

TONY MANCUS

from *A Vessel Interior*

Canal dogs sign up for boar rides

run through with tusking.

 Their gamey leg-twitch
 away from the forest.

Above us the all-seeing eye:

 tri-cornered, rung
 (bells, bells).

 Sleep comes and goes tidal.

 It rains the whole while.

We celebrate our pots. To catch the rain & cats & hammers occasionally, that fall from on high up in front of the door.

I can see the x-ray from here, it says the doctor knows your bones in ways you never will: from outside & all that light behind his knowing.

Bright smiles cross him like a storm & we picnic here without sense.

The fuses are what light
the flowers.

(each tune turning in the machine)

Time they start
their smelly glowing.

Inside what we win is a number, I'm thinking.

Years end with you chirping:
“Sell all the remaining friends you’ve got.”

We flour these last notes
together. Our break
near or at the bend.

Almost.

field the flowers
down
like to prayer

string the castles together—the cattle
young, are yet

training to be trophies. They wear their shirts untucked, their hair
tied-up

tune to sleep

(cumulonimbus)

master-cloud

cardinal numbers

by degree

bell-called locals to worship,
church-plunder
the marbled centuries

pushed around

a tower forms noisy pictures

the bus turns to sleep

equal to one bird

blackened in a flock

full sky

hole with dots

One wing lifts.

One word per year.

One branch is wishes.

In other words my face is a courtyard
full of scrapped meals trust in the eye
rusting the edges

two things harder than
life & faucets
of salt-
water confusion

never climbs back
each year.

Tony Mancus is the author of three chapbooks: *Bye Land* (Greying Ghost), *Bye Sea* (Tree Light Books), and *Diplomancy* (Horse Less Press). He is co-founder of Flying Guillotine Press and works as a quality assurance specialist and writing instructor. He lives in northern Virginia with his wife Shannon and their two yappy cats.