

cotton/mouth

dry
split in the desert, & them
teeth-shaped scales.
pick, loose
scabs, bits of white
blazing virginal summer
i hack
& only bile comes up
i hack,
& pluck open a fruit.
in the backyard, dog foams at lip
bound by a collar i am bound by collars
cuffed round my ankles, round my mouth
dogged picking.
soft, flesh
dry as the sahara
and by god, the rattle of a
whip in the distance

*cottonmouth— a venomous
snake found in south-
eastern united states; also a
medical symptom*