaches at Whitman College. His poems appear or are forthcoming in *Fence*, *LIT*, *Aufgabe*, *Colorado Review*, *Drunken Boat*, *Octopus*, *the tiny*, *Backward City Review*, *26 – A Journal of Poetry and Poetics*, and *@TimberJournal*. He lives with his wife among the wheat fields of southeast WA. He curates wikipoiesis.com.