**The Perils of Renormalization**

Mike Gravagno

*Renormalization is a mathematical technique for solving a problem… [involving] the appearance of awkward infinities…- Leon Clifford*

*The other side of the “sacred” is the sight of your beloved*

*in the underworld, dripping with maggots. -Gary Snyder*

They say infinities can arise

because particle & antiparticle pairs pop

into & out of existence for short periods of time.

So, they created a shell game for when *things*

get awkward.

This theoretical three-card monte is a gorgeous self

-delusion, like covering your eyes to avoid the murder

on screen. The violence continues unseen & the ghosts

still wait outside your blankets

when your head is buried.

Or they get bored & float on. Or they were never

weighing your naked feet down to begin with,

you just forgot how tight you tucked

in the sheets. Observation changes

the outcome. Do you make the ghosts, or

do the ghosts make you?

*You* make your own bed

&/or you shit in it.

*You* build a bridge

&/or you burn that fucker down.

That bridge between the perilous and the mundane:

The perils of renormalization come when we least

want & most expect them. Like the time I quit

meat for a year, but then the fleshy smell of

my own fingers stirred the desire to rupture

muscle & taste coppery juices. Our desires

are legion. Thousands for every season, like

there’s no real way to tell a stranger

*you look like someone I used to sleep with*,

*wanna get some coffee? Because I need*

*some sort of connection & this marriage is tsunami*

*& my brain is a birds’ nest—composed*

*of bits of trash & twigs & leaves & spit*

*& tasting someone or something*

*new could erase every infinite other*

or not.

Because our atoms may overlap

but they never *really* touch.