



Jeff Hardin
Compelled

Mispronounced like a foreign word
two centuries later. Mystic
as a fly inside a snow globe.
Misunderstood like a marching band
rerouted through a slaughterhouse.
Useless as a bookstore two weeks
after Armageddon.

And that baby
thrown in the river by its mother?
Senseless as a haiku with seventeen
syllables of *I*, a thousand kisses
blown at hummingbirds, elegies
written with dust on the desert sands.
Senseless as a field of stumps that
wasn't a field at all but was "the woods,"
a place where people once walked
not even thinking of the sky, not
thinking of an ode someone someday
would feel compelled to write,
even if mispronounced, mystic,
misunderstood, utterly utterly useless.

