

## With False Courage

By John Sweet

have thought of never meeting,  
even now, two years later and with  
a hundred million dead leaves  
between us

have considered lesser gods

taller hills

all of those roads that do nothing  
but circle back on themselves  
and bring us back to this  
empty house

listen

we are never really sorry  
for anything

we worship only  
the dead and the wealthy

choices have been made,  
of course,  
and money has exchanged hands

the art of kissing ass is  
worth more than knowledge

you will find no beauty  
in a land of silent mirrors

## In The Kingdom

By John Sweet

were sick with joy,  
like angels,  
and no one ever found  
the body

eleven year old girl,  
fifteen years later

man laughed when he  
confessed, then they  
put him to death

sound of violins and  
cellos

## With Fevered Hands, With Song

By John Sweet

sunlight, then, on pollock's  
last day, and snow on my father's

sorrow is easy

fear is everywhere

heard the dogs outside while i  
lay in bed beside you

grey light, and fading, and no one  
left who had known me as a child

no desire to remember  
any of my old rooms

and i spoke yr name with the  
hushed intensity of prayer as i  
spread your legs, and the  
air smelled like sandalwood

the distance between us  
was nothing

was less than nothing

thought it could be like this  
forever, but i was wrong

## After Having Read Somewhere That William Carlos Williams Was Dead

By John Sweet

tuesday night with  
everyone i love sick or dying,  
and i couldn't get enough to drink

watched my son fall through  
a hole in the earth

killed what i could  
because i needed to eat

39 years old and tired, but  
unable to sleep in someone else's bed

39 years old and bleeding in  
a room full of teenage girls and  
i had decided to leave the idea of  
sorrow for all of those fucking useless  
poets with their ½ empty bottles  
of wine, their 3rd shift jobs,  
their pathetic little shrines  
to bukowski

and god hates a coward,  
of course,  
but cowards hate themselves

children on fire only make the  
news on slow days in hollywood

beauty without the scent of  
money can never really  
be beauty at all

## Running Dry

By John Sweet

and then uncertain sunlight gives way to  
grey skies in  
the land of missing fathers

rooftops and treetops and then the cemeteries  
at the edges of these slowly  
fading upstate towns

the fact that god is neither a  
question nor an answer

woman is stabbed to death by her lover

child is left behind in the burning trailer

no mercy shows the way to no future  
but yet here we are

thief of light  
becomes the king of crows

steals the blood from corpses to paint his  
slogans on prison walls and  
what are your choices?

will free will carry you past the palace gates  
and out into the kingdom?

don't scream if you  
don't want to be heard

don't pray when action is needed

all it ever sounds like  
is surrender

## Blind Map For The King Of Crows

By John Sweet

stands holy in the last pure  
crippled light of day says  
*this is not the end*

stands in the doorway says  
*come in*  
or no words at all

open smile open heart and  
this is the year of wonder and  
this is the age of fealty

you give and you receive

you wait for the news that christ is  
reborn or st least morrison  
or at least pollock and then you  
consider escape

make up a list of everyone who  
would kill you for it

power over the fates of others  
is its own religion

this is true lesson of history  
and what she wants is  
to be held

what we are is lost

kid in the back seat slowly  
bleeding to death says we  
have to turn around but  
it's too late for that

just have to keep driving

# Writing Raw

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until we get to  
the point where everything ends

**John Sweet bio:** John Sweet, b. 1968, currently alive and well in the wastelands of upstate. Dead factories in every direction, and slowly eroding hills. A believer in the healing powers of sunlight and surrealism. Opposed to all organized religions and political parties. Labels are the enemy, as are those who make them. Most recent collection is THE CENTURY OF DREAMING MONSTERS (2014 Lummo Press \$12). HUMAN CATHEDRALS (Ravenna Press, \$8.50) is also out there.