

JONAH IN THE BOOTH

He weaves a roof of leafy limbs and waits
for the same igneous storm that flamed
Sodom to scorch the Assyrian streets.

Nineveh will melt in brimstone, he dreams,
as sunbeams smite my brow. Sweat trickles his chest
and evokes the damp belly of the beast.

He knew comfort under the humid gum rafters,
the tongue a humungous slick coverlet
to swaddle him and fend the cold waters.

The great molars were bone pillars.
The steady bite drummed a meter for his psalm.
He still hums the throat's law of swallowing.

But now a worm has eaten the gourd that spread
shade upon his head. The enemy explodes
in song and dance. Sackcloth shed. Fasted cattle fed,

fatted for a thanksgiving feast. From the east
now, the wind changes! No molten torrent but his ire.
There is snow where there should be sulfur.

The new weather gnashes his skin.
He calls for the warm leviathan mouth.
Spat out, he still sits behind a fence of teeth.