

GARY CHARLES WILKENS POETRY SAMPLES

Boone County Burial

They wanted to feel it, and they wanted it to hurt.
Hard black dirt and cold red clay,
backs bared to the sun, tattoos rolling
over muscles, the picks falling
like notes in a church song.
I envy these redneck bastards.
My grandmother I never saw her dead,
I don't know where she's buried
or who dug the hole.
It was probably some damn
machine, chugging and spitting
and tearing up the earth,
and nobody ever lost an ounce
of sweat or a spat of blood
or felt it in their hands or backs.
My townspeople, when you bury
them I want there to be bruises.

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On His Wife Hyphenating Her Name with His *for ASW*

I have become your ending, the tail you wag.
I follow you on paper work and in
careful conversation.
I am the extra layer when you're cold,
your one leg when you have none to stand on.

Or perhaps I'm your accessory,
your appendage, your appendix,
your addendum, the additional
features thrown in free?

I'll hold this hyphen tight
like a branch on a cliff,
hoping that wherever you go
you will drag me behind.

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The Irresistible Strength of Superman

What it must be like to meet no resistance,
anywhere. Hard rocks like mashed
potatoes under your feet, if you
will. No wall really ever a wall,
no door closed to you. Where
you want to go, arrived at.
No height high, no low all
that low for one who can bound
upwards on super legs. When you make
a mistake, for surely even you
make them, everyone says
"He doesn't know his own
strength. He meant to save her.
He tried." And you, with remains
in your mighty hands.

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Surfing Near Pali Gap

Splitting bottle-green mountains,
charging the rhino of the toothy foam,
my heels kicked to heaven, my face turned
to the cold hells, the ocean a cat in heat-

-oh fuck, I'm drowning-

then crimson fire in the sand,
ha ha there is no more Jonah,
the whale has shit him out,

into the stars behind the night,
where a boy holds a seashell
to his ear, hearing only his heart.

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