

Ten
Stuart Ross

MODEL

i.

I crawl along the beach
I turn transparent
a plant eats me
the ants applaud

ii.

the refrigerator contained a rock
where do you want to go?
how many flapjacks
received electroshock therapy
from Jean-Paul Sartre?

iii.

nineteen pickles arranged themselves
in a pattern in the path
of a pockmarked Howitzer

iv.

I slithered down the silver railroad
a chunk of Appalachia
hung off the crusty mucus
danced with Jacqueline Onassis
after the assassination
of her husband, Burt Lancaster
in the party room
of our collective forehead

v.

I'm talking into a microphone
a microphone talks into a pancreas
a pancreas talks into a Frost fence
a Frost fence talks into the ear of Robert Frost
Robert Frost punches Stephen Crane in the face
Stephen Crane knocks over Hart Crane
on his way down

vi.

in the absence of a suitable chair
I sit on a blanket of swarming red ants

vii.

a part of me never wants to
leave a part of me
lying in the gutter playing pinochle
with a cotton boll weevil
named Sylvia

viii.

cutting a person's head in half
is best to do when the person is dead
you will learn so many things
o the swirls of the brain
o the cross-section of the skull
the little wiggling tip of the spine
is our future
our temperamental orgasm

ix.

don't look at me
when I'm talking

x.

when she opened her eyes
a piece of bereavement
fell from one socket
that looks like an ice cube, someone said
others of us thought it looked
more like an adjustable wrench
which I used to rip my nose
from the centre of my face
as a way of becoming
more famous

This poem was written in August 2020 during an
online Poetry Studio conducted by Sarah Burgoyne.

Stuart Ross is an editor, writing teacher, and washed-up writer, the author of over 20 books of fiction, poetry, and essays, and countless chapbooks and ephemera. He received the 2019 Harbourfront Festival Prize for his contributions to Canadian literature. His most recent books are *70 Kippers* (Proper Tales Press, 2020), collaborative poems with Michael Dennis, and *Sos una sola persona* (translated into Spanish by Tomás Downey and Sarah Moses, Socios Fundadores, 2020). In spring 2022, ECW Press will publish his extended essay *The Book of Grief and Hamburgers*. Stuart's work has been translated into Nynorsk, French, Spanish, Estonian, and Russian. He lives in Cobourg, Ontario, and occasionally blogs at bloggamooga.blogspot.ca.

