

IX [in the Afternoon]

by Tyler Friend

after John Berryman

We stare into the abyss, it stares back. We
get uncomfortable with the prolonged eye contact
& go to brunch. We invite the abyss
& it says sure. Bottomless mimosas
in a bottomless abyss. The abyss has consumed all
the orange juice and prosecco in Nashville &

we couldn't be happier. It turns out the abyss is awful
fun, once it loosens up a little bit. It
doesn't have papers, so it has to be careful about going out
in this political climate, since its mere presence
is always sure to cause a bit of a scene, but
what's life for if not for living. We're not sure

if the abyss can technically be said to be living, but
we don't bring it up. We don't want to be
rude. We've inadvertently caused indiscriminate financial ruin
in The Gulch & I'm glad we decided to
go there instead of one of the queer-owned
establishments we usually frequent.