

JENN BLAIR

JOURNAL OF A BUSY VA PLANTER

Five missed entries.

Little time to write of late. Country at War.

Last week Jameson ran across tobacco
breathless. Waving arms. Yelling.

Chicken-like (Mary A. thought wife's
labor must finally be impending). Calmed him
down. Heard the news: "They set Fir to the town!
Some gone missing and some ded."

In reparation for York, R-Coats broke in, held
mock session, drank toast to President,
subsequently stole pair of his glittering
rhinestone buckles and, in an insult of the most
extreme gravity, took many personal love letters.
(M's reply: "Damned Rascals")

By the B for record's sake, M is hundred pound
snippet of man. Insufferable at parties.

Own impression: At T's affair last spring
had strong urge to set down wine,
go jump in Chesapeake. (Thank God for Dolly—
when she dips a little snuff
and laughs). State of things sadly altered.

Congress meeting in Hotel. Cabinet
in Post Office. After four days
of wondrously seized-up bowels,
a welcome turn.

JOSIAH

Do not trouble the horse's foot
on Sabbath Day. If bad company
corrupts, forswear thy new boon companion
who always speaks with such love and pity
of the "LAWLESS territories,"
gold glint maggot gleaming in his eye
as he takes too much bread at our fire.
Last night the moon stayed shrouded
and I was fitful—finally dreaming his wanton sideburns
had crawled all the way into his mouth.

When I see men swarming over ageless rocks
in order to scratch their own three sad initials, I fear us
an indistinguishable part of this flesh streaming West,
wound that never stops scurrying
across broke chests and dropped oxen bone.

Josiah. You saw my sister first.
Gave her a book of essays and a green ribbon. Grew
impatient. Rooted, she bequeathed me
her straw Charleston hat. When I wear it
you now and then touch its brim—
sometimes too fondly, I think.

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK

Suppose the day of our birth
the day
of our great loss.

And as the lung filled like a sail
all things shattered
to shards of tree and face and stone

—that first evening setting us down
shorn and bewildered—
stripped corn in an alien field.

Suppose before the first hour broke
all the memories were already gathered
sun-stitched green-leafed

while we who did not know bodies
lingered in the river beneath

minnows darting resting

resting in the long cool curve.

Jenn Blair is from Yakima, WA. Her chapbook *All Things are Ordered* is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press in April 2010.