

A signed, limited edition poster

## The Book of the Dead Man (Foundry)

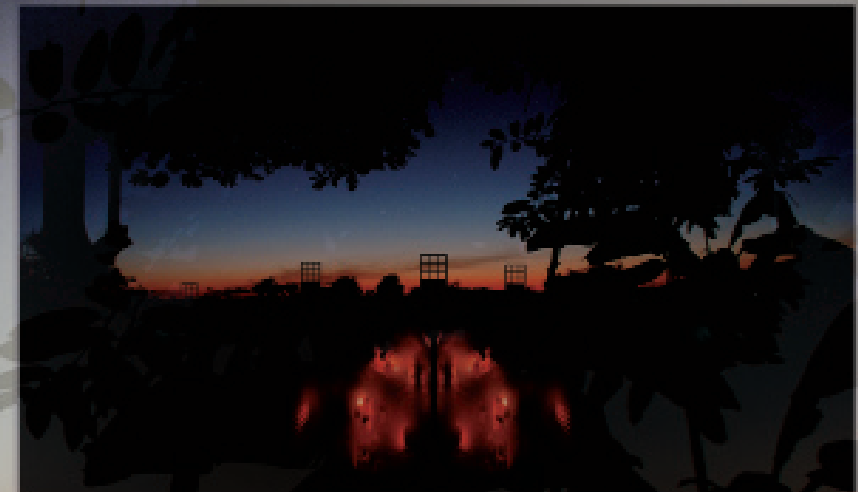
poem by **MARVIN BELL**

“... Bell has redefined poetry as it is being practiced today.”

*Judith Kitchen, Georgia Review*

*1. About the Dead Man and the Foundry  
The dead man hath founded the dead man's foundry.  
He acted in the past perfect, he melted, he poured,  
Then he was melted, he was molded, he was ground and sanded,  
He was ground and sanded, he was machined,  
The dead man took pains to stay alive, this was how:  
It was the undersong of the self, the subtext, the  
For the dead man was subterranean to start.  
He was the tuber in the sun, the worm warming, the root that stays put.  
The dead man became again what he was, he germinated.  
It was the foundry of the sun, the foundry of the sun's cast,  
It was the cosmic energy that did to the assemblage after dissection, the kick in the pants we call dawn.  
We are the children of a hot house, among orchids that grow in lava.*

photograph by **GALEN GARWOOD**



### The Book of the Dead Man (Foundry)

*Lovers of your own already dead  
Ten admissions*

#### 1. About the Dead Man and the Foundry

The dead man hath founded the dead man's foundry.  
He acted in the past perfect, he melted in such a clear cut, pure water and the spiritless air.  
Then he was melted, he was molded, he was poured and shook out.  
He was ground and sanded, he was machined to a severe tolerance.  
The dead man took pains to stay alive, this was how:  
It was the undersong of the self, the subtext, the no-man's-land's calling.  
For the dead man was subterranean to start.  
He was the tuber in the sun, the worm warming, the root that stays put.  
The dead man became again what he was, he germinated.  
It was the foundry of the sun, the foundry of the sun's cast, the foundry of the electric light and the dry cell.  
It was the cosmic energy that did to the assemblage after dissection, the kick in the pants we call dawn.  
We are the children of a hot house, among orchids that grow in lava.

#### 2. More About the Dead Man and the Foundry

The foundry of the dead man pops and smolders with re-creation.  
It is re-created in the tissue and the minuscule, every detail.  
Within the dead man, the same fire burns.  
The same furnace, the same raw materials that make flesh.  
The same red water, the same liquid tissue cooling.  
The dead man's foundry has made weapons and ploughshares, and those who use them.  
The foundry and the forge, the shapes imprisoned in the molten streams of tough matter, these are prisoners of the human, too.  
The steam escaping from a wounded body is the foundry.  
The heat of exhalation, the blush of desire, the red sun under the skin... they are the foundry.  
And the high temperatures of the III and the heat of the firm foundry assembling at its source.  
If you believe in the reformation of energy, then you believe as well in the dead man.  
He is heating up, and what is created?

photograph by GALEN GARWOOD ©2008

poem by MARVIN BELL ©2008

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