

2007

Judas

Rick Bursky

Follow this and additional works at: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bursky, Rick. "Judas." *The Iowa Review* 37.3 (2007): 135-135. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.6304>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

RICK BURSKY

Judas

I bought a nine year old pickup truck
for the convenience of Judas,
the one hundred year old tortoise
she gave me when she left.
Two or three times a week,
I took Judas to the ocean.
He rode in a plastic wading pool
filled with water that I secured in the bed.
Awkward and slow on land,
his four hundred pounds curved
through the swollen ocean's clouds graceful
as a ballerina in an old Dutch painting.
The red that blossoms from hands
when you nail a man to water is a map.
I held the sides of his shell, followed like a cape
through schools of silver fish, through
the thermocline's floor, through dark-patches
where whatever sinks sinks faster.
Deep in the ocean it rains, Judas showed me.
Deep in the ocean nurses sleep in salt-crusted caves,
Judas showed me. I held breath
in the balloon of my mouth.
This is where I first thought sacrifice.
I was a shoe box filled with the past,
Judas showed me this, too.
Notice how briefly she was in this narrative.
Ascending, air expands in the lungs.
Ascending, a survival principle.
This, of course, is a theory. Other theories
include providence and literature.
Squeeze a beating heart tight as you can
and you'll fall asleep; yes,
for this there is no explanation.