

Beowulf in Hell

by Kyle Muntz

They strung him up,
and beat him with sticks,
and bent his muscles,
They said, "We shall
to be a man."
muted by numbers,
They drank blood
they drank the rainwater
they spat bits of their
they sang fragments
had already forgotten.
small animals scurried,
between their teeth.
thunder sheered the clouds.
away, mountains were
began to walk,
the mountain paths,
trees. Beowulf looked
he said, "They are a soup,
is to be soup,
to be a sheep,
to be a piece of string,
to be the handle of axe,
to be the reek
in the stables
when the children have
as wind settles in
and dew hovers
and thoughts shiver
moonlight, the hours
turns, the calf
stowed on the balcony,
and beat him with rocks,
and bared his insides,
teach you what it means
Beyond the rafters,
many cackled.
drained from small children,
of distant countries,
own children,
of songs everyone else
All across the hall,
clasping breadcrumbs
Winds blasted the clouds,
Thousands of miles
waking up. Mountains
bringing with them
the many outlying
at his innards, and
to be a man
to be a goat,
to be an ox,
to be cattle,
to be the baying of wolves,
of dung drying
late in the evening
already gone inside,
across the fields,
above the leaves
quietly in the coming
shuffle, the earth
bleeds, the woman

bleeds, the man
the boy dies, the boy
curls, the lakes cool,
the bread hardens,
fitly above the remains
Yes," Beowulf says,
means, to be a man—" "
"that is it means
to sprout like a limb,
to gnaw like a wolf,
I am dying like a dog
the moss settling
against the water.
there was never a God,
there was never
never a monster."
like a tree, being
of a forest. He imagines
A small child spits
a girl. Her face is small,
she crushes him
from high

shits, the boy dies,
dies, the flower
the stove cools,
and flies settle
of the battlefield.
"that is what it
and coughs—
to be a life,
to live like a beast,
to die like a dog.
right now. I am
on a log, chaffing
There is no God
there was never a battle,
a throne, there was
He seethes, and feels
felled in the center
the animals in their dens.
in his face. It was
her body is small;
like a boulder, dropped
upon the rocks.

