

Observations from the visiting hall

The crèche is at capacity. Hard-mouthed men cradle  
soft headed babies. The most concrete of consequences  
have heartbeats. Mouths to feed. Hunger feels a lot like  
an open wound or a phantom limb itching  
*not my son. Not this time. Not again.* These men  
with their puffed-out-chests all pigeon  
or peacock or prophetic. The women  
wear Saturday visiting room best, all  
low-cut vests and hairspray and mouths  
that move faster than the rest of them  
can, bodies always catching up to  
*what did you say?*

Bruise or pregnancy.

He didn't mean it. Didn't anybody ever  
tell you? The Father. The Son. The Holy  
Ghost. Most men are mythical:  
half-magic. Wholly absent. But  
there was no one left to ask.

There is no one left to ask  
*do you need anything?*

A postal order? A second chance?

A mars bar? A mother? Another visit maybe?

What does an angel look like without his wings?

I'm just wondering.

Could you pick him out of a line up?

What about in this room?

Court order hero.

Big-money-mistake-maker.

Man or boy or

trying. All you have.