

THE INVITATION

the thing about the scorpion is he built
from his nothing frogsong:

a sad song. the story as we tell it
ends sooner than it has to end. consider: the poison
sits like a child in the boiling water of the back.
the frog yells this or that (he moralizes) and is sure to die
and then you go to bed. next, america,

the frog turns over, sunny side up. then
the scorpion licked his stomach (sharp, if you take
what i mean). then the frog gasped, swallowed
flywater. the scorpion thought this

is it! this is really it! advancing west across
the river like a pair of suns. and what of the exoskeleton,

what was beneath it? only the strange fluid of a different myth.
and do you think the scorpion dared to dream? he built from nothing
frogdance (a flopping). strange satellites

encircling each other. radio chatter about it. we might tell

any sort of story of the water where the dead choose to go. we might call it
anything to save ourselves the trouble. no angel would call

a prevarication a hell. he calls it idaho, kentucky, the west.
my forefather was not born here but here i am

born, and so on. and then even the scorpion tasted the water.
he lifted up as if about to drown
and struck again and again and again but the frog

was in another country, deep below him, in the thickest

part of the story and the daylight and the water.

and then he pledged a signature. then
he too crossed the water