Notes to *Storm Toward Morning* (Copper Canyon, 2014)

The initial epigraph is taken from *King Henry VIII (All is True)*, a so-called "collaborative play" presumed to have been written in tandem by William Shakespeare and his King's Men successor John Fletcher. The lines are uttered by Cardinal Wolsey, who soliloquizes upon being confronted with evidence of his disloyalty to the King:

> Nay, then, farewell.
> I have touched the highest point of all my greatness,
> And from that full meridian of my glory
> I haste now to my setting. I shall fall
> Like a bright exhalation in the evening,
> And no man see me more. (3.2.222–27)

The section of the scene from which these lines derive is commonly attributed to Fletcher, though lines 223–25 are largely appropriated from John Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1611).

**

"Sifting in the Afternoon" reconfigures line 11 of T.S. Eliot's "Animula": "[the simple soul] Studies the sunlit pattern on the floor."

**

The epigraph to section two comes from George Herbert's "Easter Wings (I)" (lines 7–10).

**

"Quarantine" is a poem to the possibility of God. Cast as a crown of sonnets in the tradition of Donne's "La Corona," the ten movements of "Quarantine" derive their logic and arrangement from the Christian monastic prayer cycle known generally as the canonical hours (*horae canonicae*), condensing the traditional quarantine period of forty days and forty nights into the passage of one day. The cycle draws from an assembly of contemporary and historical Catholic, Coptic, and Eastern Orthodox monastic traditions, such that each of the poem's ten prayers corresponds to a different biblical event or religious consideration. The work begins with "Lauds," the Dawn Prayer, which is executed in the "watches" of the night

(Psalm 119:148) at dawn or predawn (3 a.m.), and praises God upon the rising of the sun. It is followed by "Prime,"the Early Morning Prayer or First Hour (6 a.m.), which commemorates the Creation, the banishment from Eden, and the appearance of Jesus before Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57–66). "Terce," the Midmorning Prayer or Third Hour (9 a.m.), is associated with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4); "Sext," the Sixth Hour or Midday Prayer (12 p.m.), with the Crucifixion (Matthew 27:31–43); and "None," the Ninth Hour or Midafternoon Prayer (3 p.m.), with the death of Jesus (Matthew 27:45–52). Performed at sunset or upon the lighting of the lamps, "Vespers," the Eleventh Hour or Evening Prayer (6 p.m.), is a meditation on the "Light of Christ," while "Compline," the Twelfth Hour or Night Prayer (9 p.m.), is a contemplation of death, "our final falling asleep." The Night Hours (12 a.m.), variously called "Nocturne," "Vigils," or "Matins," consists of three watches corresponding to the three stages of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36–44).

**

"A Memo to the Self-Possessed" invokes book 4.49 of Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations*: "Be like the promontory against which the waves continually break, but it stands firm and tames the fury of the water around it" (trans. George Long).

**

"That the Bones Which Thou Hast Broken May Rejoice" takes its title from Psalm 51:8 (King James Version).

**

"Query on Typography" appropriates Matthew 6:22–3: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (King James Version).

**

"The Winter Traveler" appropriates from and responds to Macbeth's famous speech upon learning of his wife's death:

Seyton:	The Queen, my lord, is dead.
MacBeth:	She should have died hereafter;
	There would have been a time for such a word.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (5.5.16-28)

**

"Growing Season" revises the terms of punishment for suicides described in lines 103–8 of Canto XIII of Dante's *Inferno*. There, the soul of Pier della Vigna, speaking through the bloody wound of his snapped branch, explains: "Like the rest [of the damned] we shall come [on Judgment Day], each for his cast-off body, but not, however, that any may inhabit it again; for it is not just that a man have what he robs himself of. Hither shall we drag them, and through the mournful wood our bodies will be hung, each on the thornbush of its nocuous shade" (trans. Charles Singleton).