

JOHN SIBLEY WILLIAMS

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## As Tattoos Fade

*Some stories are true that never happened.*

—Elie Wiesel

Suddenly, from all that's decayed around you,  
the night held inside recedes.

From the boots that define your silence  
a rough outline of song emerges.

Into the torn-open wound of sky  
a chimney releases birds.

After numbers have erased each letter  
your name begins to take shape

on the skin of your arm and without  
the need for skin—

since the sun has already learned to die  
but still burns our eyes,

it is your turn  
to invent how we see morning.

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**JOHN SIBLEY WILLIAMS** is the editor of two Northwest poetry anthologies and the author of nine collections, including *Disinheritance* and *Controlled Hallucinations*. A seven-time Pushcart nominee, John is the winner of numerous awards, including the Philip Booth Award, American Literary Review Poetry Contest, Nancy D. Hargrove Editors' Prize, Confrontation Poetry Prize, and Vallum Award for Poetry. He serves as editor of *The Inflectionist Review* and works as a literary agent. Previous publishing credits include: *The Yale Review*, *Midwest Quarterly*, *Sycamore Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Poet Lore*, *Saranac Review*, *Atlanta Review*, *Arts & Letters*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Third Coast*, and various anthologies. He lives in Portland, Oregon.