



JOE FYFE

RECENT WORK

POEM BY MAX BLAGG

JAMES GRAHAM & SONS

gate of heaven

**"The gate of heaven is everywhere."**

– Thomas Merton

1.

I want pure Shakespeare with my tea  
dance into headlights skylights searchlights  
faces rapt in firelight  
climbing those steps up from the ocean,  
sea's shells grinding into sand  
the past fills up this porcelain cup.

2.

Narcissus awoke on an island in Greece  
The sky was blue the water dark as wine,  
he would be fine.  
No matter how much you pretend, it's ok to be here.  
Buried lines, some gold, some silver  
'tried in a furnace of earth'  
rapid fire priest hook, monk's robes torn into strips  
and stripped in to the paintings.  
spiritual residue, smell of forest paths  
stone walls and words spit out like hot coals  
shocking on the tongue.

3.

'Work comes out of work'  
sharp pen point dipped in think tank memory bank  
a foot on the hosepipe that the words flow through  
flat skies hide blue and gold of July  
play the field then plough the field  
sky stretching away to a bend in the river  
where the great beech stood  
shade for the traveler or the boy gathering speed  
like the London express flashing through fields  
all wet with rain, sonic flashes obscured by cordite  
clouds held down by weather  
patterns of light crisscrossing the room  
neural pathways shining in the dark.  
Cut the thorns and sharpen your horns  
men turned into hedges that scream  
for a hundred years when you tear off the leaves,  
Tell it to the watchman at the gates of dawn.

4.

Wash the floors of this hut on the side of a mountain,  
distances framed through the doorway,  
portals gloaming raising loaming walking  
furring grassing piping.  
Soft boulders of pears beneath my feet,  
soft shoulder under teeth.

5.

Talked all day about nothing at all  
the beggar took the cake mom baked,  
strawberry inflected cheese,  
the best I ever tasted  
on a corner in the summer in New York City  
living as if dying was not an option.

6.

Cars roar over the viaduct,  
the artist paints a picture  
beneath the concrete girders.  
Here on earth speak in tongues  
know the seven names for bog oak  
tell time by the light through leaves  
tell trees' names by their canny bark  
sharpen the blade on a stone,  
steel song echoes through woodland  
where badgers play at dusk,  
catch the lacy wave of words  
(leaf shadow on a wall)  
laid out like evening clothes on a bed,  
shirt immaculate, cummerbund  
in shot silk, gold links.

7.

A bird streaks between buildings  
like an arrow from some god's bow  
dazzles briefly in the still air  
fine silver piercing grey velvet.

8.

The ferry boat arrives at that distant shore,  
a hill festooned with white cubes,  
cool interiors of ancient greece,  
haunts of ancient peace.  
It remains as you remain  
in the future and the past,  
as if nothing had changed.

9.

At the beach the sand danced  
and there was wind  
moving the tips of the dune grass  
and the water behind it.

10.

Make light of it. Watch light stream out of it,  
out of strength comes sweetness  
the lion lays down with the lamb,  
or simply kills the lamb  
and then lies down as lions do.  
The kings of the jungle are lazy  
but they like to eat.

11.

Millions of girls from faraway places came to the city of dreams  
and then, something happened. They got married or didn't.  
Some ran aground with a serious grating sound  
like teeth being drawn swiftly over rocks.

12.

Empty fields, 'bare ruined choirs',  
read the runes in these ruins  
not songbirds' guts on country roads  
or crows flying to the left.  
Just let yourself be moved by love.

13.

Exit maestro with handgun, spinning the chamber  
only one shell in the cylinder,  
the Spanish word for paperclip,  
the trombone playing a singular mournful tune.  
This is how the day runs away, water over stones.

14.

All of us roadrunners wanting that touch of grace,  
lightness in the face of ruin,  
independent of the predictions of  
Syrian astrologers in the Café Royale.  
Follow the ley lines through the Village,  
history at work beneath the pavement's seams.

15.

Immersed in the stream of life not the dream  
pray for small mercies and  
small mercies might pray for you.  
Vast library of sighs waiting to be opened up  
fill the goatskins with blood and milk  
to sustain us on the voyage.  
The city gates swing shut, step to the road  
uncoiled, hopeful of redemption, salvation,  
words gleaming like crow's eyes in the dark,  
ravens playing with sticks in mid air  
not thinking about what I should be thinking,  
keep salting the wound, until the meat is edible.

— max blagg, New York City, 2008



NUN, 2007, MUSLIN AND DYED COTTON, 24 1/2 X 22 3/4 INCHES



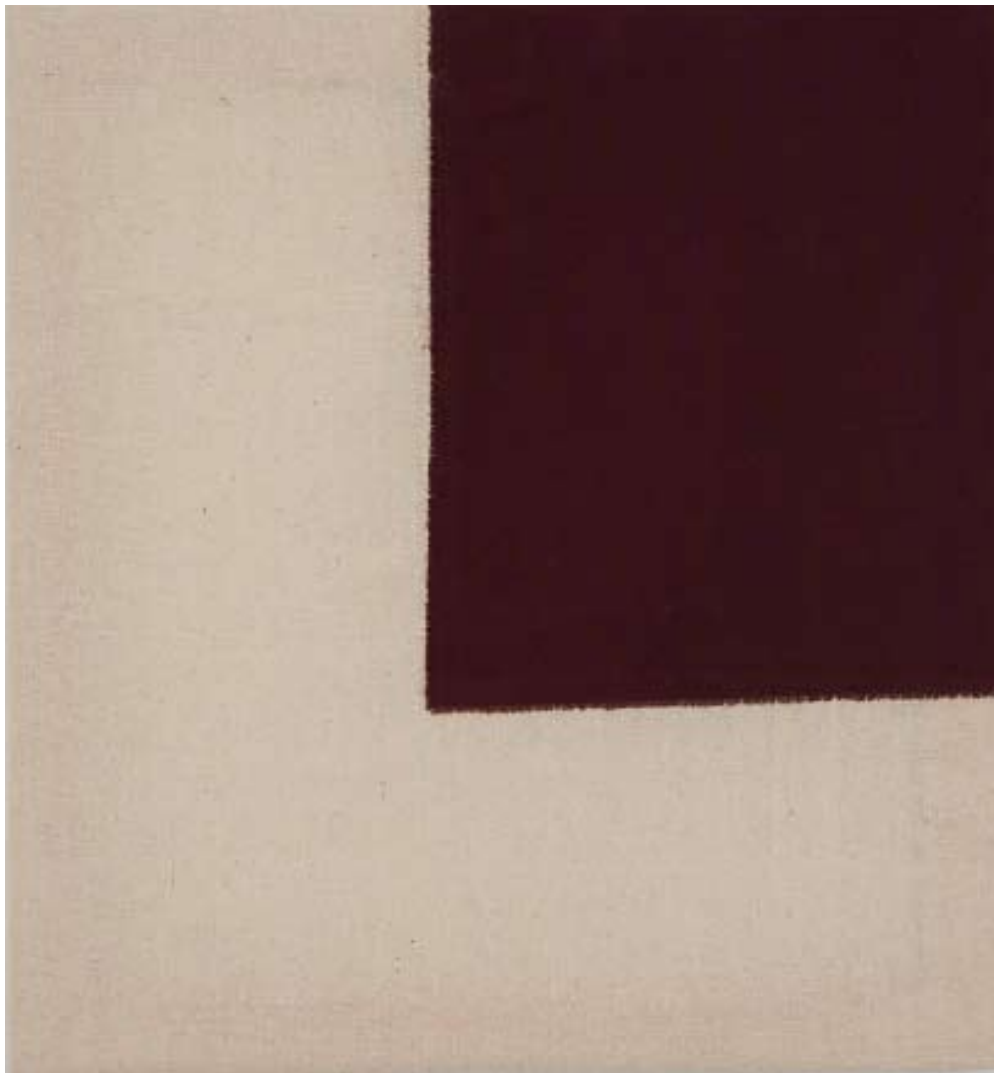
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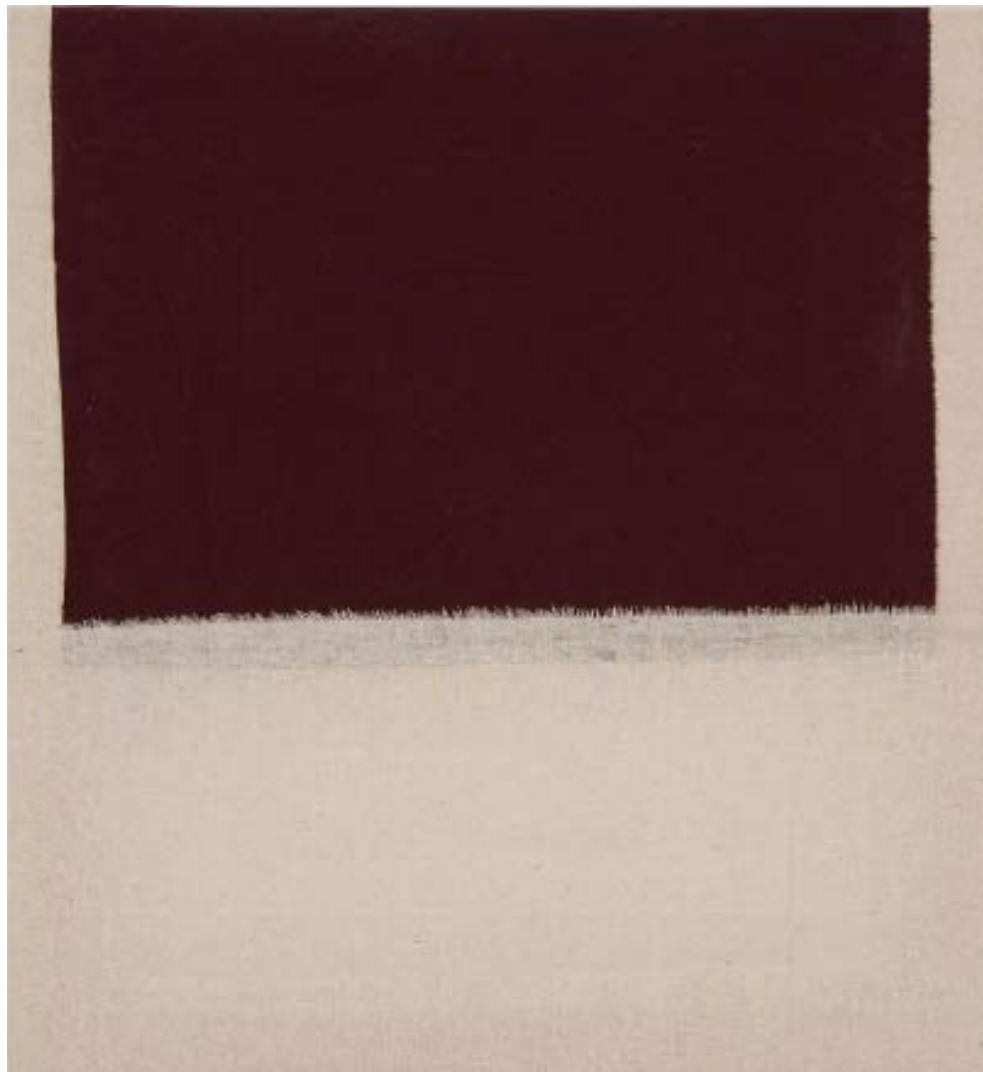
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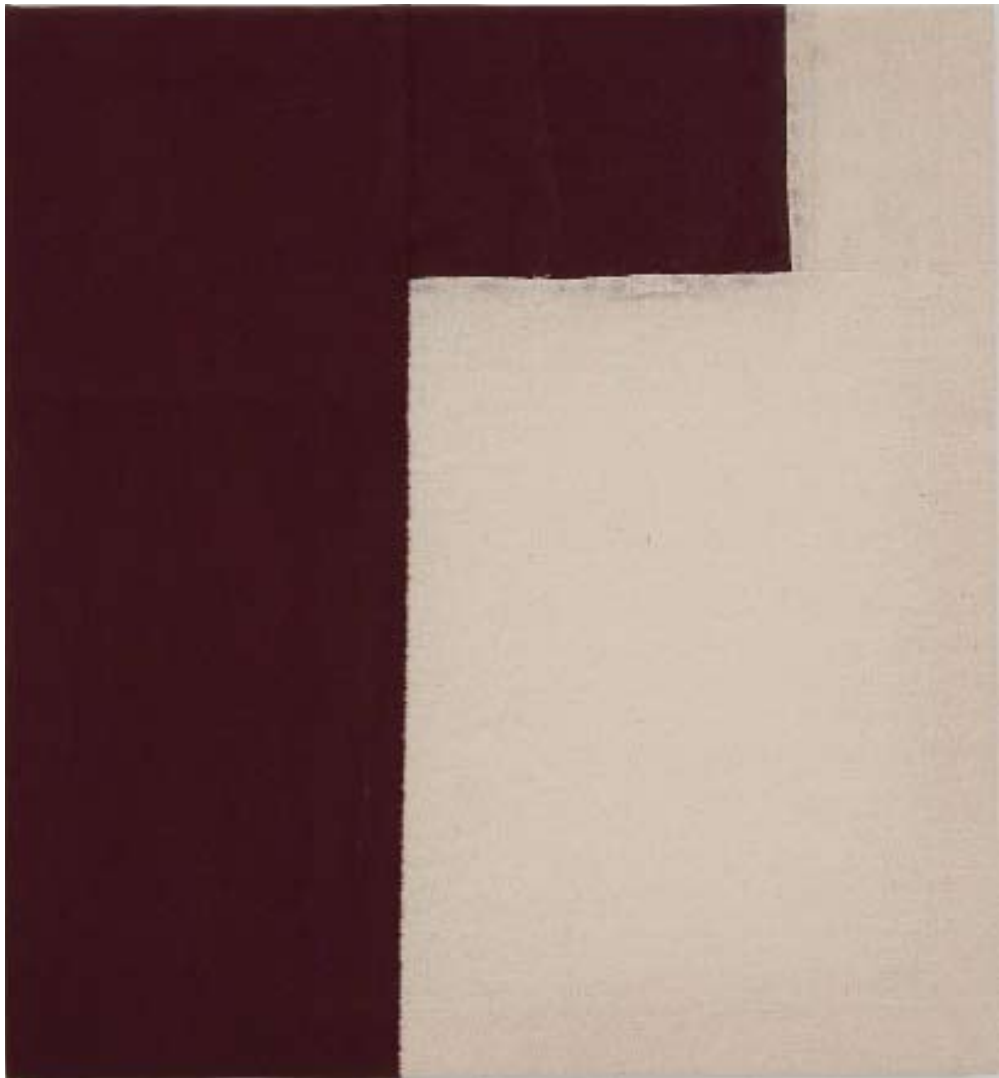
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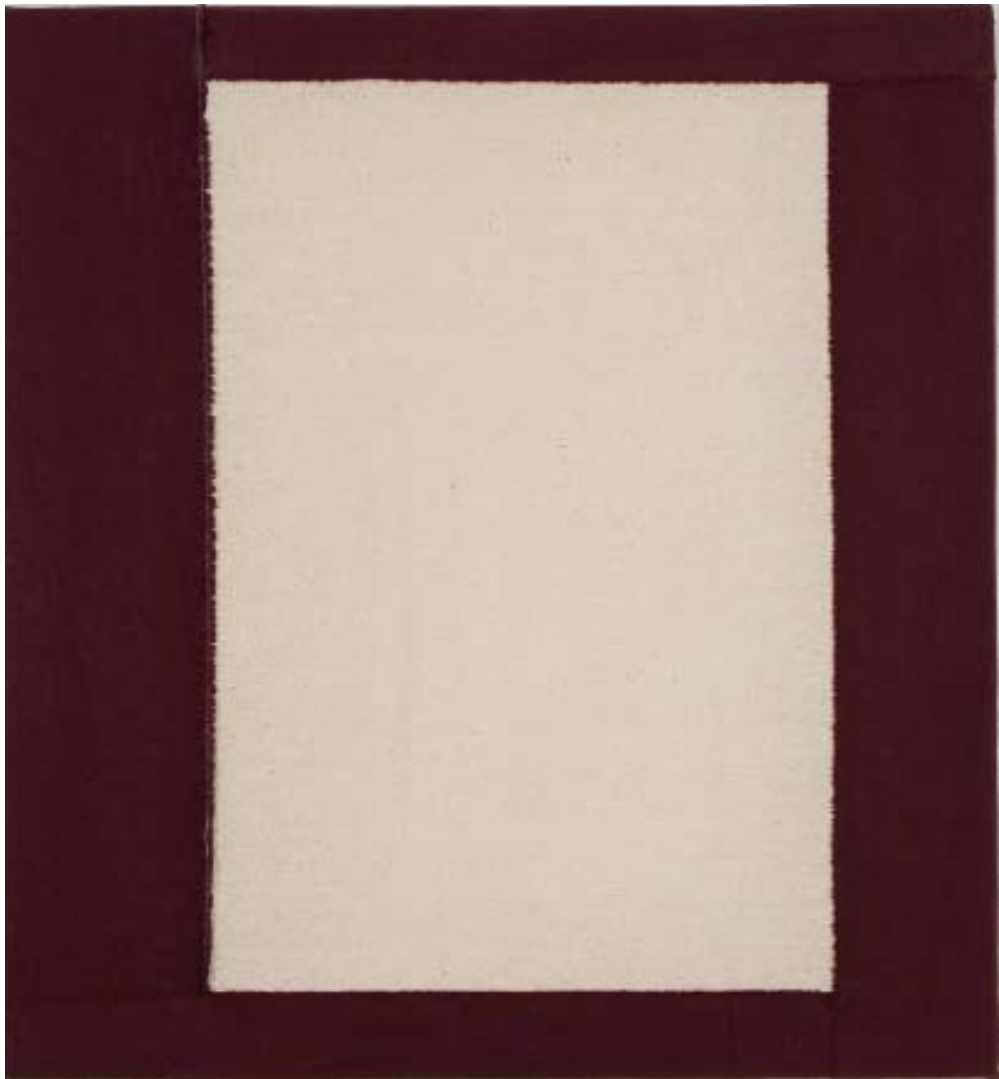
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