

Collected Poems

1995–2024



Richard P. Gabriel

Leaf of My Puzzled Desire

A Collection of Poems

by

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Acknowledgements

Leaf of My Puzzle Desire and **Jimmy, Jimmy, Oh Jimmy Mack** have appeared in *Ploughshares*
Death of Sheriff William Brady has appeared in *Crania*
The Source of It All will appear in *Puerto del Sol*

Slow, Slow Journey



*. . . Even through the apparatus,
it was just a gritty streak, a place in the sky
where something had been poorly erased.*

Comet

Dean Young

Time Leaves

Wind-pearled leaves upturned on birches,
and leaves' papered veins' faint scrolls carry
dropped lines in mid-kiss, lips from old films,
lies spurting in fine print.

From across the weed-spattered field erupting life
in mites and speck flies, grasshoppers and light-clear moths, I stare
at those leaves, and even these binoculars, perfect and fine,
fail. And still between us, the fragments I need—life flares—
rise in the heat-perfume. Feet and fingers stop, lips
stop their glassy brush.

Dust and stalk-dry fragrance lull this lizard to a stillness
ready to break for shade. How far the trees stand
bending to a wind overhead.

All the Pretty Bridges Were Built to Fall Down

The bridge would not be forgotten—
painted its rust-gilded green and draped
forlorn at dawn, performing the dullest duties:
a father standing beside the bed on the eve
of daystorms. In leaves, the sound of a crowd
settling, footsteps over water-rush, water on stone,
water past wood, green stretched wide on the verge
of narrows.

Nothing happens here: river
flows first to sea then back with the tide,
cars drive afar then back.
A small gray bird with a deep yellow lore

flung a note by my ear and disappeared
in the crowd noising over there, and I crossed
the bridge confused by a bucket of no, a garage door
slowly rising on 6 or 8 dry rusty wheels behind the hedgerow,
sounds like a bush full of spring birds and my note
mixed in salt-sweet elixir mudding beneath bridge boards,
a father earseeking the pat-pat of light footsteps
stepping away. I returned.

The bridge will not be forgotten,
nor the downslurred birdcry, nor the father.
One day I'll return to the bridge,
and it will run just one way,
one final way,
all the way to who the hell cares where.

Reflections on the Tombstones

I got the call last night—she lies a shell eaten
inside out by a disease of creation gone silly.
Even while she breathes, he spoke of her as dead,
unaware in her bed at home, family gathered—
spoke as though he had succeeded in expelling this
twin sister from their shared womb. It loops,

this film of her and me running, playing at maturity,
on a June night after the concert in Boston,
years since I had seen her last in school,
when she asked for a date and, instead of stumbling,
she chose to glide, instead of the boylike ass
I ignored at school, she gave me a sculpted garden.
All I see is us running midnight on a lawn not yet wet,
her shoulders in my hands sudden & near.
What would her brother think the next time we spoke
of girls and their sex, blundering upon manhood?

Our lawn was a lawn of dying
as we stood up sober, our frenzy frozen
like the snapshots of life around us—
stood up and watched two headlights
reflected on tombstones polished to a sheen
lined narrow and tight as a trap around us.
The passion that danced on the surface of the night
became a feathered lure whose barb we feared;
we denied that singular night with silence,
the night we stood and watched the lights on lights
pointing fingers past us to a point we could not see.

Night Lacks

When the light was most uncertain I woke;
outside, snow grayed streets, just one
streetlight lit the world—night sweats
in the chill night air. In this valley

the night wind knows the day wind's
mad and sweeps back dust and scraps.
Its river knows flat land stalls flow
and a river will sink beneath its alluvial fan
with no direction to take, no
downhill bed that finds right

into the night mind posed as a cup
or as a boat filled with the spilt or flown.
The one light lights one fat spot on the road
that in day is no choice at all but a road;

at night curbs only point and tonight the road
hides in snow and nightness. Eyes
that see only black watch me each night,
and in the turning light the night-dog—
black as guilt and keen as a jester to twist
laugh to howl—greeted me, alert
all night should I wake, eager
to sniff the road broken beyond
the snow-swallowed light,
the one that in day I hide in the sun's hurt halo.

When the light was most certain I fell to a heap,
trapped in the wind-borne snow
gathered in the crook of the sleeping dog's wrist
on the porch-slab beside the shingled house

where, when the rye-filled field
held day's sun-shamed heat, I laid
my head, and the only thing that could
happened.

Drums Pound Out a City

The motion of drummers make a city.
Not just their hands and feet
hammering but their voices
and the noise of the drums
are what put each brick, each beam, frame, window, and door,
every street and canvas awning
in place. Men gaze; women walk away.
Look as you fly through the streets, alleys like sidethoughts,
notice that men mix and women
limit their degree of disorder to one direction.
If I had a choice: Someone else somewhere else.
Oh suppose, suppose it could be me in the walkup,
bed in a corner by a 1-arm fridge; put
a pad on a crate and wait for a whim, hide
rooms of books behind mounds of yellow slips—
so-longs in smeared ink. I can't tell
whether this room looks just like the city or exactly
unlike it: I've tried turning my head,
flipping coins. Could there be a woman here, the palms
of her feet pressed together on a couch?
Her hair might be the color of brick or beeswax,
hard for me to tell. I won't say
how much she looks like the city, but all the pieces of both
are made by the same motion. Oh, and shh, hear it?
Stand by her knees, lean, lean
into the cup of her arm. Stop your wings. It's the drums—
they're pounding out the city.

Bird's-head Cane

The river jukes past the bridge's ice-breaking piers,
over a spite-sharp rock bed—the Merrimack
is storm-filled to edges. Wind-effects
web rain shawls down to shag and pine.
I curl behind a riverman's shack, waiting
to cross Rocks Village Bridge.

Steel, green as pondbright, hammocks the bridge's
wood planks, tight-bolted on. Six rock piers
split the river in seven, the bridge rustles
in soft circles around each pier.
I step out, hold high her bird's-head cane, beginning
to cross Rocks Village Bridge.

The bridge turntable in mid-span begins rotating—
do tall ships wait? A gale scratches off
planks, throws them up birchtop,
down to crazy-beauty water.
I spin dizzy to mid-span, needing
to help Rocks Village Bridge fret and fly apart.

The storm, the bridge dissolved in air and river,
my rusting will and stressed desire, all
team to keep her from the bird's-head cane.
I wander circles, cane finger-gone. I dream alive,
throttled, slipped beneath rocks, meaning
to cross Rocks Village Bridge.

Times before, I watched and hoped that Rocks Village Bridge
would fade to land and pass to rye, stones
would rise to pebbles—then sand. Piers
fold as chairs, steel enmoss trunks.
Then I could sprint the vanished divide,
hand her the bird's-head cane.

Laid Low in the Cimiterò delle Porte Sante

Each day those weeks in Florence, hotel living
on Borgo San Iacopo, we fought winter-like. Bone cold in
January, we had no weather warning. Her early music
at Musèo di San Marco and my Arno-wandering,
street-wandering strangered us the way the narrow wander,
the high-walled street separation defeats neighbors. On streets
summer-gorged on tourists and scooter rasps, each door
is a night of stone thighs and sagged affection—a canvas-draped
pole, pegs lost. We're slow now as shallow Arno
slowed to ice, subtle as days ramped to nights through clouds—
dark burst before a pink veil.

Sunday, near night, we drift Viale Galileo to
San Miniato al Monte. I insist on Cimiterò di Porte Sante
and she cites me for sentimentality. Snow starts, its Florentine rareness
unexpected after our weeks. We—she and I, the cemetery—are
snow-pulled to the clouds, Florence-scurry hangs farther below.
A woman offers a marble handful of snowflakes to him,
stone-backed at attention, solid uniform stained fume-black in streaks.
We crouch to their story told in greenglass at their side. They died in '42,
in '43, her flow-snapped dress stopped mid-stride—were these flakes
her wedding gift to him? Forty years she held air-sent presents
across the boundary of their plots; today her stonehand warms my cheek.

The Bridge of Solitude

Cutting, deep fissure—mistake of placement
sharply repaired by the furious river, rockfast earth
stands hooded and stubborn—the gulf is nothing
there to stop us. The Old Bridge
spans the rift, and even the oldest call it
The Old Bridge. Rock clutter and desert-dry:
barren cleft. Nothing is all
about.

The bridge is a shallow rise, its haunches pierced by arches
lightening pressure, made from marble drilled ounces lighter.
Forgotten are all who passed but these few names carved
on the sandstone approach. Lying, I scratch

with a stone-pen deep enough my name
to see while I gaze down at the river
that flutters like an owl rising as the sun passes
over me.

Death on Peaks Abstracted to Death

Mountains attract terrible things:

arctic storms sudden in our midst,
ground vertical to shed footsteps.

Many seek the hell in a terrible death
as the or-else in a summit-and-back proposition.

Terrible things:

stone smooth to repel foot- and handholds,
rock rough to shred skin.

In the distance these terrible things make high beauty,
they attract.

But our minds manipulate abstract concepts;
our hands and machines, bits of matter—we build

gear to outfit us as more than human when with our steps
that beauty grows close and cold merciless
to freeze the life of our veins.

Such things as, when silence surrounds us on the sides of mountains,
help us shout far. But, look, this is too abstract—

here, read this: Is it really what we want—when we lie alone
in snow caves, no food, no air, when winds beckoned by mountains
freezes our faces black with dead skin, when 27 thousand feet is just too high,

when it's dark on our way down from the summit to the high camp,
when the loneliness of our deaths in the hands of failure settles,
just there—

is it really what we want then,
to dial our wives on our cell phones
and bid them goodbye?

A Painter of Bridges

It's a marble floor, marbled glass, it swifts
about the high air, it reflects a bit of blue.
It's a dust of mist settling nowhere, shattering
to smaller bits instead. And the man stands upon it—remote,
amid the tops of mountains.

Blink—the mist's away; he stands on a pillar of orange-gold
steel. He wears a nylon web harness,
beige around the waist and blue about each leg, and a screwgate
clipped to a rope clipped to a wire handrail descending parabolic.

Hundreds and hundreds of feet remote below,
scraped and marbleized, the blue-here smooth-there current spins, dazed,
to sea. And he sees the patterns some men make.

A pail dangles at his belt, fire-full of paint,
and, filling his brush, he seizes on the man below spiraling,
sizing up the passion.

A painter of bridges carries many tools—a radio
connects him to men and trucks at land's end.

The horse bristles hair-fill three-quarters
with paint—he finds a bubble, beading corrosion,
finds it more pressing than the man in his spin,
soaks it with paint, fills it with gold.

She Places the Chicken Carefully

The screendoor bangbangs shut and somewhere behind me she puts the chicken in the fridge. I'm deep below the surface, beyond cool distance somewhere in the sandhills of dreaming, remembering her cascading shape and the funnel her feeling makes.

So, she crosses her arms at her knees and lifts her dress like the shirt a fighter extracts his chest from, moving like one of those accordion parallelogram things clowns use to punch each other with. Her desire squeezes one end and her clothes pop off the other. Now she's nude, not quite plucked like the chicken she placed away. She flares—I mean her shape. There's quite a dark punctuation mark in the middle. I feel out, like she's knocked me in the head.

What she does next really should be kept a secret, but let's say it's kind of like sitting down, or sort of like singing in the shower. Except there's no water, exactly. And the chair would be more like something else. A funnel takes a wide undefined thing and narrows it down, speeds it up, and her hips are kind of wide but the definition has a comma in a funny place. My memory feels like forgetting.

Somewhere behind me she takes the chicken from the fridge and the screendoor bangbangs shut. I'll bet she's going to cook it for supper—maybe serve it to her family at the end of a parallelogram.

The River Gone

The river is sawing its bed to hell,
taking mountain streams in its *to*
stroke and salt sea water in its *fro*
at the point exactly between
the life of hills and the life of oceans,
at the point of a bridge. We've come
all this way to cross

but we hunker on the hard
bank by the bridge approach,
we sit facing the bridgework, eyes wide
and the swingbridge stupid, all
open—as if waiting for the next ship
to pass, but the river is beyond ships. Each, a stranger,
has a reason to cross, but our hearts
are as stingy as closed mouths, as shy
as girls waiting along the wall to dance for
the first time.

The water is opaque and above level
fix only crooked fingers of rocks and cormorants'
heads and necks. Our way is broken, so
I relax my desire, take one bird to my arms—pliant
soft rush of ruffled feathers softening the clip of swiftwing
water. I clack shut the bird's bill, finger closed
its nostril holes and puff—rush
of my air in the silty hollow of the living bird
and its caressing wings fold sound
on sound. As long as I play this throaty trill,
this unmusical birdheart music,
the water will wisp away. The final dry
riverbed reeks before us, the song grows. Reeling,
we all cross, all
but me.

Ink Evaporates Alone in Bed

It's the hour when mist
locks horns with night and I can hear hot
streetlights sizzle in the war, carving
shapes in jokes and books of only facts. How
will nightmares pollute my sleep?

My madwit—a preview, some gadget—
clanks into the spotlight to entertain,
but I turn blue and back somewhere just beyond,
—song sounds at breathturn—
tracing passing shapes with the sides
of my eyes.

How can I revise “somewhere” to some place
distinct before dawn washes me away or reason
slips me a dream? I make a drop of mist and rise
in vapor from the touch of the hot
glass of nearest burning.

How sad.
How sad to be here
and know the sound of the song when the words breathe in
and the last drop of ink has been wasted on
a true story.

The Desert Fills With Roads

The desert rubble, dry beds, the life drifted out . . .

Days in sugared air,
lolling under pines, supple pine bed
thick and motes rising, sparking air,
my head blank in near sleep, muscleless limbs,
damp blur, bone rib bridge over a river flowing both ways,
or cage, needles hiss in a light wind, so far,
so very far from any desert.

Desert life litters the plain: I see cactus, globemallow, chinchweed . . .

Two-day storm, snow falling fat,
neighbors sealed behind unplowed roads,
I hover over my strings
and feel their tin notes formed and finished,
crave their crippled slur,
raise the garage door, power up 8 6L6's
16 twelves stacked 4 high & wide,
Black Beauty guitar, crybaby, oh
let it go, let it go. . . .
Neighbors' cries to 911 come up empty, barren
countryside peals in small echoes, and a patch
of snow drops from a far branch.

*It makes no sense, it hurts my eyes, my forehead cracks
in the sun . . .*

Car packed and oil changed;
she says goodbye, the baby cries;
the car rounds the bend
toward a road that leads away.

*I see scorpions and lizards on the roads in the thrill of days,
amid the hidden; what road
takes me from place to place?*

The Dance or the Dancer

Is it the way she dances in the cool
cafeteria to the nasal strum of Stratocasters
that makes the winter night colder and colder,
makes the stars fall deeper into the sky? Is it the way her form
fills her dress like dried fruit soaked
by over-humidity as the last arc of the sun
drenches below the line of the Gulf,
the side view of her bent at the waist thick as a heavyweight's knee
or the sight of a quilt folded on a bed
on one of those frightened nights? What about her hair
that drifts down as if by choice into a ranging trail
that strays around her ears and lips, over her eyes
and catches in the sharps of her teeth? Is it
the sound of the song or something subtle and wary
in the way they play it, how they are the only ones
who can stare while they feel the strings'
slight vibrations in their hands, the smooth
necks deep in the crooks of their hands, the bursting
sound of the low strings muted by the palms of their hands
making a quick cry in the throats of their amps?
For hours I've watched them: The song makes
the moves the players make, the sounds of the song
make the dance and the dancer, the dancer makes the song
through the staring eyes of the players. And I am on the edge
of attraction about to hop from this quiet place to the next.
Each time the sounds are different the song returns,
and I'm caught between two places of air, one too humid,
one touched by the bright brick of the night sky. What will I
step into: the hands of the players or the sway of the dancer?
The sound of the song? The staring eyes?

The Unfortunate Fate of the Old Man Holding William H. Bonney's Hat

Peppin's men chased Billy— Billy fast on foot, light
through canyons carrying only a rifle and pistol. But Billy tail-flashed
his new sombrero white, bought in Ciudad Juarez for \$25.

Up on the arroyo rim, Billy's Bugs-Bunny chin and teeth sketched the posse
Fudds scampering up below. Their bullets refused to ignite or
lined off rocks at impractical angles with a shrill spee-YEW! Peppin chased

slow in rockfall silence—shooting was no use. Billy leaned and smiled,
danced a lick then aimed for the mail stop, fasthorse bound. Arriving
at canyon-dusk under blue sky-white, he saw three of the posse sliding down

the gulch and twirled an old Mexican, watering horses: "I'm
chased and my sombrero's heavy. Give me your old-man
hat; you take mine." The old man, hat-dazzled, traded his

for Billy's and went up the bright slope viewing his hat in day's late
adobe light. Peppin's men charged the hat, and though the old man
hugged a curved oak trunk, their cracked bullet triplet killed him dead.

Billy upslope heard the taps and grinned back around. The sun at his back tilting
the moon up ahead threw his mile-long shadow on the man slumped dead,
his nails hung in bark.

Death of Sheriff William Brady

At day lite I hurt some men talkin and got up and put a morat on my horse.
Billy and his men was in camp nere by town and at sun up they head to worge town.
My fren Lon said see some well armed men comming.
They was Frank Macnab, Jim French, Fred Wate, Jon Midelton, Henry Brown,
and W H Bonney.

When they come in sight of some horses tide up in front of a little coral
they duck down and crauld up to the high doby wall.
French and Wate drilt some port holes in the wall and Jon stept out on gard.
Billy and the others lode there gons and cract jokes where we could all here
them as if nothing was the mater.

That mornin Brady eate brekfast at the Worly and then he stept out goin toworge
Elisis house to rest Macswain.
He stopt by the hotel to get Pepen and Hinman and Billy Mathhews
they was all in a room playing poker.

Billy tolt them when the first shot is fired, all of you kill a man every shot.
Brady and Pepen and Hinman walk up the street past the doby wall but they
thot it was sollid made of rock and no holes in it.
Billy and his boys jerked there gons out and they big shooting came off.

They was three shots hit Brady one in the leg and too in the body.
I nodist Hinman was shot thru the chest.
Brady he dropped his pistols and come realing to worge us.
He said something like I wish I wish, and then said blood is cloging
in my mouth and fell acrost his winchester.
Billy come out and roled him over to take his winchester but in the minnet
as he taken his hands down from his side Mathhews fired and
Billy got scard and said you old long logged S..B.

When Billy run up to Brady, Hinman said don't shood for I am killed.
In a wile Hinman ast for some water and Lon crauld out to him but
Billy drewe a beede on Hinman and killed him.
Pepen jest run way to worge Tunstall's store.

Billy and his frends were old long hungry looking men from 7 rivers and was
blood thirsty and would go in the fight for pass time.

I went down to the Worly for some grub ware I seen Billy who was grinnin
like a kressant moon and you
see them clere blu eyes fare skin and his yella hair.

Shadows Creep Faster

beneath a stone outcrop a woodrat turns
his back on me · everywhere the dark is rising ·
it's like that when news hits · in the flat distinct
desert the rising dark is slow ·
the shadow of one manlike cactus touches
the base of another and crawls up and into it ·
that muddy red is the salving heat where light
which touches the tips of needlepoints falls back
into the sun · *the sun sets* ·
we sit for hours while the light drains · chollas in shadows ·
the woodrat, the pocket mouse, the speckled toad all make
their preparations under the smoketree

Caravan Dogs

Tonight amid the silence of dogs
we unpack carts and bed down beasts,
place coins on the eyes of one who was loved
and not loved—some mourn or not,
or less.

Things and people vary in importance.
By glancing through a campsite one can see
what's needed or not by what's not packed
and is.

Tomorrow at dawn dogs will bark,
people will stir,
and the caravan will resume once more
its slow, slow journey
across the sometimes revealed
wide desert.

The Never-Stops Wind



*Suddenly the freight car lurches.
The door slams back, a man with a flashlight
Calls me good evening.
I nod as I write good evening, lonely
And sick for home.*

James Wright

—For the members of the Clutter Family who died Sunday
morning, November 15, 1959, in Holcomb, Kansas, at the
hands of two killers
—To Truman Capote, the teller of the tale
—To Heather McHugh, the teller of telling

Clutter Reverb

I. Report

2am. The shock—of last resort—shotgun report—rips out
and, wallbounced,

returns—reverb. Reversed by shot, stilled by light
and opened,

his head stone-stops. Nancy turns—*please don't*—straining tied
and rests—

her face—white shocked—against the wall. Her trembling, stilled
and quick-

gone in shotgun stutter—in dark cold bits.

II. Response

2am. Stray bits—all that's left escapes, bounced in wide-west
and east-widening

echoes through uncertain night,
and rips

past crouched elms, captured in stone quartz bits,
and heads

in light, in reverie bright with shock, in wave circles dim
and still

into my open door, my quartzstone cloak.

Last To See Them

Thirty-five years later I lean the car east;
slow-beat songs, and steady, counter-tap
the highway seams and ripples—

the land slaps back from the thick blade—the fresh
sharp blade—shotgun explosions in Holcomb,
nighthell kneeling on the mattress pad, killer's

Cat's Paw on the cardboard bed intending
comfort in the minute before some more
uncertain death-sounds.

The hard echoes drew Capote; the soft ones pull me through
the never-stops wind digging by my side to release
them—left unexpected behind—telling me to unbind

the head-swaddling, let them see in light
the green-gold fire of half-grown wheat.

They tell me no, stay home—bury us.
But I come to unwrap

my head, to catch the edge of me, to feel
the thought of it shed.

The Day of Many Coincidences

Nancy's head tilted back, mouth open,
awaited Dad's Elixir, and only the blond oak floor and ash
varnished smooth as fur, soft as the sun on
the day of her change, could harden the air.

Herb places the poison far back in her throat.

The magpies' hiddenness washes away in
wind whirlwound by the tornado of scrutiny, by the
Superchief butting hardened
air around Holcomb, wedging Herb and Nancy apart
from rest.

The magpie's fright heated upward trembles Herb's hand
above Nancy's tongue, arched up toward
Herb's reliable love, and only the tips of her hair
braided to a luster hung down
could feel the threat
of any train whose parts and pieces gather

in nests of bolts and dens of rods, rails piling,
burrows of plating and caves of steeltruss, huts and homes
of steam and combusting, cities of designs driven
down by the hand of calamity in wretched drives,

whose cinders are gathering to unexplode a train
through Holcomb, the little vacuum going puff.

Trust in the Teller

The lights of Holcomb scatter on in clusters
beneath the water tank. Holcomb Longhorns,
it says. I sit in my car by the road above town—
by the sand hills—alone with the coyote yip-howl,
the hollow pheasant whistle, the cloud-covering sun.

I imagine Bob Rupp's house behind me—small
pens of hogs, cattle and a dog, his wife Coleen nearby. He
stands watch with me. The elm tunnel is diminishing,
trying to fade. The lights in the house and
the blue TV—will they ever come on? He

sits in his car by her place above town—he
waits for the workers to leave. He
pulls the flower from his hip—pink-green and red,
almost see-through—he bends to put it over her head.
He waits for Nancy's hands to reach up. He

waits by the side of the road above town.
He waits with me for the lights to come on.

Curtains of Wake

Eight trains a day pull a curtain of wake
through town, and Holcomb in silence
recedes from River Valley Farm. But there is
no valley—only a river landed anyplace with its little
walls of habit. And there is no silence, only dry-cracking
tumult and whirlwind of metal parts on fabrications,
a nothing-web made of ten thousand jugglers tossing
scrap and debris,
an unlikely explosion in a line to the south of town.
When it happens, in the shadow of shouts,
all less lessens.

Nancy stands at the curtain, its fabric between her legs, her
arms about his shoulders, fingers in gauze, and just feels
the warm whirlwind—and, when it passes, the hard pull.

The Never-Stops Wind

Imagine a kicked earthshell, pantone,
fractal—flowers and trees, grasses thrashed
in variety, spread thin—valleys sunk acid deep by rivers—

the confusion of possibility high, the skin of life tight,
so tough, smooth—every part, each scale
the same, each birth balanced by death—

the wind starts, whispering soft in the wind-bent
wheat, slow from the west, turning (once) a grain of sand—Nancy's
eyes open (just once), bursting in the dark valley—

the wind-blown world, a rug scraped flat, the chaos
sheered away leaving the space between, flowers and trees turned
rye and wheat, the high confusion turned still, sliced simple—

the never-stops wind dropping Holcomb behind, a red
horizon stain urged against the sky, scope replacing scale—
the wasp-buzz considerations and conciliations clipped to relief.

See the Clutters gathered at the peak of the lane, their faces
phosphor white, awash in quick silver—the 10 o'clock news—
when Bobby Rupp leaves, blown by wind—when only two things can happen.

This is it! This has to be it!

Hurd's Philips 66 blurts bright with desolate brilliance,
one in a line of singularities along US 50 in Garden City.
In their black Chevy they carry a knife with a curved blade—it's very sharp.
A shotgun with pheasants carved on its stock—nice for hunting.

They've stopped for gasoline.
They have many shells, lengths of rope, gummy-blue rubber gloves.

Perry sitting on the can, rubbing his knees, chews aspirin,
enjoying the flavor and awaiting the result.
Dick pays for gas—high test—and grabs a bag of
jelly beans. "Let's go, honey."

Two stray tomcats with strange and clever habits juke
past tumbleweeds breezing east across Main Street, a galaxy
of two humbled in the near-collision and altered in their courses
spy the dark car—Dick veers to kill and Perry pulls the wheel.
The car heels and the cats jump, the heads of the killers
knock.

The stray bits of dust and piles of rock never stopped their vigil, never
felt any wind, only bent the light that reflects off the tracks past which
they turn west up the elm lane.

Nancy Clutter is the Truth About Me

Her tomb—I stand here chased again—she wears her prom dress—
finger-brushed red.

She laid it out dead night—she laid them out.
She died stunned cold November—the wind
—I feel it now—clear moon. She picked
warm clothes. No truth.

Her head is wrapped in cotton, shellacked grey—obscured.
The last thing she saw was the wall behind her bed.
The last thing she said—*please don't*.
The last thing she felt—a hot sting at the back of her head,

Bobby in her head—back to the wind, floating moonlight—dust—
nothing real.
Her eyes evaporated. Something chased me here.

The same song over&over&over.
Etching 9ths. Syncopated. Synthetic—digital clean. Her soft fingers blending the tone.
The scalpel-edge bass. Only two things can happen.

I want you—over&over&over—I want you beside. . .—
I want the blanket on. . .—I want the wind to stop—
I want to lay my head. . .—you are the only one I want&you

Blood Bubbles

They drove up the elm lane—their black cocoon
in a lake of moon silk, miles wide around white,
desert of coincidence. In this flat world the most fragment wind. . . .

Thistle in its caged thinking dips, drawn
by what draws air to dawn. In the plane of coincidences many
outcomes cluster. About likelihood. The thatched lane is the cylinder

of dual determinacy—all scattering moonlight and flecks of breeze
aim on its axis and bend only as it bends. All that might resolve
to two. They sat; the baby, ill, called, and a light turned on.

Nostalgia for Life

Hundreds stand—four steel caskets lie
before the sanctuary, First Methodist Church,
Garden City, Kansas. Rev. Leonard Cowan and his 48-voice
chancel choir spill and tumble, stones for jewels
in the hopeless bargain. Mr. & Mrs. Fielding Hands sing
“Whispering Hope.”

Inside the caskets lie their heads—sprayed Christmas shimmering.
Outside church, Bobby shifts his arms and fingers,
resets his head, slinging Nancy low in her cherry velvet toward the hearse.
Small pieces of Lord’s Prayer echo large
from headstones back to trees, back to Holcomb. 11 am.

The Santa Fe sprints east in the rising November warmth; car tires brush
US 50 through the streets of Holcomb, serene,
solemn. Laundry idles, cattle stare and chew.
Bobby stands by the gray steel fence listening to the first sand
flecks spray steel—remembering the night. No one but Bobby feels the wind
pick up.

Soft-Spoken

A drink, gloves, a flashlight, the knife, and Mr. Hickock's shotgun—the house, tremendous, looked empty. Full—filled with the ends of many trails—it overflowed in constancy, it billowed, catching the wind and strays.

Dick's plan had been long hard work, full of webs and proof—all gone false leaving only glory and the excitement. Perry with worthless bits transported to the car felt the wind scratch cat's paws on the rippleless lake. Behind, the Clutters huddled alone—suspicion blowing miles away.

Perry, in two, stepped away toward the fields and highway, but the story read on, the ending in his hands unknown. It would be a dream—she was ready for sleep, Perry said, hearing Herb's soft-spoken calm stopped up in clogging blood. Blood bubbled, Perry shot, and then the branchings thinned.

Kenyon's head in a circle of light murmured muffled pleadings; Nancy turned to the wall whispering hope. Bonnie—silence. The sky brightened clear as day. The killers sat and listened: Nothing—just the wind.

The Wind and A Kiss

One hard season drags into the next—their borders
smeared by wind. November 14—another blunt day, shell of sky
darkly blue, tumbleweed bundles leaping up the elm lane.
Bobby drives his Ford down the lane into the wind;
the headlights probe thistle and twigs on end.

He knocks and Nancy answers. Mother's asleep upstairs, Dad
and Kenyon watch TV, white on black, and gray.
Bobby and Nancy, the blanket on their laps—
folding hands beneath—he feels her finger
ring-bare again. Air falls on the door, whistles past brick. Phosphor paints
them gashed in lines like wind-run shadows in the elm lane.

Bobby and Nancy, together at the door, stand on the porch. The moon
snaps strict through dust to their feet, it never stops.
The wind tangles, their fingers web—she feels him touch the bare ring spot
on her thumb, real impossibility. Their kiss—mouths soft, wet skim blooming in the
sheer-sliced wind—she reaches on toes, lifting.

One hard season drags into another—years shredded and blown.
Robert Rupp stands in his yard looking down at the house. He
thumps his ring round and round. He hears thistle bound up the lane,
hears hogs rustle back, hears supper pans drop in the sink, hears
the wind threaten to stop.

Clear as Day

we talked awhile
made a date to see *Blue Denim*
we kissed and she ran into the house
it was cold and
kind of windy
a lot of tumbleweeds blowing about
the moon was so bright it was
clear as day
I drove away down the lane
I didn't see anyone
there must have been someone down there
hiding among the trees just waiting
for me to leave

I thought I could see for miles around

Teller and Told

And here they lie—Herb and Nancy—
and here we talk, you and I;
and, beyond the fence, the whispers.

Hear that?—the Santa Fe running
distant—silent,
only a cry: a horn in the
wheat.

His last hope is, in silence, to wake, to walk
the elm lane tremendous to its end. To see the river
swell to lake, moonwashed and smooth. My cloak lies quartzstone, now,
over him.

Their words and acts were simple—only the dark is
night. They would lie here, simple under stones—only
the story needed you.

One night—last night?—
Nancy's whispered *oh please*—
her seducing words before we placed the poison.
From that moment to this, just one fragment remains fixed.

We are the wind and the wheat.

Leaf of My Puzzled Desire



*No telling what these bits once were except
they were whole and had a purpose, horizons
far different than to be junked on a side street.
Sunlight glitters across broken shards of glass:
a man says, When I was younger my dreams of what
I hoped to write woke me from the soundest sleep*
Stephen Dobyns

Leaf of My Puzzled Desire

A leaf falls in high wind and drifts
along a path unfolding by simple rules:
rise away from heat, sink toward cold.
I'll claim this mirage
forming in the heat field tinged
the reluctant blue of made belief. *Move*
rapidly toward the rising heat.

After an odd juke, the leaf, drained,
pauses on a stone whose alter-center
is the rare blue-shading-white
of pale turquoise.
A lizard turns one eye
and studies the stone and leaf
for hours no one sees.

While resting,
cool. In cooling,
form wind. Without wind,
settle.

In time
the lizard rises
and leaves its marks of walking away,
records attitudes of legs and tail,
a sign with all the meaning
I need.

Even Leonardo Doesn't Know

Two candles light her face in the room.
da Vinci mixes paints, locks the door;
he starts to dissolve the pigment around her lips;
he sweats and unties the string from his neck,
unbuttons his shirt, slips it off,
softening the paint,
shading off the color values so her face in all light
seems lit by two candles.

He closes the drapes so no one sees him bare to the waist
working her, the paint softened enough for him
to see the two candles reflected and himself.
He slips loose his waist string,
stroking her lips' corners to remove harsh hints of light.

He is badgered by her sidelong gaze and interested slight smile
that thousands would study along with light that glides
over her form and the vacant and dreamy background.
He is never enough; his errors pile and bulk.
Tonight's fault is a color too strong in the corners of her mouth.

On in the night the room fills with oily smoke and breath,
heat from muscles and skill, drops that mix and smear on the floor.
Her face grows moist as he pulls colors from it,
the mirror-paint showing him and two lights.
He erases another blemish, working the errors,
one by one,
aside.

The Teacher of Crows

I know a crow caged in Pittsburgh who says "Caw! Caw!"
I don't mean the sound a crow makes which a writer marks
"Caw! Caw!" but the sound a child makes
when reading the signs "Caw! Caw!"

A great man perhaps taught the crow this subtle self-putdown.
Is it proper for a crow to crudely grasp a wooden dowel
and glance your way saying "Caw! Caw!" (Actually
it's more like "caw, caw" —

debonair.) What if
the man who looks sane stops you in the street and grasps your arm
saying "Human! Speech!?" The abstraction is slapstick.
Can the crow tell when you're laid low by its "Caw, Caw"
that it just made itself a fool? Or is the crow better:

self-confident enough to enjoy the joke as you?
The teacher of crows is gone—only his disciplines remain.

The Source of It All

Even the day after death, air drains
to the floor as if the circle of wind
makes a difference; we sit
puzzled by the cold at our feet
in a room half-filled with the urge
to move, just any part of us
in any direction but the round
envelope of the air in the room. This time
I hung behind and watched grave workers pull away
the green carpets and lower by clever parts
the coffin into its box and lower half-lids
with fat ropes over the dark roses we left.
The pieces formed an imperfect seal they
covered with thin and dusty soil
which billowed like the flock of birds
that picked just then to head south. Two men
with shovels and a wind building to early snow. Make
that three. I'll tell you what it is:
The cold wind come down from Montreal cools
the winter glass, and air warmed by our grief
rises to meet the glass where it chills and falls
along the glass face, gaining speed as it gains cold,
draining to the floor, heavy as a lump of clay
mixed in dusty soil. Warm air is forced up
to the glass to circle, circle, to circle.
Have you ever smelled cold glass, winter
just beyond, smelled what it does to warm air?
Smell the cold glass, tell me what you smell.

Colors Too Bright

Colors too bright saturate her eyes—
her dream. It's the hour when only one dog barks,
and a green as hot as red burns her hands to the touch
as she breaks for the door, the heat from her night shirt hard
as acid and even the dark sears white. Above, the borealis tries
every color, God's safety valve against star

burn-in—what will be when real light bangs the leaves, her eyes:
the Great Bear in his skimpy outline will fade, she will fade
and what small substance her hand holds in colors too sharp
will fly a reversed burst in her eyes. But this is only night,
the domain of the hawkowl who sees, who hears, who is the owl
of light, whose sight is reversed, mirror of hunger and heat, fear

of lower branches and who sits there. Colors, fragments, songs
spill spawn across the lower fifth of the sky, maybe a horizon line,
fill her night shirt with nighthawk moves. She makes the X
across her chest, fingers folds at the end of her shirt, and scissors it up
and off, holds it still, and drops its liquid green
at the edge of the line cutting her off from the tree

she adores. Her dream was never more real—
she becomes the nightowl—
she hears the hidden land-sighs—
she pierces the branch with the nails of her toes—
she glides on a hung string, silent, to her first meal.

Our Language Suits Us Like Pants

Inner pouch of my heart's being
turned inside out, sentiment

hacked in lines by some random
loser whose idea of poetry is to fester
beneath trees and flame about sunsets.
Sure, tense syntax and moby images lend
an air of winitude to the bletcherous crock.
Tweaking the cruft into clever stanzas
just makes it clear the poet is a puremade bagbiter.
Even when we can't say it, our words do,
their denial graceful with powerful ugliness.
So say it easy: the heart's life-lining revealed

in laminar beams of line, the sunlight's
catastrophe on cloud reflecting the world's pond
of despair: say there's a way to come around it all,
come around finally and win big.

Crossed Elements

The bird books say that male birds make
their song-making selves when testosterone fills
the brain in the presence of birdsong—singing needs more
than song alone or time. The river shifts from foot to foot
awaiting the day you'll cross.

One day I saw the desert road dissolve as I sped,
by chance, away from you, strange repeller,
and approaching the break
in the distorting road,
I saw water too deep to cross,
almost,
and the mind built to make symbols
after hearing your voice can see
only water turned to river, can hear only hiss.

I'll almost tell you what.
You opened your mouth as if to sing.
I turned my shoulder across yours
and faced away. You pulled the air
far into your chest. I walked back to the river
and across. I heard the river hiss,
I walked as I watched the water.

Sleepwalking on Ice

I heard them call, the knives, their sharp
little voices tucked between one note
and the next and edging up;
calling me from bed,
urging me to leave the clutch of her skin,
hot to the touch, taunting

in long zinging shouts—their between-note tones
slurring from one off-place to another shedding
a music more whole than dead-on notes
held steady, glass-flat. It's the pitch of black
when the song of night
cracks the wintercoat of rain:
trees turned ice. I ran but the floor
shellacked with keep-on ice
turned my running off. I stood entirely

motionless, but one small
light through the window or an
imperfect level slid me toward them
with the force of shallow decline.

In their drawer, the clutch of knives all writhed
and rolled but the one I grasped. Chilled, lit,
I sliced in circles the half of me,
and from the other half
fell the half I forgot.

Faith Seed

Snow falls and where it ends, he thinks, all will.
Streets stop, dark gorges on the city, even
streetlight penetrates shallow the dark
where he leans shoulder to brick, knee bent and foot tucked,
hands pocketed and tight, everything he has
neatly put away against the cold—everything evaporated
to a bulb of streetlight whose shape is seen by tattered flakes,
every sound in the night swallowed and the song in his head faded.
Waiting at their meeting place for the woman who left him
just outside a small ring of faith that dimly lights his face,
he knows light can't be seen—it's as dark as what's lost—
unless you stand where it's aimed. He knows
this not by faith but by time
spent standing in the shade.

Or unless you stand where it scatters, where light
gone wrong in a bad-luck bounce lands by chance.
He knows this not from faith but from times spent sitting in night
dark rooms warmly lit by a streetlight's mild distraction,
lit by what the orange bright arc cares nothing of,
or little of.

(. . . somewhere else, in the metal-stained light of a streetlight's arc
a rained-on curb bursts orange and bare, but
in the room beyond, behind the thin curtain gauze,
after the mist sprinkles chance, the sprung-free light hangs
like a hushed song, like the last of her shhh as she closes
the door between them . . .)

He believes in faith, all but its size; he's seen
it angled, not head-on, caught only its side
as it passed nearby—as it passed while he stood in the shade.
Faith's flight is wide, and when it passes, the shade
lightens.

Outside the streetlight, a sound starts—
of steps and shifting shoes on the whitening curb,
light sounds coming near in the dark.
His hands pull free from what pocket warmth there was,
his boot slips down the brick and his knee unfolds.

He hears shoes stopping in the midst of the streetlight's orange arc;
he leans his shoulder forward and pushes up from the wall.
Toward the back of his mind he hears the sounds
of a serenade and steps into the rim of his streetlight,
he hears the shhh swell to faith.

Jimmy, Jimmy, Oh Jimmy Mack

James Michael Maguire 1953–1980

Jimmy's grave is flat and nothing
in the cemetery grove of fat maples
blowing electric green not a mile from the river
wind blowing like the background sound
of highspeed tires on the highway not far away
nearby toy trucks and a 2-month-old's grave
playing dead but it's Jimmy I found
curled black Jimmy in his box
whose head thrown through sheetrock
was a missile aimed at his mother's cunt bursting out black Jimmy's
voice knocked from his head Jimmy bare
in the trees by the stonewall we tried
being girls by the side of the road we lay
on each other and he whispered lust my name
and Buddy and Jimmy and me with the girls
in the sandpit Buddy a man
almost and Jimmy and Buddy bare jumping from the sand cliffs
for the girls to watch Buddy hard
and I told them it's ok it's ok
but they hunched in a circle thinking God Jimmy
in a school for the deaf for imbeciles coming home
Jimmy in the shootout
with cops in his car to escape his head
through the windshield the oak
bark the meat through the otherside
past the sandpit the highway the river Jimmy
laughing Jimmy
whose voice was bunched on one side of his head the cracks in his skull
like the hammer in her cunt Jimmy
under ground his stone flat and nothing only the baby
can laugh under ground in his box full of toys
in the electric green cemetery by the river wind
blowing the sand over grass in my eyes with no cracks
in my head to see with
no cracks in my head
direct to you
Jimmy

In Kansas I Ask Nancy (Dead) to Love Me

Every line and staggered word is packed
in the back seat, her face finally
evaporated to small towns, huddled hard islands.
She tracks me flat, and wind-whisk voices tell it: Everyone
I could love

is in the ground. On the small hill high
where I stand and hear the far metal-metal whine
of wheels on rails angled on a line
away from me lies
the girl dressed in gauze
who raises the blue cup in her hands.

In the proposition of things it's words
for bones—sense to dust sand-papered—
and lines for flesh is too much to ask for:

the small grass blades
brush my eyelids,
roots talk with the dead.

Girl Hidden by a Statue

For Meredith

You're living on dump pickings now
with a man from Cleveland and 4 or 7 kids
in a trailer in Maine and wasn't my offer better
when you left to have your first at the cock
of a man from Hartford who craved the blond fur
between your legs, your hard-colored soft blue eyes
and 30 years later I won't ask who you are
because your answer would be the same
as the statue girl's I sketched for a book of love
I wrote in oiled dust beside a hot road cooling. I saw
the distill of you drop drip by drip with every step down
a paved road scraped back to dirt and left
for grass and junk trees—I held your hand
your pupils filled with dust and all
you could say as I stood behind you was look down look
down see the excuse I've made
to lose you

Red Lining

Remember the day at the anthill
when I took your hand?
A simple scene: sitting on a green
hillside, low hills, complex
clouds evolving in the sky, red ants climbing
up the backs of your thighs and under your shorts.
Last night I woke before the clouds broke

from a hiding horizon.
The dream that woke me:
We were on a hillside, sitting in red ants
stretching in a line, along a row of low hills
up your legs to your arm. They had taken your hand.
I followed that line, stepping neither up nor down,
followed it all the way back to this bed.

Years later, I sat on the hillside
and watched cars at dusk drive away
toward the hidden horizon, not a constant
level but near, and though the hills
may have been green, all I could see were the red lights
in a line like a river flowing out,
and in that line a gap, a car not there,
something forgotten, or someone.

Wrapped in a Single Conclusion

You say you love me—it seems
less important than the sweet snow
falling just outside, the corner of my bed
pushed up against the window.
Have I felt this way before?
All the things I could say are rolled into one word
I hear each time the wind hits the glass
by my head. All I might feel
is the healing scar a sharp stone makes in the well
of high value.
I am deep in snow, each flake
makes a flat sound. I lie here just the same,
you say you love me just the same. Can this world
of snow and glass, you and me,
ever fly apart?

The Last to Know Always Vanishes

For my family, just the two of them

I. Which You Is It?

Late November, the sky
held close, snow
drunk-walking down.
The gray thin maples at grass's verge
stood steady. Mother and Father butchered
a pig in the lowering sky light.

No sound
but the slice of knife through meat
like birth sliding out
and the murmuring words
of butchers at work.

II. Mother: House of Hard Hearing

Your house refused to be painted,
fell down instead—its fell-down beams holding
up against the bleach of deep noticing
reserved for children and bees. Did you think
I didn't see its nails rust and thin
till they snapped? Its foundation—
not dug, but sandy soil piled
against mortared rocks broken square—
is filled by debris
heaped on broken floors and half-hearted walls:
lamps I never saw lit, books you closed
as soon as I opened them, bits of plates
and cups you used for whispered meals
long after I fell to bed.
In that new-made dump I added my own
throw-aways: soup cans and letters,
apple cores and pictures of us. You said

to make a strong foundation wall
place an iron meteorite
in poured concrete and connect
an iron rod from its center to the surface
—hammer, and the blow
would ring hard, bursting
by vibration small caves of trapped air,
the voice of resonating metal
settling unstill forms. But that's all

☺ ☺ ☺

you said. The back
of my hand is a wild place to see
the future and each hair
that turns white there is a year
the bedstead and springs creak
from hard rust and warm winds
not my jump for joy.

III. The Knife

A 9-inch slaughter knife,
thick blade, fresh sharp edge,
prepared to painlessly open
the flesh deep to the bone
at the back of a neck.

What kind of steel was it, which knife-smith
designed the blade,
forged it to follow the exact line
that separates a pig from its life?
What kind of thing could
so quickly move
between life and death?

IV. Father: Butterflies Gather and Rejoice

The beams were hand-hewn
but you never said by whose—the wood
well past brown and into gray
and generations of cows had so smoothed
the slats that held their necks in place
they were riverstones in a bowl of water.
By the time I thought to ask
so were you and your memories had shattered
like the south-facing boards you never painted.
After the hay was lined in rows
you backed the hay-rake under the barn
on the ground level side
and there it still sits after 30 years rusting
by the pool of urine-soaked water which gathers
every day after I wash down the cow stalls.
Your fingers grow curved like old paper or weed stalks.
But none of this explains the massed butterfly swarm
by the ditch that drains the pool beneath the barn
and sends the water—piss and all—to the seasonal stream
that draws what's left to the dispersing sea.
Your hands once smooth have hardened to boards
that move in tight-bound circles by your knees;
I know them only by their rasp touch on my cheek.
Your voice has washed into itself and dried to a pair of folded wings.

In the field, one by one, the butterflies drop
to a bare spot where they watch the sky fold to fire ash
and the barn drop its time-worn beams
on your last day's work and the waste left behind.

V. My Yearly Walk

I've long since left this valley behind,
but every year I return, stop by the river,
and up from bitter river smells
past sugar-filled trees I climb small rolled lawns
by upturned stones bearing names,
by gaps in straight headstone rows
where dead will some day lie. I seek
the piece of land they bought
among the boring long, same rows,
the place where they will be one day:
Through ten or twenty years of quiet,
gap-or-grave is their only message to me.
It takes a minute to find the gap.

Sometimes I want to find the gap, and sometimes
I want to find graves.
When I find the gap I stand in it
and look down toward the river
that flows with indecision both ways.
I pretend I still live in this valley.
I think: *You're still alive
somewhere.*

VI. The Meteorite Always Rings Twice

After you left I cleared the cellar,
heaped its contents in a hole I dug
by the stream. With the tips
of my fingers I checked the concrete walls
he poured for rods. Later,
while the sky dispersed to blurring shards,
I finger-combed my hair and thought
of what you said. I think

a hangman worked here once
and from that sun-cured joist
after the stool was kicked free
you held your breath instead.

Donate Here

Poverty Poems 2008
written at Squaw Valley

Richard P. Gabriel

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Deformity

attention / here's to disfigurement
 |—pay it
 stare to learn / deformity the relaxation
 an insubmission to regulation
 nose bridge spread out beneath the eyes
 baffling / the eeriness of deformed existence
 |—to doctors
 I wonder how the great theoreticians / would approach
 |—of beauty
 its dis/covering / breed of invisibility
 vendible at the tops of trainstation stairs
 badly healed wounds / sweat over rain drenched shrouds
 such things can be returned / by the balm of excess
 |—to flawlessness
 cash / why we bury the dead
 but a vendible commodity / disfigurement
 more entrepreneurial than leprosy
 think of the last one / you passed by
 |—cup in her teeth
 afraid of armlessness / the intimacy
 of putting your fingertips
 by her lips at breath turn
 no less than Adam Smith
 would declare such / among the rich
 |—beings / interruptions
 able to appear in public without shame

the walk was short
 cool night / narrow
 streets / in front of a brick home
 on the stoop right here as we walked by it
 a woman sat behind her clay face / her everted appearance
 talking to someone on the other side of the world
 cup by her side / the smell of urine soaked
 into cotton

a woman well dressed opens the door
 her friends over for a chatty interruption
 she feels proud of her choice
 to purchase the scented candles that make her home's odor baking apple pies
 she watched ads and figured
 this small bit this small touch would enlarge
 her life and her family's / the smell of apples blushed
 by cinnamon

Notation:

Lines like this:

ABC / GHI
 |—DEF

have the syntactic sense as if written like this:

ABC DEF GHI

but the reader is instructed to imagine an unusual oral presentation, perhaps a second voice speaking DEF at the same time GHI is spoken.

Pain

*the particular pain poverty affords is named hunger not pain
by those who reckon pain as accident*

down sloping sidewalks
between housecrates two chicken widths apart
a shack of planks crisscrossed and nailed gaping
provide their courtesy to mosquitoes and rain
a vinyl tarp / blue
harvested from discards where boats unload / for a seat
this is home to a broken toothed woman
she recalls men passing through her
like illnesses leaving pregnancies behind
she serves tea batched
from makings never strong never sweet
from a river fish save her from hunger
but healing costs excess
without it her bandaged knees and toes remain flawed
her crooked hands
her unearned sexlessness

after tea she sits
legs folded under / her
feet pointed out the back
she searches her unplanned borders
for a hunger to sell / something exceeding
mishap / her's is the dirty side of the world
her role is to live at the wrong end
of the bell shaped curve
at the other end the funny men
take pills for their pain

Accident Prone

when the rain hits
the streets become a different sort of black
an inviting black that welcomes rapists and murderers
along the wall that forms the street
the blue paint that glows in the streetlight
becomes part of the yellow world even in the fundamentally blue rain
fidgeting headlights single out her lips / her green eyes
lamps through tenement windows shine
small pockets of safety down the street
tottering fences / busted bricks / plastic bags / styro boxes with torn-open tabbed slots
grey night sky over dark roofs bleak as streetlights on a grey puddle
this is the yellow time
the prostitute exhaling the breath of poverty
walks away with the wrong man
the runaway wrapped in a newspaper
starts to shiver and never stops
the sister who bags her day meal in the oily alley
where garbage is mixed with rubble and sand
is never identified / never makes it out of the bag
that keeps the bullets from tumbling away
if any accident of wealth had intervened
small bright pools of safety would grow
risk would pass by / recovery would replace decay

she has read
when the rain hits
the streets will become a different sort of black
an inviting black that welcomes the lovers
who have just put the first forkfuls of their first meal together
into their destined to kiss mouths

Numbness

*drudgery can be improved by diminishing consciousness;
knowledge is the heaviest stone*

he came up the street
to the spot where a man was loading
his brother onto a wagon bound for the ER
to be patched up

to the west the sun was setting
after a series of cool breezes
and purls of gunfire

he needed to earn 20 dollars a day
to live on the outskirts of wealth
but earned that only once or twice each month
he figured one day he'd return
to his home / his fault
is no one's fault

mountains to the east faced the possibility
of echoing stoically and vagrants pushing
their carts down the wrong street
could not be blamed for pausing and looking back

he said the night rain froze his coat
and wind tipped the fire can onto his legs
was ok

I drove past apartments that night
one seemed dark when I stopped
but through a gap in the blinds I saw
a dim light over a bed
and a picture of lovers
the frame corner only perfectly
visible and sharp

Estrangement

DONATE HERE
help keep me out of your neighborhood

Mary is kind of a loner

*who knows what your friend's done
maybe she'll start shooting / maybe she'll draw gunfire
you never never know*

Mary sleeps two places
the lapsed church
where an aleatoric event
determines who gets a bed
and in a hole under a graveyard wall
not near the center of the city

one night returning to her hole she got raped
there in his stalking ground he (in the usual way)
grabbed / choked / threatened
in the end he agreed to protection

Mary's face is toneless / her flesh smells / she has wide brown eyes
when she fell asleep later / her head in my lap
I could see lice like lace in her smoky brown hair

she took her raper's dropped cap
to her social worker who gave it to the police

I wanted to snap Mary for this poem
but she feared to let you see her

tonight Mary was playing it safe
she didn't come downstairs
because she would lose her won bed
I talked to her on the house phone
two grim police came in
I asked how she would sleep tonight

*I'm thinking of you
be good*

I wish this were all / I mean isn't it enough? / turn the page
for the final scene which is about estrangement and war eyes
set where the overstimulated overeat

walking back to my hotel two streets up from the blueblack river streaked streetlight yellow
I stopped to stare through the fogged window of a French restaurant (was it attractive? / full?)
before I could move on a close cropped man (ex-soldier?) looked away
from the woman with serious eyes across the table from him
about to photograph herself
and in much less than a second
studied me / decided me no threat / turned back to her
just as her hair fell aside
revealing her pierced ear / the flash

Invisibility

*culture like poems
shapes by constricting*

by the river a hot drink
is passed around against the clutching night
and hampering mist that rises
up in the rain from the river rushing past
behind a row of wind breaking trees
one who is poor fellates one who is not

what you and I may take as institutionalized dependence
another may see as cherishing and respect

suddenly he finishes his meal
rises from the table
takes 20 steps and resumes his invisibility
his blue cap pulled down tight
over his sweaty black hair
when I left he was gazing everywhere
but not at anyone
with his reddened eyes

he shopped for his wife's underpants menstrual pads and burqas
how could a woman haggle with a man for such things

where the emblem of beauty is the impossibly slender
who can't be seen
the thickwaisted / the sweaty / the drunk
in short a forgettable thing
muttering to itself at dusk
between a paintpeeling cart and the roaring freeway

low tattered tents together in a herd
dust and smoke rising up into the dusky sky
a refugee woman speaks from the other side
of a veil / her lips distorting its hanging otherwise perfect opaqueness
she says she is not like American girls
who are used like tissues and thrown away

imagine the humiliation
of being inexplicably forced
to serve food to the being
you have resolutely refused to see

at the club outside town a 400 pound man
sitting on a chair by the door collects a 25 dollar cover
inside they're shaved and showing pink

on a subway crowded by strangers
I moved to sit between two women pretending I wasn't there
they furled their skirts as I approached and halted their eyes again once I sat down
they seemed to be asleep but got off when their stop was called
I can respect shame

how can you respect a woman by not seeing her
the same way you respect her by not seeing her vulva

she seemed unremarkable
she stood shaking in an icy doorway / nothing in her cup
she wasn't there was she

Unwantedness and Dependence

the master foresees / the slave works
households are formed by men
using women and slaves

affection may be an advantage
interdependence with benefits

self-reliance is a luxury

a street vendor told me
the police took his goods
left a receipt
he declined to die
he put on a good show
by not falling off yet

Adam Smith said
*all are often supplied
and a workman even of the lowest and poorest order
if he is frugal and industrious
may enjoy a greater share of the necessities and conveniences of life
than is possible for any savage
to acquire*

unless you're used up
*a carpenter in London
is not supposed to last in his utmost vigour
above eight years*

the tightrope wins by default
in the ninth

my father lived in a community
that suddenly had no use for him
he picked apples
we ate our livestock / sold land

two men cooking
outside their crates / discussing hope
I'm waiting for my death the old one said
the young one laughed a brassy laugh
what if they force you away
I'll make another / pointing to his boxhouse

unwantedness may be too much word

Sharp Tone

A Collection of Poems

Richard P. Gabriel

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Shower/Cold Near Dachau

The cloud slapped shut
like a lid on a boiling pot,
clouds of snow knocked loose rained
down on the stream edging past,
shoulders furtively turned,
against the razorwire rules
you've built around here.

The color of the inside of anything
shut down tight. Lace curtains like slices
of snowfallings. You told me once
of a pretty song, how it kicked
away a snowcloud and painted near purple
the sky with a filtered sun-dark light. Is this the world
we're standing on—or is it just the sudden
hardening of the chillcold beneath our feet?

Junk Park

Discarded sticks playing trees,
mounds piled up by yellow hydraulic machines,
yellowed swampgrass in a marsh as cold
as your hands binding sluggish movements
as a sign of life,
the sun dropping has abandoned us behind a row
of houses. Where I come from they play

a foolish game, one like the children
play in this park thrown off and dusted down
beside the highroad. In the cold air that day
the warm parts of our faces were placed in red,
the hidden parts ran wet as water.

For me hearts beat, for you
hearts beat, and this park is the space
between those offset beats.

Of Something Else

How slowly can the last article
of clothing fall past the most seductive

part of you? Could be it catches
(in the)
jam of door against door

slamming shut on the train
railing away from the preposition

that starts with b? Something old judging
(by the)
rust in your freshly washed hair. Hair

smell or odor freshly erased
(wait—Neil Young is soloing—this music

relates to his fingers in
an unexpected way. If your

last article

fell like the unexpected flake of snow on the head
of Neil's vintage junk Les Paul, tuning

machines might be
<a line containing "last" and some dots of elision>)

by a songline in blues whose
microtone bends hint at dominance

I mean dominant.
All this to say I waved instead

Vinyl Polychron

time his song phased out
of joint kilter tune time money sync
with me and all us buckwild boys he sat on the sidewalk holding
a sign in cardboard neoclassic style of bum and I
knew places he could get that but the marker or crayon
where was that from it said U.S.M.C. which means 1967
all that a cakewalk through flamethrowers and pole charges
and interlocking bunkers I knew places those he could get but
the cakewalk where was that from they don't stop no more
he said they work their fucking .coms unbrickworked
though clickmade lay down pavement tile mausoleums
final liquidations vinyl liquefactions linoleum defecations his song tuned
in and she walked by bleeding rich a rich henna hair
and thin vibrant cloth that fell from a high arch of her ass
clung as if tight but hung as if wind to advertise her available
assailable malleable mouthable of worth and now come

come correct of the two songs one olive grunt one silk ass the henna red hair
black marker cardboard sign singing singeing slinging signing
soundless song song and one more neuron path made my head was in

Some Kind of Cakewalk

She gave me a good wound hiking away
business-like in thick highheels like hiker-punk
meets tux on a windy day.
The air is filled with her secrets expressed
in music like a wind or rustling branches
nude of buds in winter coming on.
Not a permanent wound aching after all,
but one demanding rest and care in a warm, safe
foul-smelling place with men and women engaging
voices. A good wound takes out the engagement
permanently but leaves one fit on the perimeter or more.
The good wound must dig nails deep or fracture the solid
and make the blood flee the site of any occasional
or happenstance friendly fire. The good wound
floods the fires with cooling blood and stains the skin
with the smallest but most richly detailed tattoo. Make me
the good wound.

Where She Danced

On top of Route 66 the desert air can be dry
and small movements in the air can mean
what they want. Since Route 66 could not

make the leap to full color it small-faded
out like any pricked-awake dream and what's left
I'm sitting on. Your redhot dance barefoot

across the blacktop was a shimmering sham-dance
seen from the backseat of fading outasightings.
You told me 6 of 60 dreams in that quarter

moon we had strange sex & to tell
the truth: Route 66 did not fade out:
you chopped it up and I threw it away.

Swift Cold Stream

No one told me Dachau was a peaceful town,
a neat suburb of carnival-loving Munich,
Swiss in its devotion to proper windows,
and prosperous—votive homes in Catholic
rows—and near the edge of town they built a fenced

enclosure meant for safety—so small—with one
yoke-like building of unknown motive with neatly
rowed foundation blocks formed before it.
Along one long side a narrow swift stream of curious blue—
unearthly—with bubbles of turbulence

made on its surface speeds while branchy twigs and stems
look in on it. Like a side pocket they built a peaceful park
of oak and fir and neat Dachau grass mowed close
with a sandy brick incubation house sitting
low with redbrick roof tiles and industry-sized

chimney. Two rows of neatly planted poplars
line the road between the barrack rows
and it's here I think someone like me fell
with arms bent back in this safe enclosure—so
large—with the thought of floating swiftly down

the curious stream into the peaceful
town of Dachau hiding as an ostrich would
under the curious blue sky.

Everything Will Be Done in Small Steps

Her house. My car. Her window.
Like Romeo fattened by slaughter
I will receive the lovely sounds
your fingered manipulation
you will make on her tonight.
Streetlights will reflect off her window
onto the tuning dial of my AM radio
as I listen to the radio man count off minutes
sent to him by digital pulses from a nuclear clock.
You will do her alright,
but she will wait for the buzz
radiating from the end of your hooked
finger like the 1 by 1 tick from a fissioning clock.
She will receive it; I will receive the guitar's
digitally crafted phase shifts made to replace
the musical sound interference makes
out of a signal and its bounced twin.
The only small steps left in the world
are analog: your soft index finger
and Romeo's last meal.

A Love Song to Most of You from the Deserts of Arizona

We spoke in tongues not to praise
ourselves jabberlike, but to tease
passing ears who might have heard in plain
words closing doors and then dreamt sad
lines. Nearby, longhorns gathered
and locked horns in their grazing,
the sound of their earthly lives
sang in the air.

Of all the doors that could have,
the mirror one reflecting two imaginary
points became our flux.

Plastic clicks, uncrossing horns,
the metallic shift-sound of unlocking
horns—can we ever unlock the tangled
speeches we rehearsed before each other?

Cattle sing a foreign song—their move and sway
while swarming, their self-to-self measured
distance discourse. If you cannot speak,
move, as they do, in ever enclosing circles.

Our Numb Circle

After Rilke

I have fallen like wind for you
but in your heart I cease to exist
even through the impression I made
in the taught stillness of your limbs.
How did my image enter your eyes?
Did the curtain of your pupils lift soundlessly up?

Did I enter into your numb circle,
the center around which you move
in soft strides, powerful as any woman
in her dance of strength? Did my wind-words
fall still?

You have waited watchfully, bored
and tired by the enclosure that holds
nothing more. Outside it there is no further
world. You watch the passing wind
as it has passed a thousand times before
in your tired panther gaze.

I Play Guitar

and the pads of my fingers press the sharp
metal strings against each fret to make a soft
note buzzing in two tones from fret to bridge
and fret to nut

and the tone of buzzing wires
excites the magnetic fields firmly established
by three clustered bars of vintage Texas single-coil
pickups on my tobacco sunburst ash-body Strat bolt-on
maple neck with rosewood fretboard
and sends bursts of electric
signals out the jack
and through the fat copper strands
of a monster cable electric guitar
cord with gold cold contact jacks
and into the Dunlop crybaby
wah-wah pedal where a foot-position
activated variable-frequency-pass filter
mimics the cry of a lonely woman

and from the wah a sculpted slice
of tonal energy is by another monster
cable fed to the gaping mouth
of a Sylvania 12AX7 vacuum
tube preamp stage that is fed
to another and then fed

by a cable into a loop whose deepest
parts are A/D converters
and digital sculptors
which through a process not
unlike time travel and not
unlike breaking physical laws

press the signal into the shape
of a woman's cry in a French
cathedral transmitted by AM
radio over the cornfields of Kansas
in a phased recombination
in a chorus of like-minded

converts before moving back
through digital -> analog
converters and back once
more

♪ ♪ ♪

to the funnel of a 6AU6
class A push-pull power amp
section that feeds to a load of 2
8-ohm 12" Celestion speakers
and the sound I make with my 1949
quarter/pick as it pounds
the strings into chaos

and sweat from my head
and hands coats the loving
strings that I bend
to haunting microtones
and sustain in sensual pulses
of vibrato is fed
as a cry upon cry
through the wah

to the preamp tubes
that burst and bend
from the strain
of the overload I make
that is coolly with reason
patched into the shapes
of a lonely world
and into

the hungry jaws of the power
stage and into

the clattering fabric of the speakers

making a feedback shrill shout
and whispering cry

like a song might sound like
like a bird might fly like
like forget might like
like loss

unlike a mistaken tone
or a slip on note
or the language I mean

being invented through
mechanisms of unfettered
distortion.

Art Struggling in the Weeds

When art is spoken
all alarms are ignored,
and the death of women by saber
and the cleansing of blades
on their white silk dresses,
perhaps their blinking eyes
make faint applause,
or so thinks the god of art
who stands in the aisle, saber
at the ready, and sharp.

What If All Were Or

your hand shake
your hand shakes
your hands shake
does the thin not fully formed veneer
of science unstick in places
my tongue/fig
or plum
above the top of the sky
your hand unsticks in places
above the top of the sky science shakes
my tongue not fully formed
your fig shakes in places
not fully formed
this tongue
may
not
only
plumb the sky

Mystery Us

standing with ankles crossed
her left toes
beside her right ankle
in black to
accent her hips
make like: dark wine glass
squeeze her lips
hide her sex
hold her pee
bunch her ass
invite my stare
repel my approach
pull all eyes from her small breasts
mime her cheeks
scratch her leg
or
shroud the woman
in holy black

All Along

The room I write
in is as
small as
me sitting
+ a table

a boat prow
atop a third-floor porch
and three windows—on each side.

The Three Voices:

cars fuming in wait
for the harbor tunnel
waiting for deep dark
in dark
is there
anything, really, to say
about it?

ships hooked
to their moorings
hoping to slip
on the next tide
will a banjo
play that happy song?

planes caught
by the nose
by gangways really
and melancholy steps will
people take their places
in lines through air?

A Fourth Voice:

there is one
no?

Page of Mount Parnasus

Everyone has a last message.
A feeling they've had that persists
or forms their basis.

A song that impairs hearing
or feels good played too loud
too often.

*I was your everlasting.
I waited doglike.
I left behind myself.*

A drink that unsticks
the parts of your mouth
that fasten at night.

*Find dust
that settles
all bets.*

Make mine sentimental
like the maple syrup
he reduced from sap those years

my father walked as himself.
The time he left behind.
Cure it in wormwood

—to slow down
every thought you have,
—to kill each one.

whoever copies this sacred text without permission will be damned

I beseche the o my lorde
lyghten and pouрге my memorye
and with the brightnes of thy light
illumyn and confyrme my
forgettinges with the oder
of the switenes of thy holy sprite.
Helpe me and quicken me as
the error of infydelytie and the fylthines
of my syght hast gayzed
on the nayked bodye
of Shrifa. Helpe me pouрге
my memorye of her owtwarde
partes. Infforme replenishe instrue
restore correct claryfy and
refreshe me that I may
be the man I wonc was.

Ruth Said It Best

This Winter the house fell down,
as if the sun had changed brightness
it took a minute for my eyes to adjust
enough to the changed sight to register it.
My car balanced on a fulcrum of plowed
snow in front of her barred driveway,
and beans of heat—black soot and sand—
worked to melt the last ramps of snow, I
stepped from the car seeing joists and beams,
shingles, window frames, windows themselves,
tables, chairs, couches, and beds, pictures and picture
frames in loose piles all in a loose pile
where her house once was. She moved
on only last Fall, moved as her cravings
pulled her and hatreds pushed, old
in her ways, her sharp scraping skin
hanging from her arms, her face, her voice
like a razor, she is held together by a thin
coat of displeasings and dislikes. The house

held together by the strong coats of paint
she layered on it, like the lasting coats of pain
she laid on me and my father—he had the sense
to let his heart give out last Spring. In the center
of the piles smooth river stones from the chimney
lay, cracked from the strain and cold; it once
formed the center of the house, and even
it—held together by the strongest mortar
he could mix—has given out. Father, pray
for me to help her move once more
this Spring, move as only the faithful can,
into this falsely restored and fallen home.

Hair Talc

Dark she walks besides me in a woods
what she says is nothing you plainly
see or is it here her deepest thoughts are mo-
no-
silly-
la-
bles and even those are crypto
6 layers of crypto stack
ain't nothing written but in loveyellow
ink on like yellow paper o dark woods
besides me she's walking in
but listen I hear secret parts
rubbing together what pubic
hair is I figured is cheap grease
keeps from rubbing too
hard hotsteaming parts on others
helps stop rash running I keep
talking besides her
but she talks I'm rash
I tell her contents (o loving notes) she says
love stuff's trash quit
fucking spamming me

Packings

My girl's Pop's going to visit A'nt
Verna for the last time this Spring.

"I'm coming up to see you for the last time,"
prob'ly what he said, and God's disquiet

is a twinge om'nous—how unlike
last from first. My girl's no girl

neither, she's passed into
her 40's and like for us all

her robust packings
are feeling last at last. Joints

get stiff, joint's another story.
We're dog-eared from lookin' up.

A'nt Verna once had puffed lips
and a vertical smile the boys

like to make signs of the cross
with kissin'. I'd go

myself, but it'd be
my first, and I'm not

sure how full a circle
God appreciates now

that some folks have gone
to see him for the last time.

40 Love

Tag, we played it for days.
Across 40 from Flagstaff east
Through New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas,
Right across the Mississippi. Corvette
And Mustang. I was drawn to your color,
Maybe you liked my acceleration.
I paced you from behind and watched
Your rich henna hair fall around your headrest.

When you stopped for gas I slowed,
Stopped. If I lost you I'd
Rely on my radar detector
And the stealth of my headlights
Turned back dispersing seeking signals—
120, 130, and once 140,
Whatever it took to catch you.

Nights I'd write notes.
You'd raise your fingers as I passed.

All the small lovely places—
Leupp Corner, San Jon, Benonine, Pharoah, Lonoke—
That morning east of Amarillo,
The mist held inches above the ground,
Layer of wet clear air,
Thick fog above that a thin blanket,
The heavy morning sun rising up.

I lost you in Memphis.
I crossed right behind you.

I sped.
I waited.
I searched until night fell in Asheville.
Did I tell you poets weep there?

Naked

Is there a word that fills more of us with joy, spawns more optimism, speaks of more possibilities, fills us more fully with the lust for art? Naked Lunch, naked women. Think of the clothed man sipping his tea with a naked woman. The contrast is exquisite. The Story of O. Think of Manet's painting, *Déjeuner Sur L'Herbe*, or Bow Wow Wow's version in photo cover art: *See Jungle! See Jungle! Go Join Your Gang, Yeah! City All Over! Go Ape Crazy!* Two men sitting, clothed—tangled legs—a naked her. Any man's fantasy. The day she first strips before you, you believe her nakedness—there are her breasts, their nipples and aureoles, there is her waist and bellybutton, there are her hips, her thighs, her ass, and all of them in the proportions of a woman. You have fallen for a woman's finest trick: You believe her naked, you need her to be, you must see all of her. She is not naked. Your desire makes you see what is not there. You have been fooled. Believe it. Trust me. Picture her standing before you, naked, arms hurled toward heaven, legs spread apart manly style. Stare, stare, think, consider—you will see her naked every time. You will swear to it. Take her picture and study it day after day. Use a magnifying glass. Put it in Photoshop and mangle it every way you can. Scan it in 3600 dpi. Zoom in. She is not naked. The parts she cares about are hidden. The ones she touches remain away from your eyes. They are not in her mind. They are right there between her legs, right where you expect them. Look closely, between her legs is a mound of hair, long and coarse as any beard, deep and thick as jungle growth, curled and tangled as gang colors, opaque as any nun's panties. Go ape crazy but she ain't there. It's just hair. Lips, lips, a hood, colors pink to purple, a small penis-shaped head, openings, engorgement in excitation, shades of skintone in variation. That's naked. Who made you believe in hair?

A woman's hair is long in youth—the pretty girl you first love has flowing hair like the mane on a groomed thoroughbred, and shiny. As she ages into each relationship, she cuts it shorter—to make it easier to handle, she says. Your remorse expands and she just laughs.

Listen: Can she make it any plainer how stupid men are?

Dodge 50

Call me stupid but the day was pretty,
 even if that punk across the street was under arrest,
 dope I suppose, cuffed in a plastic bracelet,
 sat down politely by the cops until the pokey wagon showed,
 sitting on a cement curb—they even put a jacket over his wrists
 so he'd appear reclining not detained. And the old black man,
 roses in one hand & a paper bag bunched on a neck in the other
 sitting down with his bag-carrying hand touching the brim
 of his hat before he sat and sobbed for an hour. I touched
 you once and you were full of you, to the brim packed and substantial.
 I'll bet both those guys thought we were ready to trot,
 trying it on for size, gazing at slowburning leaves in mid-Fall,
 smelling each smell brought up from the plains to the east.
 They would be wrong.

Pretty is sentimental—poets beware. Even a dog
 probably smells the flowers a little prettier when he's tracking
 a bitch in heat. Any kind of animal that uses its nose to hunt rut.
 I smelled you that day, but I wasn't falling.
 A punk selling dope to buy his cave bitch a new sled;
 roses itching for the gutter. No way I'm cat-eyeing you,
 Miss pretty hot and tempting in a sweater from Milan.

A pretty day makes you love. Sentimental.
 I'm carrying no bag for you. No up north trip for me.
 Poets warned me. Shakespeare's crap—I give it a miss.
 And aren't I pretty anyways.

the first step in your quest to become linguistically obscure

Makes no difference who you are
words go one way: left to right.*
In. Top to bottom. Ost'n erewti enigami.
Yes, folded enigma. They went thattaway (→).

You don't say.

Daily sex (me) dyslexia (you).
English. As "in your head." Some Japanese characters
(I) like it like this.

How do I fell? Postamor All. Us.

We have out own thoughts. Except rarely.

Word order makes order, unless:
:whom **You**
:what **Love**

Who? Me!

Thattaway (←)?

Funny grammars make funny gran'ma's.

Typorthodoxy in the alternative.

Ok, upstream is not downstream.
I can feel you standing behind me
the flesh of your thumbpads in my ears
your hands splayed up like moose antlers
wiggling.

Step 1: For words to go one way
you need words.

*Except etc Hebrew & like

Lesser Birds

They one by one fall
An erotics moves toe to toe
A denial could not bend back
Our hips space apart
There is only one no to go around
Can I touch the infinitesimal circle of the journey
A watchtower is not all around
Like S, N, and R, like a man their pace
Wear fire-fangled feathers the first time we fuck
In the spectrum of know and wonder
A funny wind did stand up

Windfall on the park bench
a spectrum of erotics wondered and moved
first deny our feathers, fuck, bend
pace only our hips, snare, watch the no go around and around

Can I circle the infinitesimal journey

Touch

Yesterday This Was a Park

Dark heals,

sometimes it's like cutting out a cancer with the tip of a stiletto
and an ice cube painkiller.

Imagine a growth of skin shaped like the early part
of an explosion.

Hold ice against it
until the sensation has moved twice
from heat to cold and back.

Pinch the growth in the jaws of sharp new pliers; pull.

When the blade is done with its slice
you know immediately
you can remove the knife quickly
from its nearness to your precious body.

Push
a cloth over the wound.

bandage, cloth, skirt, dark long coat catching mud
from the backs of heels

Dark heals the way a dog runs
when you turn on the back porch light.

Evening Spread

The computer zenlike sorts my needs
like the proverbial chinaman
sorting tickets.
As fast as he can he piles them to the left, to the right,
moves them from cigar box
to desk drawer, marks some
—on others he crosses things out. As if responding to a tick
he looks up sometimes and says Huh? His job is routine,
without thought, without careless sounds.
He dreams his family is marking the backs
of chickens with orange magicmarkers
left over from Spring classes. His needs
exceed my imagination—I am drawn to him
like the boat adrift to the corpo morto.
With a sweeping
gesture he wipes his table clean—
all, save the lines of toothpicks
that spells my desire
to sweep away blankets,
gesture in full,
make a pile of your underthings beyond the line around your bed,
descend like snowfall on the tips of toes and fingers:
this note I'll send
once the chinaman's tickets
review its spelling and the grammar
of my interests.

Heights

At night from the airplane window
 I see the line of dotted lights leading from one small town
 to another or to a larger city in a distant nearby. Some lights
 are the yellow-orange gas arc variety, stationary,
 brightening inverse squarely a dot of roadside farmland
 and road, others are cars with elongated ice-cream-cone
 shaped beacons that turn like vectors aimed at possible
 stopping points. Something about each light tells
 the smallest most general story of lonely life, that darkness is never far
 and something as quick as a blink draws
 darkness in without hesitation.

Or in the day over the northern parts of Canada
 in the dead of Winter I see a sheltering stand
 of trees where perhaps the snow is less deep
 in a cove around the trunks, and maybe some parts
 of the ground are visible—cold but a connection,
 a place someone might wish to stop and light
 a small fire, a warming, a soup break, a prelude
 to a night in a warm tent and bag. At night
 the possibility of a flickering light, a dot of humanity—
 is it any wonder I search for them at night
 from the airplane window over the least inhabited
 places.

In light or dark
 but especially in dark
 each place like these sends me signals,
 begs me to step out. How cold
 would it be to step outside? How swift
 would the downtrip be? If I stepped out of the dark
 into the orange arclight dot by the side of a small road
 or within the simple reach of firelight at the base of a tree,
 would I yearn for the flickering lights that tonight seem to be
 passing far overhead?

From a Scene

As you lay there naked in bed
you are like the sinewy muscled foothills
of a tropical mountain range, covered
with a pastel and cotton mist
that swirls and rises as the heat from the sun
moves the air around you,
and soon you are fully revealed. But

tell me,
is it the offering of yourself
that moves your fingertips
to the thickest flesh of your soft legs,
or the desire for warmth
from my fiery skin?

Sentimentality 101

The room is 10x10, small addition
to a small trailer in Central Florida.
The walls are covered by art—duotone
night winter scenes in blues and white,
woods scenes from the forest behind the house,
mountains from up north;
flower studies in orange and blue, mixtures
of flowers and mountains in miniature. Something
is off about them—color, proportion, perspective,
too much of the wrong half-brain.

All are signed in the lower left traditionally,
but in the upper right is his mark: a flying bird
made as if calligraphically with one fluid stroke
or two. Perhaps it was the same way he died
one year ago, stumbling out of bed at 4am
to puke, his hurry and rush too much
for his damaged and not fully repaired heart,
for his weakened brain-supplying blood vessels.
Just one stroke—or two—and he went down
to his knees in the position my mother found him,
kneeling as if in prayer—she said
he must have been struggling to or from bed
at the beginning or end of a final trip to the bathroom.
His last words to her were get out of my way.

Where was he rushing to? What appointment to keep
that didn't involve her? He laughed about his trademark
bird signings, as if it were the conceit of an amateur.

In his best painting in this room where I sleep perhaps for the last time,
the bird sign is small: From just a few feet it seems like a small spider,
and above it is a thin, drawn line that seems to hold the spider
up as it waves its legs working the line. almost a laugh. And the spider
line anchoring its descent goes up, up and up beyond where I can see,
held finally in place between two hands, clasped in prayer.

Lover of All Things

On Buck Lake Road in Central Florida
the people are of two kinds totally:
reliant or self-reliant. Take the majority:
pickup trucks (several) with 'gator lights
up top and hunting dog kennels in the bed,
4-12 fox hounds and blood hounds, fishing tackle
always packed, a double- or triple-wide with a swing-set
and swings enough for 3 or 4, a trampoline
but not too level, wives with 3 or 4 curves too many,
satellite dish, and a supply of spare parts
rusting in their chassis' in some tall
saw grass out back. Did I say it was a sand road
scraped clean and level 3 times a year? Did
I say it is on no map.

The rest are old, they eat sporadically,
say ok ok under their breaths with every move
of every chore, who do everything in slow steps.
Women fart and belch day long, every aspect
of any female packaging long disguised as hanging skin.
Men indistinguishable from women.
All they own that is covered in webs, mostly cob
like the inside-out palimpsest of their skin. Everything
they own is rusting and decaying, under attack
by heat, wet, wind, and bugs. The neighborhood
mimics memory loss.

I wonder why the affinity between the totally self-reliant
and the totally reliant. Heat? Or the not cold? The opportunity
to make something of nothing. Prying eyes and judgments absent
except in pronouncement? Or maybe it's a love affair
with that most intimate of lovers,
that most fervent clinger to life,
that most reliable of all:
you know who I mean.

Ars Poetica

Take the finest book of poems,
say a collection of Neruda's love ones
or The Duino Elegies by Rilke (your choice
of translator), open the book to your favorite
poem or passage, read deeply with the parts
of your mind that have remained longest undiscovered,
lose yourself, heighten your soul,
move the book slowly still open as if in for a tango,
hold it out away from you, time it your best
and slam it shut like jaws of life in reverses
on that damned Florida deerfly circling your head
who looks like that movie you cannot watch,
who stinks like the hole behind satan,
who looks like what the poet really means to say.

Walk

Florence SC, walking, busy road,
groceries, facing traffic, no sidewalk, tall weeds,
2 lanes each way, some cars switch lanes,
others straight on, swervers male,
killers female.

Men more or better:

empathetic
driving ability
caring
manners
familiar with the shame of walking with groceries
prepared for the unexpected
global

Women more or less:

willing to kill
willing to yield
daring
helpful
predatory
willing to adopt new rules
local

Were they hateful to murder of poetry?

What I know is this:

None of these people were thinking about passive sex.

Hoarsepower

Sometimes I'm a poet,
sometimes I'm a hater.
If I could only combine the two sometimes,
I'd really have something.

The Hope of Love

May your lovers all come
wrapped in plain brown paper.

Despite

I am paralyzed by spite,
not a word, not a drop has come of it, can come of it.
I would take back not a single word,
except it delete the world along with it.
Spite please be enough,
please be the right spice to pickle language,
the right acid to curdle ghosts.

Work Makes You Free

The day has been atmospheric starting with dreams
then snow and freezing rain making crystal of brush and shrub,
branches and hung wires. In the dream there was a conference
where the lunches were served on mud tables—roadways
were plowed between them in rectangles. Despite how I ran
my loudmouth enemy followed from mudflat to mudflat,
so I fled to the registration booth.

Then the European scientist arrived and we kissed
ceremoniously first by one cheek then by the other.
She reclined, her silk dress was loose by her thighs,
and I drew my calloused fingertips up from her knee
plowing back her skirt until she pulled it up to reveal
her densely curled public mound. I looked into her sweet
face and remembered to wake up to vomit in my mouth.

Today spite petrified into remorse, solitude
reduced to sentimentality when Celine softly
singing as her niece died in her arms made me cry
in a motel room decorated in diluted Bavarian or Swiss—
blue and cream. Everything that has happened this week
considered as a unit reminds me of a pair
of old men adrift off the Irish coast in a dory, eating a formal
dinner in trays on the seatboards, the sun behind them the way
a cinematographer would want to see it, so the scene is really in shades
of pink and lensflare.

Not an option—failure isn't when speaking about getting the well
primed: something I can try when the weather clears. When it pumps
I'll pass by Satan's ass and out into purgatory to pay off the 1000-year
debt my spite cost. Is waiting part of the punishment?

What I mean to say is that neither poetic seeing nor scientific
attitudes is going to save us from the thousand 1000-year
acts we'll perform and the need for the heart to contract then release
over and over. Celine dropped out of school at 15 and everything
she knows about life comes from the lyrics to songs she sings
along with the mood of the music as commentary that tells
her an attitude toward those words.

So what will happen to me the day I decide
to trigger an episode of impromptu skirt lifting—do I swallow
or breathe in?

Haunting Drops

Rain is such a symbol.
For me it is the symbol of never going home,
the way it prevents the work that is that journey's
precondition, the way it has shut down the airport,
the absurdity of its slushslop sounds when it puddles
outside the windows of the most convenient motel
day after day while I get used to forgetting a now-former life.
Rain endures, transforms into floods, gets messy in the way,
soaks rats to near-pleurisy, provides an excuse
to share warmth with a different gender, renders common
the most unusual, keeps inside everything
you want to keep outside. Rain is the ghost
of sunlight and shade.

Can'ever

Love can never win
even by cheating: replacing all parts
one by one—one could say lovingly—until one
love is replaced by another. Let's say
this method includes hillclimbing—
each part improves upon the one it replaces.

Is perfection preventable?
Considered a function,
choice depends on what? Let's change
the subject. Take hair. The possibilities
are fragmentary. I love her
and she wears suede skirts depending
on her ass.

Love's focus on "one". It's like
a guitar with a floating bridge tilted by fever,
fresh springs,
beautiful chords may wobble.
Sound still beautiful,

wobble.

Let's wander;
if it snows that stretch
of incandescence will never know
already. Away to win.
Love can't.

Lit Study Guide

Sand by a park lit by
incandescent or gas arc lamps
casting her shape in black on orange,
the sand is orange and park parts
green. She will walk home
with thoughts of death camps in her steps.
She finds twigs that remind her of memory,
branches floating on fast-clean moving
waterways fatherlike toward a mothering
sea. Somewhere someone is lighting
a small water heater, holding a flame
within a stream of gas, holding a button
down until a bithermal sensor is red hot
doing that work for her. She is watching
that flame expand as its movements
make black on orange shadows dance
within a sheet metal apparatus whose design
is toward warmth and human comfort.

What reminds me of these things
is the park-like appendix at Dachau
where the cremation stations are. How
I wonder how far I would get if I tried
to make love there one night
while the erasing stream flows past
faster than water can flow
without the forcing presence of satan's
hatred at its back.

Compare and contrast—relate if you will—
the echoes.

Rosetta or The Exotic Dancer

The angel came up on me fast,
I mean—too
different, unexpected, lusty,
really—like a lusty slave,
physical presence of a woman.

Came up—I mean
entered a place of recognition,
named, categorized out
of the compartments of whore,
seductress, first lover whose
local circle of passion and cognizance
now includes me.
The sort of oh
attached to surprise
not the one of relief.

Fast—I
mean the sharp transition from wrong
to correct
not graduated so that one
would blend into another.
The wings—like the sudden
close of chaos when the needle
drops on the record
and music emerges—
they popped out of the indistinct
background and condensed to wings.

Shallow carved, by a digital process
perhaps, more like shallow dark dots
or worm tracings on polished marble
or maybe even a granite—blue or green
tinged grey with dark flecks or chunks
like a confection.

The stone had a lap or portico
or front yard—a small red brickstone
fence, each piece a small rising sun,
all arranged into a curved entry
garden of maybe one square
foot, filled with white porcelain
rabbits and squirrels, cherubs and
marriage archways. Sprigs of vibrant
then frozen then thawed flawless
flowers, each in a vial cracked from the sudden
snowstorm.

♪ ♪ ♪

The angel—good mother-sized breasts
under silk or chiffon, a womanly hip
3/4 revealed, her left leg advancing
to her right in profile as if on the cover
of a swimsuit issue, her thick thigh
cupping her lap's bowl. Sexual—
predatory. But her arms were held
at an introductory set of angles
back to her left, in forms
meaning her's Johnny, hailing
the word "Mother" carved
distinctly, with the fast coming up
being the coming into view.

On the back, her name,
"Loved mother and grandmother"
and the dates of birth and death,
her life the contents of a parenthetical
remark made in this most attractive
of cemeteries on a cold cold dim
late spring day, when all I wanted
was a warm hand on the side
of my solitary head.

Force and Simple Dynamics

This is my exit, a ramp
that lets me cruise
alongside the main road some at high speed,

same speed as yours, and maybe I'll pass,
then off I'll veer at a normal angle, meaning
I'll make a right turn or left. A normal finish

for an all-talk situation. Enforced starvation.
What I've come to see is that there is nothing to see,
I've heard there's nothing to hear,

come to grips with the fact there will be no touching.
Radio on, top creased and folded, tucked by the trunk,
wipers on—it's raining hard, hail or sleet, the thin layer

of skin between the pellets and skull is pierced
in places. The rain enters.
Hail enters and greets

hearty. I've come to rest in a wide spot—
Bernoulli says to slow down here
and I've joined a very small crowd

each of whom has found their exit,
a ramp easy to negotiate. Each of whom
is content to have left you or someone isomorphic.

Smarter, I would have taken
the ramp that exits gently on the steep downslope,
exits straight and heads 10% uphill

through sand, so even the most hot
and passionate truck comes
to an eagerly unanticipated slowly burning
stop.

Lines

Crimes of anatomy: Guilty.
Crime of shape and filling,
size 6 woman in a size 4 dress.
Crime of arms, hands, and skin;
voices and ears; eyes and surfaces.
Near is the first rule of human
contact—love, let's say, or romance, sex, for example.
Or just handholding or admiration of form
and skin,

visiting what's revealed.

This is where lines come in. Crime
of distance. Missing person, another
missing her. Or him, I suppose. The first line
is mail. Sending word, writing of love and gone:
having gone, continuing gone. Rail line—
possibility of reuniting, visiting,
letters quickly answered.
Physical exchange in the offing: Kiss
a letter's seal.

Lips—time—lips.

Lines with movement at the gross level of matter.
Conveyance, in short. Airlines, the jetliner, the ship line—
nothing new here. Conveyance.

Lines that trade
information. Encodings.
Telegraph lines, phone lines, power lines even.
In the plains these lines are lines,
visible, curved hanging in parabolas—
inverse square laws. 3
times farther, 9
times more ways not to return.

Long distance lines pretend
to bring you closer. Length is desperation
only. These lines respect time. Predictable
duration.

Better then than a letter.

⌘ ⌘ ⌘

E-mail, voice-mail, pagers, faxes—
dull variations with better print quality sometimes.
Make rejection as pretty printed as Donne sonnets
in the latest printing. *Goodbye you
loser.*

Or voice delay, like the 7-
second obscenity buffer.
One-time echo.

Think about storms
stretching lines. Think
back/ahead.

People in pigpiles, night
storms made us. Storms, line
break.

Thickness of Paint

Brushstrokes, layering, paint as medium
whose physics matters. The texture of paint
matters, the direction, depth, and swirl of a brush

stroke matters. Painting is additive, nothing is taken
away, or rarely. Mistake? Paint it over, cover
it with more, build up never subtract. The mistakes

are always there. When we speak
it is like this—in bed, at stove,
with others, what I say is added

to all I've ever said, nothing taken back
only covered over. Branches and leaves
piled by the tree, decaying to constituent

parts. Rebuilding material. Do
my words rot, decay, reform
under the weight and resulting heat

of newer dodges, newer explanations,
more refinements? Does the under paint
of thick masterpieces

turn, somehow—chemically,
physically, relentlessly—
into canvas?

Easy as 1-2-3(-4)

Winter turns to summer
in Silicon Valley and even the live oak
bulks up—leaves block the view
by adding themselves to it.

Fog through the wind gap 5 miles north
enters the throat of the Bay at 50 mph.
What does this crap have to do with Lonely Heart

left under a rockslide or covered by graffiti.
Backalley licenses. Translate
that into something that runs
100x faster. Or make it small

to fit in cell phones.
Make it a better offer.
Better Off-er. That's what we want,
isn't it: Poor turns to Rich
in Silicon Valley, and even the lowly hacker
bulks up—riches block the view
by adding BMWs to it.

Lonely Heart searches for meaning
by substituting words one by one
or meanings one by one
gathered from butterworthy songs

bought mostly by teenage girls
or younger. LH does that 100x
faster than his coffin-bound half-circumcised friend
and in a space smaller than the crack/hope
LH has been left with.

LH holds the IP.
Genetic swarm
improvements, better-off
money from clip-rate royalties.

As I write this,
I think of selecting a cell:
change its format to bold, first;
change its color to green, second;
change its boundaries from single to double lines, third;
and add a Black Porsche and the girl who steps out of it & so forth, fourth.

Singularity

I couldn't recognize myself
so she did it for me, hands on ears,
feet in the muscled small of back,
slender slick silken shafts of hair
pulled along, brush strokes swiftly past abdomen.

Her eyes looking out for me
in a mirror's image she saw herself looking at me,
recognition. The self in senses
all trees and breeze
Mediterranean seawarmth
sweetbreeze
vapor of slumber descendency
muscle tissue hardened & relaxed
curtain of memory pulled past each thought disappearing
everything every breath deep in the chest

She to watchover,
she like watcher suricats swiveling & humming protection,
the first 2 digits of her left ring finger
placed like a popsicle
on the hard palate roof of my mouth.

In a minute the part of my mind trained as a brain
will awaken, and all she'll be
is the Wizard of Oz
stepped out front of the curtain.

Bridge Brigade

One day they will all gather at the river's
transition from lake-sized
to the swift final flow to Joppa Flats.
They will begin their walk at the obsessing
bridge and its funny
green. With luck they'll choose moments
when the river flows downriver

(woman/tidal
river).

Because I want them
only
to see me the last
time only
one time.

Perhaps a crew will insert
the metal turn-machine and march
around 11 times to let me pass.

The parachutist drowned
above Holt's Rocks may let loose
his shrouds and sift my ashes
through the combs his hand bones form.

Who will appear?
How will they walk?
What of their hair?

If the water be still
I will be the dust amidst the clouds.

If the water be ice
I will melt ice with my gathering heat.

One place I will place
my initials, the last thing
first on my mind.

Because I fell for them,
let them
let me
fall.

Stopping Courage

It's a simple cross
built by a carpenter from clear
wood dadoed together, untreated,
in a shallow hole dug with a posthole
digger with the initials AD written in lead
pencil at the joint.

I saw a few beads from New Orleans
and a perfect spiral shell atop the post.

The cross appeared months after burial.
His house nearby is for sale.
He has written his last words and some have been said.
The old writer with simple things to say.

Will I have the courage to leave as little,
will someone with talent say goodbye
by acts as small as these whose remnants
I find.

But the raw sandy earth on the road side
of the marker has not been taken by grass
nor flowers nor weeds, has not sunk,
remained bare and clear.

Years I drove slow
past his house finding
no courage to stop,
each time past slower than the last.
Now I can stop
these are the only times I can.

Excuse me for stopping my writing now,
someone's car has slowed to stop,
I see reflections, hear echoes,
the car door clicks,
it slams.

Minimal Spirits

The years are sharper than razors
—4 seasons wide—
each year shaves off
one layer of dark color,
one week of screwing,
one mph of speed, and
one possible liaison. For 20, 30
years we layer them on like
coats of short oil varnish

and for 20, 30 we shave them off,
random order,
potentials come,
go. But precise,
precision.

Or more abrasive than
low grit closed-coat sandpaper,
grinding off layers,
clogging,
worn.

I sit toadful
staring at the few years to come
while behind me like cartoon speed lines
the possibilities fall, sheets
of paper, manuscript knocked
and scattered like thin slices
like dust blown
from my hands.

Smooth Curves

music can be played even
when the players step on each other
play leads
play them too loud
into and through the singing
while other players are soloing

and an audience hears it as music
well played and forceful
high energy and full of life

discussions can be held even
when the speakers step on each other
state positions
state them too loud
into and through questions
while other speakers are talking

and an audience hears it as discussion
well argued and forceful
high energy and full of life

I suppose it works as well when two lovers are split apart by an over-
powering distance

singing would be too loud
talking would be pointless
all that's left is the solo

—skip to the sunset scene, you bozo—

that and one walking behind the other
on the shoulder of a busy road
with the low winter sun
twinkling our eyes
love is a young
man's game
honey

Look Out, People, Machine Coming!

The famous words
—famous in my family—
when my Lithuanian step-grandfather lost
control of a small flatbed
in 1920 in Lawrence, Mass,
Main Street, failed brakes.

What would the people have wondered first?
Who is “people”? Or
what is “machine”?

The eagerness in his voice
—mugged by his accent—
but combined with the indomitable p’s, e’s, & l’s
would lead to quick apprehension
that “people” is anyone in earshot.

“Machine,” though, is problematic.
Listen: “maa–sssshéééén!”
And who knows how many people glanced
up at the rows of windows that morning,
hazy from shoe factory smoke
and the air of tanning—boric and oxalic acids,
quebracho extract—to catch a brief glimpse
of the pearl sheen from the rising sun,
before recalling the brief deep “maa”
like calling mother for help,

or pondering with the beginnings of great depth
the abstractional choice and what it meant
of selecting “machine” from the spectrum starting
at the 1910 Ford Model T flatbed,
passing through commercial truck,
and ending up somewhere in the vicinity
of inanimate object and thing,

before seeing the need clearly
to hop aside quickly as the Ford flatbed
plowed into the front display window
of Neuman’s Department Store.

And from its depths the small cry
still sounded
—*machine coming*—
people became angels,
the flatbed truck and the soul inside it
took on the pearl sheen of the rising sun.

Black Horse Nightmare

I am just a dreamer
and you are just a dream. Concrete
and dreams don't mix: A dream
tries to be forgotten. A dream
that tries forgetting turns to nightmare
when it comes to book the flight
and plan just which ancient stones
and hotel room overlooking
them in a rich Mediterranean
sunned landscape will become
the likely site of someone's
nightmare. Maybe mine,
yours,
maybe theirs.

Turn to my nightmare,
explore it like an ant
following sprayed pheromones,
and I will do what you will,
follow single file to an ugly place
to decide, in any order,
the who, whom, and when.

The wettest Spring
I drove past a sloping hill
by the tossed ocean
where they led the blackest horse
through the greenest grass
in front of the bluest ocean whitecapped
and frothing in high waves upon rocks.
They led him by a bright red rope
held by a man on the back of a dirtbike,
a camera truck beside them.

At the ugly place you said they'd erase
the rope with a clever computer program
you wrote, because it was red
while everything else was green, blue, white, or black,
and I thought
a red rope is all that connects nightmare
to dream, and can forgetting
be as easy as running your red-erasing
code.

Dreamtime in Carpentry

His first was a wasteland
of joists running wrong ways,
slabs where footings need be,
nails in place of screws
etc

He had seen houses
but never one apart, never was told
their secret So he built one

He'd read of slender women
who lounge in them
swigging pearl-blue Bombay martinis
in cream gowns and slicked hair
Seen deco-style cartoons of them
with lengthened limbs
and draped eyes Colors thrown
off kilter like the tan brown
of the third cappuccino layer
that their faces were painted in

All his houses were built
according to made-up rules
and fathomless designs
always wrong or faked

The women he lured
with his operatic baritone
rarely favored the pearl-blue gin
nor were their colors monotone
Too hairy and swore

He stretched brushed silk on shag-bark
sticks and as far as sunlight could decide
it decoyed a glossy moth
Even I was humped by its shaggy skin

I repair all his things now
All seem real and as sharply focussed
as gin dreams and pearl-blue women
stretched as tight as silk Those are easy
But shag-bark limbs, wrongway joists,
fathomless dreams—my imagination
is wasted on words

Over Dose

Make the world larger
end the current period early
Enter the year made grey: the second millennium
is not over, the third not started—
for calendars
are belief in time which can exist only
as mathematics needs it. I have
fallen ill or into anger
over the need to love
(or is it live?)

when the assumptions of an ill
life are glued to the roof of my mouth
by the words wired through my head.

I've tired of following the slightly high
heels of your fashion-ing boots
that kickkick the back hem
of your dark coat.

The overstuffed god is ready
to pinch off the tuft of time
that exploded zip into theories
that negation alone can repair.

Our fate is in the hands
of the action of not,
a philosopher evening.

I'm jumpy over love
this year, Cupid has gone
upscale with a Remington 700 BDL .308
and just when the edge of my heart peeks clear
a whisper in the alley take him.

Jumpy year when time's in a pinch
zip love on my calendar
let's end the current
peri

Song of the Goatherd in Silicon Valley

Hitech valley
high octane capitalism
cars brighter than the fastest deal
more dollars than a first divorce
12-hour, 15-hour days our weekends
vacations vacated
digitorrid chat affairs
overtones of typing speed

This valley full of hills laced with oleander
manzanita madrone underlaced with grass
tall yellow brittle to sparks

Broadband envy
design coercion
polymers as natural as vinyls
lace desktop underwear

Goats shepherds shepherd dogs
flexible fencing marking the places of goats and execs
trailer lawn chairs
warm days appetites elimination
extraction and recompaction
fertilization like intellectualism
hidden within capitalism
small goats eat

in the days when girls kept their underpants on
undergrowth turns dark as earth
and one Australian Shepherd sniffs a Lotus tyre
when the oldest becomes newest
as fast as new becomes old

Wrong Dream

It's the dependency of love on dreams
that makes God's choices hardly
seem important. What He denies

begets drama since the negation
of an absolute must vanish
not soar. How many dreams

can I dream at once,
immediacy the reckoning of solitude,
the running away, the chasing

after depletion? In her hand
she holds destiny like a scepter
to her mouth as if to sing

or suck the dream God
dangles near not,
she becomes the hole

a void fills when denial
vanishes like the sea
from a near zero slope

beach. Leaves fell
from aspen, birch and filled
my dreams with scatter until

seafoam then greenwater
returned, floating above it the leafy dream,
the hangdog face of God, and the denial

of the simple act of sex
she begged for, longed for, hated for
when she was hanging from my wrong dream.

A Tale of the Christ

I imagine an ancient street of stones placed a thousand years ago, the sudden embrace as when water overflows and the one not yours is taken, the adulteries and betrayals, cravings, flavorful flesh under many simultaneous touches, when whose hand or skin is touching whose cannot be known—all of that done 1000 years ago means nothing now unless something of those people lives on encrypted to eyes and understanding within the stone walkways, under archways, behind doors long withered and gone, in courtyards or in hovels. I think of Judah Ben-Hur gripping Esther on the rooftop garden of Ben-Hur's estate while biblical music plays, chords shifting as if the key of the music was changing, big shifts implying the majesty of Christian mystery as water turns to wine or blood, bread to flesh, desire to gratification where the scene takes place in a mansion whose courtyard has fallen to ashes and leaves, puddles with dark blue movie-light lit effects, and it means something now because it's Charlton Heston not Judah Ben-Hur and it's Haya Harareet and not Esther, and today they are old but alive and in 1958 or 1959 when they embraced on that balcony we were alive or nearly so, but we see it yet on TV.

But to think of the bones or ashes of the dead embracing on the worn stone streets or breathing air that cannot be still is to dream of phantasms, to fail at living, to blaspheme something that seems sacred or not in existence, and such clutching cannot be the same as our sexual rigors and postmodern annexations because what survives from the past is what the mind and spirit need to feel immortal, which is not the flesh nor the desire but an inner tension between scared and scared, there can be nothing like the look Heston gives over his right shoulder looking down at Haya with the weight of dominant chord changes and the slightly off-expressive Middle Eastern temperament of the violined melodies, darkened skies, darkened skins, as one passion is spelled out before another, Haya the Israeli beauty, Heston the gun-toting gun-loving bombast whose Hur-blue robe is on display in someone's collection.

We alone are left to clutch at one another, penetrate and stroke, make wet the other because what becomes of us will never be played to a background of 50,000 extras and special effects, framed by 3 hours 41 minutes of spectacular, filmed in never-ending Technicolor or digital fancy, and neither one of us will be played by anyone else but us once you are burned or buried and I am languishing in the mud of Joppa Flats, not played by anyone, not by the likes of Charlton Heston and Haya Harareet.

Shagbark Rattle

My earliest memory is being sinkwashed.
Memory mine alone. Two others in that house: Running
into the living room when the Shawmut
ad came on, the Revere Italian
playing indian, and when he raised
his hand in greeting so did I;
the other the low Spring sun
through the dining room highwindow,
slow song trebly with violins playing on the Kenmore,
reflections from sun rays
polishing the oak floor and raising dust motes.

The third's partly mine, clearly story's.
Father just home in his blue 1948 Pontiac,
Mother panicked, asking him to hoe
the rattlesnake sunning itself under the shagbark tree
in our front yard not 3 yards away from the shiprock
he left there, too big to move and too shapely,
to death. This is clearest.
Pontiac sold when I was 6 months old—
Sight and story memory each as solid
as the granite shiprock, each as slinking
as the snake flinched from, each as clear-skinned
as my back in the sink, each as blinding
as the sheened floor, each as sober
as the falsified indian hawking Shawmut.

Our number is still memorized:
Fireside 6-2926—to recall it takes
the dropping of a needle
on a record it's so old-fashioned.
Infidelities of sight and memory, only the story
dug into the hole beneath the shiprock,
nose to rattle behind that snake is honest:
clearest thing I see,
furthest thing from truth.

Management Techniques Using Weeds

It's good to see the world revolving again,
as if it were making periodic progress,
with then again some regress. I think

the foam that slips across the bay
or rolls like dust bolls onto the piled dirt berms
are enforced by wind cycles fomented

by the revolving world. One of these dandelion
heads of bay foam seems to have blown
into the car window and onto your nose

where it is trying its darnedest to remind
me of how you might look in your shower
after our first long night together

where the small details of the backs of your legs
(and source of the Nile)
shortens my sleep cycles

enough to . . . enough!
Poetry on sex is the final
sentimentality of the previous millennium.

Doesn't it seem like this:
the world going round—through lightheaded
intermediaries and manmade dikes—makes love.

Lingus

All poetry flows from the mouth—
breath divining rhythm, word shapes and clicks,
warmth and moisture of the soul,

tongue wetting the lips, complicated shapes
making complex sounds, tasting what nourishes,
what excites, sweetness of other mouths

after rich desserts, bitter fluid from just-whetted
genitals, shape feeling and palpitation,
pushing and prehensile pulls, licks

such as performed on frozen slush
or beneath the hood; teeth, white
as few things natural, sharp as dull knives, unyielding

and several making them robust. I've fallen
for women just for their mouths—words,
shape, movement, what they could do down

there. Trust enough to risk the teeth, explore
her, tongue that makes everything it touches
large, teeth in many configurations. Some say

it's the complex brain that makes language
and its feral half-twin poetry, but I say
it's the strangeness of the mouth

and its parts and variety of purpose,
its punctuation and profusion,
its genitalia-formed processes.

I say this: the brain is made to fuel
the mouth, fatten its nerves,
lick the last line off any poem.

True Dreams

I will make your dreams come true—
the words of untoward love,
unguided direction, bass-heavy

leavings in a shady spot where a statue
should be left alone to face its transformation
to lime. Your first move was by hand

—stopped there, and I made the promise,
and true they came, falling in love, falling
as leaves do sometimes swarming

and marshalling abandon
when the recent act is a mirror job,
falling in love micron sized bites.

I made them true, puppets move
as like they might think,
I've got links to make and shades

to pull, blinks to close, myths
to make up in sharp fonts
whose fat angles clutch at our breath.

Ok, you introduced me and all I did
is all I do, but your dreams came true
being a puppet, a toy, by your hand

and what I got was corn-fed,
cluttered—when hair was long,
was soft, reminiscingly real.

Touch & Go

I found you in the details,
by grains of sand, nibbles of rust

on the funny green of that bridge.
Or by drunks hawking woes, or

passers-by who know me and shocked
by my eyes, one dead and lingering.

Behind you in the woods it snowed
without accumulation, nothing

catches, piles, picks, shuts, lets
up you put up look up

and it's the same every time
when what's weeds blooms

like bee-liking roses, wild
wings. I've heard you sip tea,

heard you bathe in the sea
like any siren's sweetly singing

you've gathered the ashes by your side
and it's the talk talk talk, stores of narration,

and sirens blasting past in city streets
where friends see us, see it, small spandrels

beneath the string of the stare—people
who expect fewer small parts, fewer small pieces

to the puzzle, fewer clues and more news
from the frontal lobes. Details. Small facts.

Tell me when I touch down.
It's the detail of reality I'm missing.

Z Z

She lay there,
hump of her hip raised up double high,
her left hand between her thighs high up,
her right arm covering part of her breasts
in the high night heat in the town
of small delight.

She snored lightly,
just enough sound to tell me the night was off,
there would be no sparks tonight, no sweet
songs nor sweet word love, sounds
would be left untempted by her left hand.

I walked downstairs,
and switched on small lights, powered on
my obedient and watchful computer—
alone and longing for life,
I brought up this file,
the one that starts “she lay there.”
Upstairs the muse snored lightly,
her left hand hidden between her thighs.

Jazz Yard

Today the heat,
and I learned through signals sent through wires and space
that few listen to what I say, though many
in fact
will take the time to inform me of my shortcomings,
except some who like the clanging of one word on the next
the way a scrap yard sings at 8am some days.

I like the jazz dogs who roam the yard
and skip on 3 legs to the beat of scrap on scrap,
iron filling the role of percussion, the heat
damping the rings just enough to jazz them up.

A refrain of "who cares." I'm aware
that junk yards and jazz need excess
and what's wrong done wrong twice
is music beyond range.
Heat affects the body and how it reacts to sound
or sights. Today it's the sticking of one part to another,
the scrap that says "who cares" that sticks
to the part that puts words in files, lined up
in trains like thoughts on their way to the censor's
fire.

Today the heat,
and my muse left on vacation.
The fire is lit carefully, sadly,
and I'm left here sick & lonely of a home
trying on my own riffs
in place of real ones.

How Do I Live Without You?

The cool air that settles through my open door tonight
is pasted onto this earth from the golden black of space
which when seen from within and afar is the milky blended
blue and red of the damning equations that fell
out of no one's head when they were pretending to be god
before anything but pretending was.

Anvil Hopper

The idea
or everything. One night
or day beads strung and counted rosary
style. These choices seem abstractly
boring in both consequence and precept,
although I'll throw everything away
to comprehend the idea a night
with you conveys, give it the thought a raven
might in hop-flapping from one trunk
to the next while the maple leaves turn
up the faces on the bottoms
of their leaves to the rainstorm coming
in from the west on the heels of a shattering
cold front, as shattering as throwing
all those rosary beads away for an idea
that can't be written down with fewer
than 3 exclamation marks.

Tonight you sleep
unaware of the back-sheared thunder anvil
nearby, and at its top, this little idea,
hopping cloud to cloud,
that could mean everything.

Art Driving the Big White Bus

Sentimentality is creeping back into popular art,
TV shows showing funny romances movies
playing "How Do I Live Without You"
after a cargo plane lands on the strip in Las Vegas
killing dozens. Imagine there were two realities and part
of the day we'd be in one, then the other. Imagine
we could talk about each from the other and make plans
across them. Imagine one of them was life or heaven
and the other hell or death, and we'd play or kill.

I wonder what it would be like if self-interest didn't make
you stupid. As in, are you one of those stupid people
who thinks when a writer writes "you" it means you?
Suppose I said, "darn those Red Sox, are they ever going to win
the series. Well, whataya gonna do?" Do you think
I expect you to tell me what you are gonna do? Here you
means me as much as you or that other guy over there

standing in front of a knick-knack shop with a stuffed iguana
in it, tail in a hoop, mouth open like a mummy. What're you
gonna do about that iguana? Hey, I mean you, reader.
Hirsch says you're as much a part of this art thing as me. So
tell me, what are you going to do? Writer me a damned letter
(in the form of a villanelle if you can, you twerp)
and tell me.

General Love

Love is a car
—in a land with amber waves of grain,
where wheat is a bit player more living
than the main characters who
die at the start and die
at the end. Pity the car that took them there.

—in a land that shields secrets behind
sullen lines of yellow shafts
like protesters who can never leave their ground
but stand it. Love needs a place for us
to stare into, like the road coming up,
heat lines rising up, passion of sun wave
on asphalt in the cerulean desert.

—in a time when a back bench seat
pretends support, and the oddly scented night air
rolls down partly rolled up rear windows.

—in times of cheap gas, the smell
of it like unguent, a rapidly evaporating sip
in the belly made of steel, cooling in the heat-still
noon air.

Love is a car because its body is stronger
than desire, made of unimaginable
bits of unmoving leavings on the cell floor
called industry.

—in fact the legs that push and pump,
the hands that hold on despite the road
cling puppetlike to strings.

Love is a car because it becomes
the instrument of leaving,
motivated conveyance, a coffin of life
which mimics forever,
like love in the foreground,
with soon.

Winnepesauke

When I arrived—he was long dead
 (long dead to me)—we'd spoken last
 fifteen months before at the airport—goodbye
 was all it was—she—had exploded again—sickness
 I think now but obstinacy was my thought
 that night. A year passed.

When I arrived—it was hot—Florida
 is that way in mid-Spring—bugs flew
 and leapt, spider webs or just webs
 on everything—he'd replaced the roof just months
 earlier—himself—now I had to clean up,
 pack up—her.

When I arrived—she—pointed
 (to where) he died—it smelled of urine
 there in that shack—I put “to where”
 in parentheses because “pointed” and “he died”
 are the emotional centers and “to where”
 is just English—“get out of my way”
 were his last words to—her. She—
 knew he was very sick but thought
 it was just another fight—her favorite.

When I arrived—a man
 drove up in a 4x4—
 with a box—
 and a jar—
 it was him—she—
 signed for him—asked
 me to carry him away into my room
 which was really—hers.

When I arrived—in New Hampshire
 with—her—after hell,
 the insults and making me him—
 we drove past the boat in dock—
 the Mt Washington—they went every Monday
 —she—
 closed her eyes and wouldn't look—said—
 he loved that boat so much—she—
 couldn't look at what he loved so much.
 Nor will I—
 look at what he loved so much.

Again and Again

With the smallest steps
we run ahead.

When your head will not turn toward me
we walk as one again and again.

Again and again we twine
after carving goodbye.

We know low hills
and anthills upon them, ants
who bite
when we lie
again.

We have seen
the end of the river, how it flattens
out broadly—as thin as mist made plain—
before tearfully entering the sea.

We speak
and the cage beckons again and again.

Again and again we stain
ourselves with continuity.

How I hate
 concepts.

You have found, been found,
one who is lain upon.

I go on down the hill,
down the hill
that falls
to the sea,
again.

The Womanly Curve of a Feather

Today leaving takes center stage,
a weakness exploited, the gift
like that of a bird landing on a finger
taken away by startle. Both times

I left you, scales holding
exoticism in one pan
held the duty of being
somewhere in the other.

Leave me this time.
Turn. The back of a head.
Make you wonder
about the passing of light

into shade, how small
the mottles. When I last
left it was into a clown
crowd costumed fully

for fun, everyone in shades
of difference from being, children
even in tender pretending,
in their continuity of moment

to month to memory
and it made me to blame.
Today two birds came to my door,
and when I opened that door

they raised their wings,
held them curved, feathers
spread as if to fly, pretending
to fly, pretending.

Overlooking Munich

Below, forest tufts stand shocked
straight up, thin fragmentary patches
of farmland in green colors, red
roofs, wavy streets and roads, some towns
walled, but always a black-roofed church,
and we descend toward Flughafen München
through clouds scattering, my thoughts
are on the city miles to the south,
in the park made of scattered debris.

But what this trip to the airport means
is nothing, what the stopover intimates
is nothing, the reason for coming
is no reason at all, no part can name
the whole, nothing signifies by anagrammatical
pointlessness.

The fragments of woods lay as if sculpted
or drawn in calligraphy, lay 3-dimensional
as if words or a message, or messages.

Well, the potentialities are the point,
the possibilities that might be are as if they happen.
The red roofs are so familiar, so is that park—
twenty miles to the south, in a town now whose familiarity
is fading as the city does in the thickening haze
as we drop down to burn off patches of rubber from the tires—where
nothing can happen,
nothing might happen,
& nothing will happen.

When I leave, a rise up, the air which seemed clear
coming in fills with mist, maybe small tears in the fabric
of farmland. A concrete highway lies below,
the same hue as the haze, but brighter.
Soon the farmlands fade, the kanji woods fade,
and all that's left is a winding road
away, me not on it but above it,
and now it's gone, too.

Christ's Pre-Passion

Lordy, 9-lb magnet
and 9-penny nail—steel nail
of a sort seems like it's about gonna fly
'cross the table to the iron magnet.
Nail hammered 'to the table
ain't gonna move not never no
inch nor part thereof. Magnet's
gonna twitch one hair's breadth
of the way, gonna move jest
that much. 'n' Move
no more till rusts apart
it will.

Beyond Range of Vision

Dealt short life and loneliness
fortune tellers walk away,
even in Prague, cobbled city fashion-
wise off base, forgotten flash loneliness,
short dogs & leash
queens, luck amuck springing streets.

Kafka found here—fondness
transpiring the grave, bugs abounding,
12 experiments shall not be forgotten,
legs expired from freshness wrapping
failures. The short life is briefly
forgotten when 2 experiments
in loneliness go wrong
due to mechanical failure before any clue
is found dangling above the river run below
the waterhouse. A fortune teller
glimpses her palms and joins the writer
in a plotfull for topless queens.

Short message,
letters alone,
electronic writ
ephemera flakes.
3 simples,
one undone.

If life is this simple,
she representing everything
was seen swimming
far out to see.

Rhapsody of Funny Images and Sounds with a Funny Color Thrown In

With the sky the color of blue Bohemian crystal
with the Vltava the shiny sheen of oiled amber
with the weight of walking heavy on the memory
with the last time also the loneliest
with the weight of warmth like warm wine in winter
without the system whose centers run abreast the flow
without the wrapping legs are used to in these recent days
without the cravings for small steps imagined like a fiery tale
without the links that make life's little sense
without the remote sensing of the heart's desire from the least careful images

I find myself holding onto myself again, curtains opened on the rear
windows of people in flats,
the sound of aerobics in acerbic Czech,
the sound of singing transformed to jizzled shizz
by the trundle of electronic tantrums over its overtones.
I pray you find me the henna-haired woman whose widespread
walk was presaged in the icy quiet on Čertovka, winter in Malá Strana,
whose attention paid to detail was as increased by questions as this computer's
latency was reduced by the jerking twitch of my pinky on the ? key.

This is Prague Just for Us

Last Prague winter
air so cold it turned red
all parts of you, shards
of would-be mist chilled to razors
in the wind whipped your face,

and I think it had something
to do with how we clicked, let's
say—made a difference
to how many fingers you put
in my hands, where you wanted
me warming you and how.

This Prague summer
exactly like winter but
cold turned hot
sharp airborne ice heated
to swelling moisture filling faces
with reasons to change slow
putting up low places to pool.

The same parts on different sides
of equations are wiped away
it's clear Prague remains
air and moisture remain
the heat and movement have changed
and you?

Your fingers pulse slow
silence pools
some skip in your walk has subtly changed.
Across the way in the casually open
window a proudly tanned and hair-dyed housewife
prepares herself for her lover's arrival
combs her henna-ed back-length hair
slips them down
slips them off
drops her panties.

In Prague I write
this
miles from bed.

One White Tomb for Every Thousand Black

Franz Kafka's stone—
 his tombstone they say—
 is modestly small and white
 among the others 100 meters
 down the cemetery wall hard
 right from the entrance, but
 reflects his modest aspirations—
 whatever they were they say.

Those aspirations would be tremendous these days—
 though his writings frighten me I say—
 since his stone is taller than me
 and shaped in an inverted position,
 white like a kind of raw marble
 or smooth granite, and in front
 a small white rock garden
 with a granite or marble fence
 and gifts of stones and notes—
 dead parts of this dead place—
 left by people of low aspirations
 for sure.

Laid out in ivy-over-grown streets
 and scraped gravel boulevards
 and tall ivied elm trees—
 very tall, so tall that the sun is near blocked out
 and the blackness of the black marble is black
 indeed, and the ivy absorbs what little is left over—
 this city where Dr. Franz Kafka now resides—
 he cannot live there any more they say—
 is filled with secrets kept in black boxes
 as tall as Shaquille O'Neal
 (who is 7' 1" for those of you in another century)
 (he is black as well, 340 lbs—see
 the word "black" 2 lines up), secrets
 made so full of secret stuff we needed grave little wool caps
 to walk around in the yard, so any secrets escaped
 from the tombs that bounced into our heads
 wouldn't escape up to God—
 or that's what the man at the gate
 who fears Kafka says
 they say.

Sunsets Underlined

Sunsets say a lot about a place.
Compare four places.

New England pewter is just a post-sunset thing; I remember when young thinking kaleidoscope sunsets were a Pacific-dipping effect on our sunset. Sunset Strip. I tailed a Mustang once with those black and yellow California plates—a friend said girls were in it—down on Bridge Street. I had my bike and saw them finally—not blond. It was hopeful in 1966.

California, the sun just goes down. Sometimes the sky's a pink then red. Any Pacific-dipping effect is too casual here. I heard sunsets are no event at all, night's just a dip in heat. I felt that way once. The first highway I saw in California looked like Baltimore after a bad weekend, crabs out of season.

Tucson, Bisbee, Taos—sleek sunsets here. Think of stylish pink-green, a silver-streak cloud like expensive watch ads. The colors turn Southwest-like, maybe they'd call it spiritual. Probably these effects originate from Sunset Strip, but no connection I see. People here listen to Coyote, who signals death with godly metallic hiccups. The cool night sky smells of iron-blood.

Dachau & Prague: here are two places that scare death. In Prague the sunsets never happen or always happen. The cemeteries here are miracles of passing woe. Oily but without smell. I snapped a picture of the Vltava once and it came back only reflections reflected, like two infinite mirrors with 0 in between. Dachau sunsets are like cymbals crashing—either it's sunny or it's night. Work hard and free yourself of transitions.

☞ ☞ ☞

Sunsets are placed by heads in the sky—
live with them, live under them.
Live in their cracks—that's all they are.

Paler

Where do people go when they run out of ideas?
Is it a place built like a garden but shaded like death bags?
Are there shades of green that cannot be seen by open hearts?
Is goodbye the same as delete?

Tell me something that you don't believe
but tell it with a sensuous mouth.
Move like a samba past fallen twigs
to me and raise the hackles of old mothers
who forget, only forget.
Listen to the wind whose blowing turns
to rack-pounding, keys blowing loose
from unbuckled pants.

Let's buy each other things that sweet
-en, -en, -en on the lower steps of passing
out. Let's find a key, let's find a lock,
let's stand before still the door,
let' hope. Why is innocence un-
something? Uncircumcised,
unhappy, unlike,
until?

One day beside the mountain
I wrote it. The disaster is
I still remember.

Street Sign, Orange, of Great Teaching Power

No stopping 100 feet
on & on
the sky fills with such a clear aspect of no
single memory, art taken into the mouth
crunches, teeth bend—that's how you know
sentimentality
seeps out under cover
needs evaporation
forms anvil thunderheads
hails upon the masses
who flee—100 feet as 2—fleet
to the shelter of old war horses
to know art. The poets sing
“this is art” “this is art” “this is art”
like as not up is down.

Sentimentality is the odd duet
of art against memory
an interval of irrational size
somewhat less than 100 feet
the size for the crowd who would embrace
embrace and kiss
kiss and sing a sad song
as the lover turns and walks away
becomes the cottonwood in the river gully
turning the merely sad
to lingering art.

Plainstone

When I arrived—expectations black
 with a little white in it—the thing was long dead
 (long dead to me)—she—pointed
 (to where it was) tossed—on fine
 sand ready to absorb—at the edge—
 no box—no jar—the sea of heroes
 touching it—turning it of-wetness
 beautiful—she—tossed it here—
 let-fell from her hand—packed-up
 sponged full of—her—small-sized
 last words, just another fight—her favorite.

When I arrived—she—had walked
 across the mountain small though it was
 as the rather plainstone—she—
 carried part of—her—not
 me—signed for stone
 just months earlier—was really
 —hers.

When I arrived—a stone left—
 already washed into sand—
 I asked—her—plainly
 black with a little white in it—
 toss, fling, throw
 —it far away—
 into a sea flowing with heroes—
 where it—the I—could rest
 in pieces, dissolved
 bits, bits of sand—plaything
 for children—bed for lovers
 —thing on the bottom, but—she—
 dropped it—catpawed by the sea—
 harping plain and beautiful, pleasure dancing.

When I arrived—outskirts—
 the little stone had turned from wet-beauty
 to plain, lying on fine sand washing into sand
 —(she—wouldn't look)—
 where I expected a symbol—
 plainstone, warmsea, a footstep—none—
 lost up the beach.

Symbolics

On the beach
wet stone black with white bits

warm salt sea upon it
fine sand washing into sand

across the small mountain
but not back

what woman with many years of nakedness ahead
has dropped it here

telling some old man
so be it

Nothing All All

Nothing is left to say:
all the poems have been written
all the poets have flown away

Dull is pursuit in the beauty of language:
all that's written is written quick
all that's said is sufficiently said

Praise the wrong things:
all unwept so far will remain dry in spirit
all unheld are enough in pain unswept by tender tongs

Place the spirit in symbols:
all symbol stones wash away
all requests in praise of self remain sufficiently unwritten

Dull is the way of all distinctions:
all spectators have made their final boarding
all cold all full all not only

Nothing is the rest I take:
all the poems have been shuffled
all great lies are made from their words realigned

Car, Waves, Road

In the dream the tongues are rhythmic,
overwhelming forces. The road falls
down from rockpile slopes, grass, & glades

to stony gullies by the unstill sea—
moonless night, oceanic phosphors
in the heavy curls make the only light save

headlights fixed in relation to my car,
seeking pointing-like with fingers or arms
outstretched sleepward. In the dream

down the sea-aimed road I drive ,
make my timing match unmatched
waves washing over and upslope,

dumbwise, trying like decay
to wash me from the script of rock
or grassy depressions whose arrangements

or colors signal like clouds, lowlike.
The waves are aimed at me. Like a start
they seem to disappear whitewashed

before firstlight, recede, drop their storm sense.
The waves, instead, grow, and my only choice
is who they are or maybe when they'll catch me.

Making Fun

Where there's heat, there's desire
to lazy thought, romanticizing
the off pastel band of green between
the eggthin shade of pink at the horizon
and the light French purple in the sky—can you

bring some cool, bring a way to sleep?
Climate more suited to long views,
far-off places darker, cooler. Things that wave
in thinnest breezes grow on the hope
of eventual rain, designed to withstand
hell's wind. A man and a woman are not

one. His desires match hers like a 7-long
string of tails. Her desires are piled beneath
birdsong and wind secrets. On the cottonwood
I'm imagining, a blackbird dangles its feathers,
sings a rusty song, tweaks its head round

in funny jutting circles. I've made a line
of corn crumbs leading to our bed,
and perhaps tonight that blackbird will light
on our pillow. If it's true that a man and a woman
and a blackbird are one—hell,
forget the f--fangled blackbird!

Peloton

Today I found the role I play
in my own life. There are 2 observations:

1.) ...

I do computer research,
I play lead guitar in a rock/blues band,
I do management coaching,
I am a minor organizational guru,
I ride bikes,
I play volleyball,
I play squash,
I write essays,
I write books,
I write poems,
I make love,
I am a father (twice)
I've been a husband (twice)
I'm an only child.

In all these things, B+.
Got there fast. Pretty good at them.
Surprisingly fast study.
Look at the length of the list.

But not so great.
One or two notches down.
World's most famous second rate computer scientist.
Good poet for a computer guy.
"The guy can play guitar real good
for a management consultant."
Almost kept up with that peloton.
Inattentive father.
Objectifies women during sex (jeez, we're just fucking after all)
(No excuses)

Alright.

☞ ☞ ☞

2) ...

Not many friends.

Two (count 'em) two

ex-wives. One kid per wife.

They start off stripping before I get home,

end up on the other side of the bed,

in their clothes,

wide awake,

all packed.

lawyer hired,

papers already filed.

Listen.

Center ring.

Walkaround music.

Spoiler. Rennet best case.

Aspirer to peletons.

Essay on Reluctance

Idea of romance
is sex. Diminish desire.
Deny. Visual objects. Seeing
it is not doing it.
Attention paid
is debt incurred.
Clutch her body,
fleece her grave
dress over bones.

Today we discussed our sex lives and decided we lived in different centuries.

Prefer a motor.
Prefer herself.
Prefer facing away.
Prefer night.
Prefer hair.

Today we discussed our sex lives and booted the Rage driver instead.

Render fat, render
fractal-based scenes
in games. Act of sex
is the romance of hyperventilation.
What we see
around is what we see
into. Ammo
for pure sleep.

Today we discussed our Sex lives and our hands closed simultaneously.

Proving in the evening
after discussing our Sex lives with
Romance, Romance is having sex
with Ideas.

Chaos Theory, Part 1

The door is closed,
each one has been closed.
Sitting above the rooftops are flocks of lowing birds,
communicating? No, just acting, reacting.
All around, farther than communication can happen,
faster,
small pockets of activities merge into larger ones
and sudden displays of sense
appear. Complexity is mere
large numbers of small
senseless things added
together to a soup of more senseless
acts.

I am part of this. The closed doors too.
Flocks of bird may have closed them.
Flocks in unsense. The latest medical theory
is that this is how the human heart
beats.

Mirage Ceremony

Stolen night
still dark but taken,
another night without
the small fire in the wood fringe,
spread.

Ink and oil unmixed
lie bookside,
inside you a flourish builds
then turns.

Cakewalk over, the lights stun
but it's only sunrise and its mirror-return
from the house you left.

Stand and turn, steal promises,
write without ink but make it hurt.
Like an open book you turn and
sigh, sight unsensed, spread with smiles
now spread alone.

I am the cliff you walked off once,
I am the cliff you approach as a wall of stone.

The Poem as Pineapples and Hula Girls

An illusion, a poem.

The man who invented them is dead,
his first were made of silk—light and loose,
decorated with girls and pineapples.

The first poems, combinations of two unrelated items,
were loose checkered songs sung by plantation workers,
and nightmares or day illusions made of bright silk.

The poem is the ultimate expression of delighted
creativity. You can't help but
feel good after reading one.

Critics can't begin to describe them: flowers,
reds, blues, and bright. Feel-at-easy.

The mind reals.

Imagine poems for under a dollar
made of rayon. Leisure and decadence
in a package no larger than a startle-awake
nightmare.

You know it's real when a poem
has travelled somewhere, cold and dark,
talks out loud.

Speaks to nonsense
speaks to you.

Lies, Night, Tracks, Lies Again

Tonight there are not too many ways to fall for lies.
The air has grown still through cricketry, let rise its heat
to the heavens as if running. Have you noticed
that lies are bound in prepositional phrases, in direct objects,
sometimes in the verb, but truth hangs
from verbs like meat on a beef leg. I'm not much
of anything, not the captain of a ship
whose cargo makes rare spices into rotten meat,
whose sails shine like a depthroated O.

If you find things in lines, find things here. Find
that this is really about loneliness, the work-made-free
encounter that plies like windblown ships in beer ads.

Or imagine the stick match lit past midnight
struck on a box-car roller door, imagine the start
of light and heart as the horses shift from leg to leg
wondering at the sickness at heart lies told
to forgive loneliness beget. A sound
from the deep, a sound from the throat, sounds
not in protest, yielding to the lie
held within.

Outlawless

Read and learn—the poem is the purest window
but being pure it combines with nothing
least of all understanding;
being a window it conveys the essence
blocks the substance. Nights
we walked; by tracing each path,
by calculating with care, by figuring
the tiled world the point would be clear
pure, incombinant. unduplicitous.

The poem is the avoided, the path
that avoids fear by fearing louder,
that makes music with amplified pieces
of noise. You who read this believe
its path has led to you.

The pure fear, the innocent too—
only the outlaw sleeps well;
here's my job: play for keeps.

How Fortunate the Man with None

Talker without listening:
how could this come to pass?
The way is down an asphalted slope
to a lego-shaped barn or shed,
roads bent on intersecting frame
their destination. Dark but bright,
cold but cheered by their lightened touch.
The child walks cautiously ahead,
runs to the roads fleeing slight shards
of adulterous touching.

The shed though is home to homeward-marching
trains. One waits. The courteous conductor
signals him on, doors slish shut on him and clowns,
and what could never be imagined
nor ever stopped
has been avoided
like the trainlike meaning
of clipped and framed images.

When the Truth is Played, Baby You're Mine

Like you I like
silences and the stillness
of uncomfortable

pauses. Slowdown. Shuck
dark, feign orbs.

Cameled pocks of water,
snaked—
vehement—
meandering.

Sweathanded fingers clutch
then—cool, reduced—ensnare.
Argument from reduction

as if it

matter-of-factly faces the rhythm of logic
beat out in ambient sand.

I mean, a river disappears
over there; we sit in its gully cut from the mesa
right here; and
right there a river returns.

Flow in equals
flow out.

What is the desert
if all it does is drink?

Inutile Reflection

Tonight we accepted secrecy,
chose the drying slope of grass that preys
above blue-turbulent flow, dragged
our selves by the bark, head-drooped branches
above us shining downcast.

Vapor lights collect moths and smallflies,
mosquito hawks and gnats the way I
suppose I've collected you. The light vapor
lights spit across the slowing river turns its surface
oily or languid, you lying like Lillith afraid
to be named so surely by my fingerpads.

Those gathered insects intent on light
slightly swirl like the first of snow tempting
fall, and so I find it no surprise that downstream
of us the half-finished
bridge is imperfectly
perfect, and as useless.

Intolerable Temptation

No one goes down
this road, we sit under the wilting shagged bark
eucalyptus meltingly sweet mixed smells
with tarweed and other exotics here, the place
you come from like wet mud. Here dust
from all sources fills the late day air to gauze

and your gaze is down the road toward its end
or the sunset. For hours we've sat making bed
or reclined our heads stuck

in idle. Soon you'll choose one
end of the road and I
the other—the only thing true
may take a turn for false. No
one goes down this road.

Infertile Encounter

Huddled in a hard fall
rain beneath a small bricky shelflike
overhang 3 storeys up
just before dark in one of the more northern small
Canadian cities, what was she waiting for,
waiting so long, soaked in a scarf tied
under her chin and over her hair,
in a long wool coat—that time of Autumn
in northern Canada when snow deserves
to fall—that she would not stand in a doorway
nor wander down the street nor cross
beneath a vapor light, that she would turn
every few minutes to look down the street
the other way, pause then look back again,
minute after minute for over an hour,
and I could only imagine the streaks
down her face, the small pockets of warmth
hidden beneath her clothes, the season
made sharp through the efforts of bright lights
on poles. I can never ask her, I could not walk
down to her, I cannot turn
to her before or after bedlove—
the vapor light did,
and still does,
seem more important.

In Tucson

Heat so dry it's just a just-warm sheet to the skin.
 Clouds formed by storms many iterations
 of simple rules ago levitate making fun of cartoons
 and heaven theories. In fact, fighter trainers care
 neither way about them. A pretty woman or several
 found the sudden pour overpowering and shed
 cultural standards and clothes to soak in rain
 and stares. Later they spoke in monotones
 about nudity, O.J., and a retro video rental store
 in the Valley, meaning LA. My sudden claim to fame
 was lightning gazing, or rather turning my head correctly
 with respect to the overfed spectacle. But appealing.

In the background, women spoke of making money
 through the slave labor of software developers while the angel
 asked quiet questions urgently—quiet urges. In my room
 the Southwest decor is tinged with chinee (to dredge words
 with the intent of shock), an encarpated lamp, gold on black.
 Somewhere to the East or West my love beholds
 the lightning strike which to me just flickers this computer
 screen, off then on, the one on which I just wrote just wrote.

Ineluctable Interment

In Colorado near the spiritual flat
of Kansas we laid like fossils by the cottonwoods,
on the shovel of land we had, in the soon sunset
that inhabits the plains or prairies and holds
in the still, and the rising dark had risen
past us already—but an amber red circle
leapt up trees and meager milo,
a light beacon as if from a shone lensed
searchlight set on low, and in time
it encompassed us, seeming spare as if diluted
or uncompressed, a red made from the amber
of pine or fir sap. The red in her hair flared
or filled with ultra-earthen shine. This time
of day the air fills with motes or mites,
small flecks and flies or a blend of pollen,
a sullen softening made of living or lifelike
bits. Sample me, sample the reddening soil
and hair. The circle was of a size to encompass
us, our stand of wood, our ragged but rugged house,
a quonset, and implements and tools, or things
whose names may be forgotten. Follow that line of light
up and back to the mountains, not high, but back
up to the fir in the notch and in the crook of branch
and trunk a small cup or bubble of sap formed the lens
that sprayed that 100-foot circle around,
that marked its path through small-living
or lifelike things in air surrounding us.

Today, though, in the plane above that small-circled
place, the sun is setting as it does and it does, and I'm heading
east away, toward the rising dark in the direction shadows
go. There are no circles of light anymore. Decades. Decades.
There are things you may ask about the spirit light,
the amber light, the red becoming dark red in the hair,
the encompass of the circle. But I tell you it's all nothing now.
Light simply cannot—do you understand me?—light simply
cannot do such things anymore.

Incessant Broken Freezers, Click-through Sonnets

Statement:

Senseless to write poetry
on a computer connected by phonline
to the Net in lightning. Better
to write you instead. Shakespeare did crap like
that, but the lightning could only strike him, and hunoz
what goofy triggers got to him:
notes on foodstuffs
scattered like chopped ham on the table.
The floor freezer warped by the cold useless
from heat leaks. That's inspiration enough. Things fly
apart. Lights dim but the computer is battery backed.
What about his paper? Too sensitive to water? Lightning
flashes outside, lights seesaw inside—seesaw
of insight, the rising swell of stupidity
that love depends on, rising rainwater
as if a final flood, rising senses and eyes. Sonnets
have held our attention too long Mr William Shakespeare:
the statement, the turn,
the final couplet—that's where that damned "click"
came from. Experimenting they said. Here's an experiment:

Turn:

You stink. Your language dried up and the airborne
debris makes nice sunsets. And damn it,
we're the ones who have to read about them.

Here's your goddamn clickshut couplet—fix my damn freezer already:

Damn you WS, damn your foolish
sonnets, damn your goofy language stunts.
Click! (not even 3 lines, you loser)

Infusion of Age-End

Things here are old.
Dictionaries last read 40 years ago.
Wood so old and unforgivenly kept it melts to touch.
Clocks heaving from one second to another.
Machines made more of bluster than engineering.

Things that are old
need to be coveted, fondled, touched rarely, but with respect.
This house heaves, breathes slowly; it was put together with clumsy care.
Thoughts were used here. This building holds. Tonight
I cannot say whether my way is east or west. In front of me

a doorhandle, held in opening a million times, will wear
out after 3 more touches, though it breathes as a handle will
normally through the night. And
when it is finished, its last grains of brass will float away,
the way things do when they stop
being old.

Inconstant Repetition

Tonight the night
came calling, the heads
of women blended, their clothes
moved in unison. Bending
circuits, overacted
upon strings, primality factored
into winces. Circles—
irrationality and returns,
circle parts skirts drape
off, slide off,
parts like a searchlight.
Sleek blend of synthetics,
rhythmics, one thing, bent
back things. The searchlight
came calling, factored into the night
the silence of clothes talking back.

Inside Rock

How does the albatross die—
heartstop and plunge? The heart
is involved.

The sap is blood
to the tree, engloved in bark and hardwood,
maybe we see it in the after-amber

when mosquitos filled with blood
rest as the albatross never does. Imagine
sea waves—40, 50

feet, wind like a particle accelerator,
linear, ring—the albatross
doesn't, can't,

planning an approach to wind
that avoids anything but the stiff
yet flexing wing holding in place

that makes death fondly
appealing. No, the death
is prosaic—think of the bird

itself, the size of the wings,
the size of the heart, how both
shrink, how the will to hover

over high waves shrinks
when the albatross steps
into the steep-sided granite

hole out from which it
cannot step, cannot fly.
How fortunate such holes are found.

Informed Mourning

Good cemeteries live,
 the best cannot form parts
 of a metaphor. Consider the one
 by Johnson's Gas and Plumbing.
 I noticed it prowling the chainsaw
 sculpture place by the side of Route 16—
 5' bears, 7' bears. Take
 a trunk and chainsaw the big parts. Heavy magic
 markers mark smaller chunks, 16
 lb hammer and thick wood chisels...
 The slope is cut into a sand bank,
 at the top, the granite post mark
 of the edge of a cemetery. It is a patch.
 I found the frantic tries at Eliza: died 1834, ÆT 12 yrs,
 6 mos. Eliza 2nd: died 1839, ÆT 3 yrs, 8mos. People
 extremes: Jesse Thing. The day is a spectacle.
 Sun in the last quarter. The patch is part
 of a hill. Walk from the lowest part of the patch
 toward sunset and the patch ends just below a hilltop.
 Fifty graves maybe, but the ground swells
 every few feet in a 2' by 6' mound. Uniform.
 Patch as island. The hilltop was taken for Route 16,
 the others for a camp store, the chainsaw place
 and Johnson's, a home—something
 like that. Enough to walk, enough
 for a warm afternoon, enough to believe
 those coffins rise pulling the patch
 with them, enough to reject metaphor, enough
 to see the cutbanks linked to the chainsawed
 chunks. O, it was enough.

In Hand

River seems low
as if yesterday's drenching downpour
ran full out to the sea, skipped its usual flow,
or the tide skipped its backward flow
today, didn't push back. River

seems a scrawny dog, rock-dense bones
protruding, channel-skin browned and dry
where riverreeds usually prowl. The wind
has picked up, raking into close furrows
and worry lines the river surface, except
three or four spots that remain mirror
calm even after minutes and cloud-light
changes. These reflect the bridge

green and foolish atop high & dry piers, river running
more to sand and mud than mountain runoff.

Today it's a kayak's river.

Is this what's meant by walking arm in arm?
Thin and cautious, wary of existing continuities,
abstaining for incautious over-runoff,
four calm spots among light sprigs
of craziness. The constancy of birds.

On the other side, nearby the little red
bridgeman's hut sheltering the logbook
of boat-comings and boat-goings, turnings
of the crank that opens this bridge,
over by there—is that where we can walk
for one day hand in hand?

In Order, Too

Silence takes too much energy
but you have grown into it
the way a heavy runner will eventually
run all day upslope on thick legs that shrink
as he does. How many ways are there
to interpret null? In as many contexts

as there are the ways are infinite, nil & all
being darkened twins or separated-at-birth
coincidences—let's favor surprises. Your best surprise
is which part of the overall silence
to attend. Of seven blackbirds all
alike, which one holds song?

When Jimi played, God
sat silent and brooding—wondering whether
the image thing went too far. When Stevie Ray played
I fell silent though the heaters in my tubes
were ready. Who

shouted? Of all the things to make sense,
the dark angles on the page and ill-sorted sounds
seem the least likely. Where can there be prettiness
there, or her shallow twin,

beauty? Should I fit
you like a hand in a hand, or will arms
do? Tonight the square parcels line up
below—the plane happens to take
me away from where you are secretly
wishing when all it would take

is 9 lines in the right order

Incredible Essay on Language or Stuff

Suppose the fellows found it exciting
 to slaver themselves with your smell
 by rolling themselves in the last 3 rhymes you wrote—
 take you onto themselves like skin in skin,
 of cannibalistic forays but without the food part.
 Bitter tinge to the odor—blank or free—sweetly
 smelling of petunias or jasmine—what can it mean
 for who what you are or wrote? I'm supposing

you've selected the roundworm defining you.
 Aren't you sick of the prepositions, how they like to
 line things up, show a direction of reproach, take up
 valuable sound counts when you want every sound to count?
 I'm taken aback by the cultures who value planning ahead
 enough to think to write a question mark upside down
 at the start of a sentence that actually turns out
 to be a question. Getting back to that smell. You've

no doubt thought about the sexual implications
 of this. I'm indifferent to them, but wouldn't mind
 watching. Let's say that writing an upside down
 question mark is equivalent to "signalling". What
 signal does approaching with someone else's odor
 give off? You've noticed, no doubt

that signals and odors are both given off,
 and it makes you wonder how much master
 planning those language designers gave off.
 Look, no one sat down and designed the languages
 we speak. No one did. So how much fucking
 sense can what we say make? I don't know,
 but I wouldn't mind watching that.

In Touch with Reaction

Erotic photos from the 1800's
evoke flesh full and only
the breasts and buttocks show clean—hair,
hair, hair (arm pit, arm pit, crotch pit) and coarse.

In one the photographer is level with her knees
while she reclines with her left hand's thumb touching
where the clit should be, but the thicket
of unaltered chemicals on his plate reveals just what is wanted:
nothing. No smiles and the use of darkness harkens
to night. Things in the night go stupid
when they bump. There is something, though,
important about the way breasts hang
when her body bends and her arms come
slightly together, something that makes meaning
less common or anyhow puts the perfect
proportion to it. It's
involuntary how the palm reaches up
for the nipple in these cases.

The coarse dark pubic hair of a slightly older
dark-haired woman no matter how soft and wet
underneath it is tells every man who investigates
there that this is mother country. I've read

something funny about this,
it concerns silence too,
what the poets call stillness.
It's about the possibility of constant
ecstasy and what this means for creation,
what it means for the image thing.
Who makes things.

One night I touched her leg—
nothing happened, no comment, no rejection,
no welcome. The next thing the train door closed
between us. It reminds me of places, and how
they take on the stench of what happened to them,
and how one day all that's left will be
what we've done, and the only images
left will be the ones with key parts
untouched by reaction.

Infidelity of Sound Warnings

My back's against a willow's trunk
the time of day when the dimmest visible star
is not yet visible, but what can such stars

tell me? Across the meadow and choked
marsh pond a cutbank—the freight
train moves at a snail's pace south to north

reaching for latitudes that bring on steam
heat in the conductor's quarters even mid-spring.
It reminds me of us the rattling and light

screeches the metals make against each other
and the firm shaking of the boxcars' hips.
Is this the way dreams leave? Through the open

window of the conductor's final quarters
a dim light shows a showgirl's breasts
but it's too far for me to see. Leaving,

the trains rhythmic slight disturbance
sounds fade not to silence
but to the murmuring background

rising roar of frogs and crickets
and rising dark and hanging branches
that sound and look and feel of me.

In Light's Grasp

Stay with me tonight,
ragged group of moths,
beside my nightstand, outside
the screened window in the small bitter
white circle of an ill-chosen bare bulb
stuck in a fixture stuck
in the wall. Mid-summer.

Your wing filaments splash
a mothy dust in the air—illuminated
sprays or perhaps smaller motes or bits
of dust. Small metallic bangs
against the screen. Hotter smacks
on thin bulb glass. Stinging
heat. Singeing
heat.

Later I will tire
of the loneliness of moth company,
the wet heat will keep me above the sheets,
a pillow will be clamped between my legs
for comfort and to keep air
between them. Later I will snuff

out the nightlight outside,
don't I wish for such a switch?
Moths will fly away one by one,
and I will be the one
to greet the next persona
of the lonely.

In Cold Blood

Behind me panic has risen
as the warm liquidblue sky
has suddenly clouded over
and a popcorn snow
has started to hail down
on us. As I bring my collar
up and pull on a skull-hugging
balaklava, a thought
such as clutching your breasts
from behind you as we lie
under layers of feather blankets
in the depths of Bavaria
hails down on me. If only
you weren't you,
I weren't I,
this place behind me were not Dachau,
maybe I could hold you
thus.
Maybe.

Interpreting Snow

Nature has no erasers
nor has physics really.
More like pushing love back and forth on a wide bed
or an infant alchemist's seventh dream.
Eraser aren't erasers either—this is the power
of abstractions: to make us believe the way
Jesus tried to on the cross. The image
is of taking away, removing the way
a woman will erase her last garment. Snow

erases the opposite. Green copper rooftops
in Paris, a steaming ashpile after you've dumped
your coals out back, blades of grass
foolishly or optimistically green—all
these erased by sifted snow piled on
like sisters feeling something new tonight.
Additive erasing. Big art's

whiteout. Think metaphorically:
what can it mean when snow laces
over itself, snow piles on snow?
Does it mean the same thing
as when I lie on your back
and whisper two things
into you?

India Ink

Tall candlepines & the approaching storm,
squall line of sharp breezes. You bend
to watch me paint these images

in India ink on rough-hided washi,
one solid color black but softened—the stiff
inner hairs of the brush ensure

sure strokes, the soft outer wrapping
slaps on ink. In
all, the perfect way to sketch

the sound of breezes in pines,
and what after all are such sounds
but the movement of thoughts in the mind?

Guessed Guest

In the overwarm park with the crying drunk
and downtrodden arrestee, under eucalyptus shade
its blended smells with the sickly sweet tarweed,
by the fungal green bridge that strangely attracts,
near tombstones of writers and unknowns,
from the small offerings of tenderness rejected by jokes,
from men sitting on sidewalks begging in latin
and blank verse, from snips of food scraps, stories,
and accents, from the hobbling half-walk, beside
the soft strokes of pubic hair and girl-thin layers
of slipping skin, under trees made from old harlots
or piles of rye hay—

from all these pilgrimages
you've gathered the rags and straw
to make a scarecrow. It follows
you, stops when you do,
enjoys rain by falling
apart, talks only on Tuesday morning.
It likes to sit in fields,
adjusts its approximations.

Direct Seeing

Seeing is direct seeing.
Songs over and over, drier night
air pulled in by a fan in Merrimack Valley July,
The same song over and over, but it's a tape
and I need to rewind it each time and find
its beginning. Look at one picture
over and over. Dream of the one dance
over and over. Hour after hour. Midnight.
Two.

She would wear a suede skirt and dance the Pony.
She would sit like a queen. I would stand by the wall
of windows with drier night air pulled
in by the dropping of night.

After, I would listen to a song
over and over, or
two

songs. Seeing is direct
seeing. Once I hesitated,
thought, and the drier air
turned moist and floated up,
away.

Ink Worker

Consider ink workers.

Squid, octopus, many cephalopods—head
and arms and ink-spurting behaviors many
thought were camouflage or confusion—with
foes like fangfish or filetail catsharks
who wouldn't think ink was for blotting view
or stinging eyes. Now we know
better: The squid unfurls his fangled arms
and draws a floating, fanning self-likeness
in black or phosphorescent ink
the charging predator—spermy jaws, fangs, fear-reading
eyes—takes for squid and bites, lunges, ingests,
critiques for all the worth worth has.

Something Fishy About Physics

By the tank
in the aquarium, dark
purposely to reveal the tender
phosphorescence of midwater
shrimp, fish, crystal mosquito-likes
moving like arcane machines,
after walking with my head
turned back to watch the jellies
I stopped—
turned—she was there only
inches away packaged in pressure-packing
jeans and blouse, creamy hair and crystal-thin
skin, like something stumbled upon
beneath the sun zone, something similar
yet startlingly stranger-like and as phosphorescence
is to pressure-water so smell is to the urge
to reach for the pelvic crowns or shoulder blades,
slide the self-knot from top to bottom,
slide to the surface too fast to find her
gone in the distance time
makes out of moving.

Pain Arch

The eyebrows of beauty
gather together in button seams,
at shaved edges, brought
together by a salted taste,
green plum pickles.

The eyebrows of beauty
gather together in concave groups,
skirt shaved, insignias attentive
to hair, triggers alert,
brought together by the potential
of watching the whip

shadow slip the horse
forward, one of many
insignias of implication.

Cities Bombarded by the Care of Lifting

We wore love clothes
in the flat felled by firebombs,
percussives—rain sleeved dancing
clothes—by the bridge rusted to falling
for any trick to cross for free. We
could say the bridge was half-finished
because it could be salvaged, repaired,
a teardown or rebuilder. Feels
like the boredom of the natural world
is no match for the obsequiousness
of city remains and silence dispersed
by the meteoric ticking of concrete
doing its rust dance. We wore
out the pencils we brought to make love
conform to the arc history makes
through collapse, urge, untanglement
and the dreadful replacement of city
bridges by unreverberent green tones.
As you can see it's all a box, a column,
unprepared sentence streams and all.
All that's left is the click—click of concrete
falling an inch, the same inch I got without.

Leaving Her at the Door on a Rainy Day: Art Versus Thought

Absolutes are acceptable, relatives
not: existence versus
relation.

The day I left she
stood naked at
the door, I rolled
up the handcrank window on my
passenger side though
the rain had soaked through
the seats and puddled on
the floor.

She stood arms
folded beneath her breasts.
The thing itself. Naked
and dripping wet herself
from herself
and me. I left.

To hold two
in the mind and relate
them is an act of outright
abstraction, assault
on art. Sentimentality
bombs.

Two drunks stepping
by stopped, stared swaying,
existence not held
in mind but in hand.
Persisting in her mind:
relation of standing to
leaving. Her naked sideshow
was abstract. Putting the car in first
was real.

Out There in the Cold Distance

I've built three gates to pass through
back to you, shrine of ulterior warmth
rising from the cool mud-singed spring

air looming as a breeze by the sea. Obvious
as a mouth, no, lips is the last, closest—nothing
but red ochre on your lips or ash as

if fallen from a straw fire made cloud. Obvious
as the moon, no, the bitter coastline hugged
by sea debris and jugs, entered cold &

wet as a hag is the first, most distant—
much more than a pipeline wave
or a wave that breaks rocks & sprays

sand as much as sea-spray. Oblivious
as a monk, yes, serried rows of barley
betokening law is the middle, a hundred laborers

choose the weeds and make from their choking
hold a mould of fruit for favored plants—
this is the law & think of the path,

each gate two vertical posts and a flat
beam top, the simplest design, each
long day of hard work is made to pass

through a gate. The distance to each
from the other is such to cast doubt
on the wisdom of direction, & each

time there I've stooped with the laborers
whose lonely long spring day is rewarded
by yellow—or are they green?—cold low clouds.

As It Is

Beneath or within you can see still in her
the shapes of sharp looks,
rounded parts not as taut, smooth
places furrowed, suppose as a hill field

tilled and serrated into furrows.
Like any woman who admired flirtation once
she wears thin loose fabrics that hang
and reveal innocently. From this

her breasts are young. Any wideness
is hidden in her hidden thighs. Truth
is revealed only in one place—the hat
she wears crookedly as she works garden

fields on a hill upvalley, birch whites,
eye whites, whites in hair echo her forgetfulness
of where her home lies below when the day is done,
and she, unlike the farmers' wives, won't stop.

In An Order

The messenger came today,
stood at the door pausing

before taking in his free
hand a lilac branch from the bush

you cultivated before choosing
to live in bitterness, knocked and waited

until you opened the door to see
him hand you the lilac branch

aroma-full and laced in purple and green,
before handing you the letter

I wrote yesterday in an opulent hope
embodied in the arc of three things.

Elimination

Suddenly spring evening
leaps from the broom as I sweep
the garden stones, suddenly
thinking of it. The permanent faustian
situation alights. Our bodies stick

and crevasse—but night
eliminates body, a spoon
drops honey. Our souls,
dried honey in cracked combs,
one light lights another. Our

souls adhere—but day
eliminates soul. Evening:
Embargo. Crevice.
Glue. Suddenly
the garden stones stop.

In The Handcart

On the side of a busy road,
a discarded handcart discards
shadows in my direction. I
walk toward the declining

sun. In the park at the end
of the road, by a bare wintering
willow, a woman wipes her eyes, cheeks.
The cold has been carried here. I
am someone she never saw.

Paradox of Immotion

We lay beneath less cloud laden sky
than the oaks pretend, but one
sits still as froze foam. She
lies still. That cloud denies motion,
change, is fixed, a patch
of sky-only snow. She lies
still. The oak has paused to observe
what follows on. Many looks.
Nothing/nowhere. Sky Fixity.
The oak is sudden; the cloud gone.
She lies still. Is gone.

The Captain Has Fallen Overhead

Greywool pants hems mudspangled in stereo
syncopation: brown colorblood oak leaves,
greybark, (the one-foot pathway) mud tannin
soaking in hundreths of inches into her boots,

&

when I stop the luscious tapping funnels
to mono or fades behind soft snapfingers
punctuation (rain). After all, this fragment
trail trails tide ebbed to sugar black flats

&

it's just metaphor for the vegetable willow
green tip plunged one inch in such mud
as she reckons a spectacle's rainslaught
can liquefy. Urban woman on a heart's-whim.

Underground Movement

We've paid our respects to the parking
garage. underground with all its subhuman
smells, grease maybe or gas & oil. Exhaust
& fumes. Concrete brushed in waves,
circle parts, made to keep things—
all sorts of things—from slipping
down a slope whose largesse is a bottom.
Nothing there was touched by life
save life long dead as in oil,
leather, cotton fabrics stretched
thin & worn thin. Nothing
there moved save by combustion
which left behind exhaustion.
Oh, except for us, who made wishes
like half-candles & smoke wisped
up, goodnight is the luck of clear
afternoon sun air.

Caution: Artist at Work

Making a sculpture of rust
I started with one of iron
and as if one person stood
by the railing under a pier,
another joined and the two
walked off, something about
moisture, something about

air, something about events
that take a little too long
left the iron just singed
not gone. The satin finish
steelwooled on the surface
is now replaced by blemishes
like blisters, by the beginnings
of evaporation like leavings
of passion.

Seem

There is no magic to places
though the sentimentalists work
overtime. The small forest
clearing surrounded by pines
and overshadowed, glacial
stone set just so near its center,
small twig fire lit by the teenage
boy next to a hut he built
of branches and bits of scrap lumber
from the barn, on a winter day flurry
filled and brimming under escape,
small bits of warmth in a barren
landscape is now a rolling paddock
of mud and horseshit, the rock hauled
away and the trees down, burned
to smoke and ash, the hut
ground into the ground—no

magic place. Beneath the mud
where the hut once stood
rests the metal can inside a metal can,
and inside both is a plastic bag inside
a plastic bag, and inside both is the hand-
written letter in which I told you
once my feelings
in a place that seemed.

Imagine That

River as fountain.

Water released from all sorts of everywhere
contained in the confines of bank, safe
storehouse of slowly escaping convictions.

Heat transfer. albedo, convection,
evaporation, condensation—abstractions
unhelpful to our plan. Fountain

as meeting place, place for men
to watch overworldly women
work their bodies into silhouettes.

Or if a man died near here the fountain
could serve as monument and time
echo. As river the fountain is hidden.

Body of water and banks for stepping
down. Parts are hidden as many parts

are. Imagine the bottle floating down,
down. Imagine the paper within,
deep inside. Imagine the river that ends
on a sand plain, that spreads before
slipping down, confusing up.

And the bottle delivered as expected
to sand, but the wrong sand, very
wrong sand saying imagine that.

In Exile

I'm so impressed by your little green lights—in daylight they remind me of fountains or indigo stations. At night they cause the bottoms of my feet to itch unscratchably. For me the letters pile up, and though you haven't written in weeks it's time for me to write you. Or at least sketch out who you are. Furnaces burn brightly near the edges of your face, or is it your hips? Do the green lights signify the that of burning? *That* of it is happening? Even though I can't see you, my sketch has you not understanding. Like poets sworn off worn words the next fix is ubiquitous. Hold on, hold to what we got—broken is how we exist, the break in symmetry that enables something or two. Were we perfect for each other we'd blend to nothing. One light, is it turning? Turning round or color? Selfish on the inhale, selfless exhale, exhale, exhale.

Clodmaster

One could argue that my role is master—
like the plum-master who in expert lines
cranks life into the tree and blossoms
overhead that hang as if saddened
by the joy you feel. But what's more important
is the stick I hold, earned as no other has been,
and the hard clod of earth I strike with it,
passing by it on my way to you.

In Case of Stymie

In your city like mine the hardness of buildings,
the coral, the stinging scratchiness of the soles
of the feet are symbol of cranky silence
and underground passages. In my dream
you warmed your skirt on the surface
of a covered brazier, and within the quilts
you wrapped on top you warmed
your feet. We broke charcoal on charcoal
to hear it tinkle, smell its cud. In your dream
I was an urban bench carved under moonlight
after an English sunset. You would have said
my language frightens you, but my language
frightens you. Tonight the sunset alternated
with crashing waves curled in pipelines
and all we could think of were sizes.

Someday I'll revise you, make your city
more foreign, make your hair less human,
makes its color unprintable, averse
to photographic chemicals. This way
words will mean more.

Ferocactus

I found a place where the earth is red,
where green things grow with sharp whiskers,
where the color of lemons signals sharp lights.
where the sun near night becomes porcelain,
where the sound of a single shot shifts a ring of blind birds,
where soft dust from butterfly winds makes the delicate
meal you've always wanted, where strangers
happily exchange clothes by stripping
unashamedly. In this place I've grown
lost, and I wander from one small shade
to another as it moves from west to east,
my daily water supply is provided by shale
cups and barrel cactuses—the viznaga—fierce
and wild. By night I use its spines to tattoo
this note to you in dark blue fountain ink,
but the sun burns so hard the words
are hard to see by day, by night I hear howls—
metallic, linked to spines and sharp whiskers.
I can't tell. I can't tell you
how happy I am.

My First Hail Marys

When the green line
goes flat, disappears,
place the rosary in my hand. Ignore
the ugly shapes my mouth assumes,
the half-closed way my eyes stop.
Don't fix your stare on the wall's plaster
whose dents were made by deliberate ignorance—
there is nothing there but sorrow
even in its turning away whiteness.
Choose the bead you've chosen before
your special marker and place it
between my thumb and fingers, pretend
the words I'm saying after my last breath has left,
pretend joyfully. Turn to the trees outside
the window, the glorious ways their branches
branch exuberant in possibilities though dark
this dark evening; forget what I've forgotten—
the life I've lived and your part in it. It
means nothing to me, and I will remember it
forever.

Thin

Summer is thin
all things that think are thin
in summer—season of creation and contemplation
summer heat thins meals—
difficulty making makes sweats
thinness hiding in small
lines blunt meanings drown fear
in the wets of skin on sheets
where constant yelling, carhorns, roadcrush
pulls wet from the air—you're
so thin all's left
is the crotch punctuation
you grew back
muck your mind left
behind

In Arc

In whose arc does the little hand move
slow as a boat launch full of tons
creaking as all things manmade do,
clothes that change every day skin
like changing skin reflecting mood
the way the bottoms of leaves turn up
in rain or is it wind? Crows stoically
one color, herons shamedly one color
always except when tricks
are played. The hand moved little
because the fan needed to stop
because it began to sound like
brief words of wisdom coming
as if from the bottoms of black leaves.

Meeting Scene

In the park corner near dark,
summer, gathering
the insignificant: branches, bark,
twigs and tossed aside dried leaves,
grass and green weeds, combinations
of dead and live, I pile
the dead in chimney piles, room
for air to rise away angelic and light
the dead grass spurting yellow half-
flames and, smoking, light wood—
sizzle and crack, resurrection in the small.
I place the weeds—still, living—on,
and smoke seeps up through the rank
rubbish and makes smelly smoke—
smudge against mosquitoes—
rising up into the air and disappearing
above the park. Into this corner,
into this time, you've stepped
and sniff your greetings.

Unterment Ceremony

The women were left to untie
the bonds binding him to life
which pouted—leaving a trail
of mousetracks to show the way he came—
rattling death, there on a lark.

Not just clothes reflecting his smell
hanging as from a scarecrow,
nor his hair nor nails yellowed as summer
hay left by the barn last summer,
not even the ring he wore harboring
secrets for one of his liberators.

Just his name which they cut loose
from his eyelids and packed in a box
shaped like a puffball cloud
and let it fly twisting up like a smudge
that keeps away the biting things.

Indistinct Dream Bird

Imagine your wildest dream
spilling off a cliff fresh , still
fused with mud making brown
cascades falling to a pool you
can penetrate little if at all,
all hidden by all-graying fog,
all indistinct besides the crows
coughing their doubts in the fog,
whispering of the mud,
reminding each other of the days
when they sat in a row on branches
above the cliff reciting psalms
or kissing, small pecks. This dream
lies in your bed, its hand on your arm,
its breathing all hidden, its dreams
all indistinct.

On a Sentimental Aspect of Killers

We kill—all blood,
all bloodless. The kill is in us,
silver dark roads. Sniper
crouched on a rooftop, his Remington.
Radio says, “got him?”
“Barely.” Bugs in the lights, road deer,
slumping rats furtively dodging.
Birds dented by glass. Green glass
night shade. “Take him.”
Death does not wait.
Find this bag of tricks
when you contemplate
stochastic sight, predictive vision—rationalize
a rose the color of kill. I watched.
I cried two days of beauty,
from skill.

Unbearable Parable

This is the work of water-
color painting. Color mixed
in water, glycerine, homey-water,
a pesticide as preservative, gum arabic
or senegal is laid on absorbing
paper; water drunk in paper
leaves the gum and color;
hot from preservation heat
evaporates liquids leaving gum binding colors.
Think of it: evaporated water, and water
soaked into paper makes art,
and art is left to its own
lightfastness.

Secrets of Travel, of Work

Rivers and bridges, mountains, seas—do not give them new names.
They are as silly clothes or none, are no more than gossip.

Spend midday on foot; use a stick as a third thin leg;
save morning time and evening time for thought.

Wish for beds or mats you've never warmed, simple food
without excess drink, for poetry is the duty of man alone

and woman alone but the duty of man and woman together
is production. With simple food you can do anything.

Keep your poems to your pockets, carried as winged insects tucked
in vegetable cloth. When asked, make them fly away; when asked,

make more.

Instead of Love

I have taken your forgetfulness and grafted
it onto my love of detail and grand sweeps
in the hope of creating keen insight
into emptiness. Take plumtree lightlessly blue and graft
it onto the sequoia and create fruit birds only can reach.
I find at night the thought will come that
I should have crown-grafted not tongue-grafted;
in a rainstorm the thought will come that
instead of a bare clayearth patch I should have wrapped
it in plastic. But back to us, the sun drapes tree mantles with
increase and beneath the shade only dirt dares
invade our thoughts. The graft will not take, since
I have forgotten you, and you're mending the detail
I dropped on the path home which
is away from you, away from lightning, away
in every direction.

Could It Be?

The point of living is the glance,
walking along rows of briars, ducking
beneath thorns, nettles torturing the soul
through comforting sandals, puzzling
philosophers whose view of the soul
tends to head, heart, or gut not feet
or knees, the ports of nature biting
along the rows and ways exposing
narrow critic's eyes peeking up
in their own glance to the eyes
which dare glimpse the shining
body of Shifra whose backward
glance betrays a soul dripping
like semen down her legs.

On a Rise

Her hair is gunmetal grey in the dimmed enclosure
light, tinted light a redblond at the tips and her stance
is faced away and the curve disappearing between her legs
is the face-realm of the black in the soles of the feet.
She stands as on a stylite and the head has no choice
but envision the view behind her from behind her
from all directions to see how the pointing place
encompasses all. Look up to her to see the misperspective
she affords, how spirits like drop angels are left
in the lurch, how dangling statements are like
treatises. That is, the womanly parts throwing
shore shades into sunpools infringe. She comes
into view as I top the rise, one of several along
this path enshrined in live oak and sweetsmell,
and soon she'll dip below the next, this path
where bugs and frogs grow quiet, where snakes
jerk in warning, where all is plain.

Bet On It

In the house, in the dark,
subtle parts of doors and windows
are broken, worn by words
passing by, through. on. In
each corner life signs crouch
lower, hug closer the walls,
fibers broken off from rugs
and turning colors in the air.
Let's say my bet's the same
as yours, say we know it.
Is it hope we shoo to the corner?
Is it a hulking bug looking for it?
Fly near me, to the dark place
where curtains curl and stain,
where words are buzz saws,
where bets wander off.

N'N

Long reck'n'n up'long rails,
whiskey poured in plastic pouches hang
from lowbranch buckeyes 'long the stream-
bed, place I sleep with hair-wrap-over
eyes'n forehead, not-wash, knot-tangle.
What meat I cook was recent live'n greens
I eat raw are sour and shape'nd spades.
Each night trains'r scummin' past blow
past, raise'n wind whin'n dance-twirl.
Each hour I wake'n start my you-dream
tongues together'n lips just behind
hand on hip facing each oth-hour.
Then it stops, it stops, stops. My piece
with you is at'n end.

Folds and Ropes

Tonight we sit across the room and all I know of you
is escaped.

You are vacant of you. What animated once is now
the white a snow makes
over fallen leaves, your emptiness once fresh as opening leaves
is covered in white sheets because I've seen enough
even seeing nothing. It's time to go.

The ropes are draped across the woodbars
and under palettes made for lifting
heavy things becoming light.

I'll find you here one day, and all I'll know
of you is the lifted folds of the white sheets
draped as they've always been.

Planning of Precision and Haste

The shelves are full of empty boxes:
You planned the provisions exactly—
running out was a photo finish. Doorjambs
and framing stood till the last bug's bite and rot
brought them down as the weighted grey car
rolled down the sand lane but no one followed
for fear of blame. Was I blamed for dying first?
Across the rise a chestnut pushes up, lady slippers
shed pine-needle hats, and invisible flying bugs
live their houred lives just the same almost
as if time kept at it. Look at our lives—
where was the genius in their design?

You've poured your sullen potion into me,
and I'll stand by the sawing river, the color of birch,
and I won't join you, I just won't, until the yellow
dog howls in my ear and the funny
smells blow downstream.

August 25, 2000

Nothing But Cross

for Andre Dubus

He's in a simple wood box under
a simple wood cross, both pine, made simply,
simple nails where others would join
or fasten stoutly, no name but initials
in pencil facing west in the fading sun. The ends
of the cross and its top are cut flat
with small bevels to prevent eager children
from bruising themselves on a last work.
The only clues are the beads
hung on Mardis Gras and his country's flag
on a broken pole. Seen from a low angle away
from the sun his cross is dark and sweetly
releasing pine smells, and the wind is full
of words he wants to say, but he's holding
it in this afternoon. This simple green place
and pines have captured him, no need
to carve it in stone, no need to name or describe.
He knows the words, and the words
know him back—drinking buddies
in a plain-spoken bar.

Sallie and Her Lovers

Sallie's split in two
by the 2-foot trunk of 100-foot pine.
Did she know this would be her store
when Joseph Mudgett married her
200 years ago? Nights were dark,
and womanly hysteria in times of intimacy
were lies held clearly by pine boughs
far from the village. Dark by
lack of human light. This yard
is rising up sunset, shadows
crouch by her headstone bonded
to the tree like a mistake
of growing up, a second trunk
or Siamese sister. This pine
has loved her, taken her body
and now towers above me,
above Joseph to the side
and crooked. This yard is now
a stamp with its approaches dug away
and sand. These pine roots
have ravished and drained
her as Joseph tried, each on his
own divide. Of the four of us
in the rising dark, in the rising mist,
in the center of the remaining
rows of solitude is smirking most
beneath the threat
of human light?

Face Facts

The face approximates perfection
varying according to dice rolls,
sagging by sweet failures, pondering
time by night, dodging eyesight
just out of view. The stare develops
to a look that ever fades, takes on
a dusty hue or slighted paint, sinks
into the eyes, shades them. Downward
stares problematically persist, and the hood
becomes inner. Beneath your skin
the bone is mined by the near-perfect
finished sawtooth of backwards
glances. The trick is the life filter,
the balancing memory
to life variable blend plug-in,
standard equipment packed as backup
for the latter half of an unknown-length
journey between two sudden drops.

A Bad Century for Sallie

Sallie's not going anywhere:
Her headstone's buried
in the trunk of a pine tree, the biggest
in the cemetery. If she's in a pine
box we can add irony to her embarrassment.

Her husband's buriers in a puff of inspiration
buried him just where he can lie there
and just laugh and laugh, staring up into the heights
of those pine boughs strutting conquest.
He never planted her, I'll bet,
with as heavy lumber as that tree did.

If the tree caught fire we'd laugh like clichés.

The mind is a piece of burnt wood eager from use,
and in this state one wonders whether it matters
if it was split for fuel or lacquered for show.

Forget the jokes ending "Sallie wood"
or involve "pining". Yeah, Yeah, Yeah.

Me standing there. The headstone sticking
out the side of a pine. The cuckold husband grinning
and moping off to the side. Sallie with a root
jammed between her legs. An idiot named Pee Wee
chainsawing bears out of pines (I didn't mention this
before, but I'll add it to the next draft) within ear range.
And instead of a director named "Spike" it was just me
and a notebook still looking for a door.

Slower Traffic

So much living made into so little,
circling the pond all night,
the moon reflected many ways.
Just one short poem at dawn,
then a long rest when
really it's a stop. Waking up to find small
gifts on the ground above as the gatekeeper
asks us to put the blossoms back. The water
that's evaporated makes a fine meal of the sky.
To the poet the poem's not there at all,
to the poem the poet's a chalkmaker
and the dust on the ground his greatest work.

I like to come up on my subjects
while they dawdle in the left lane
and flip them off while passing on the right—
the best subject is slower
traffic in the wrong lane,
and the best poet has the darkest grill.

Cemetery With A Mohawk

We come across cemeteries,
wander into them in an accident,
drawn by the smell of flowers unable
to grow or grow more colorful, drawn
by the odors of fresh cut grass
and sliced-in-half frogs. At least
this is usual: The walk from the nearest
truck stop requires no great feat
nor unusual stride. Some, though,
are closed and beyond closed are forgotten
though not forgettable since the dead we
fear rest there or so someone wrote.
And such cemeteries buried in civilization
have had their sides sliced off and rest
as cut-down pyramids, and the fear
of children is to burrow the hand
into a side and feel the bones shake
back. The walk to such ones
takes a slide-down climb and maybe hands
or fingers, and the edges on top
open up to sunlight, and flowers
here grow and grass is low from respect
or gaul. The trip to heaven takes heavy
equipment and trucks that haul.

A Spire Carved into a Strange Shape

Your vacancy is hoodoo-sculpted,
all angles and bulges sanded
off, pleasant curves fears
now sand-dust flowing ahead
of hurried winds. Some call it the age,
some familiarity, but it's a standing
wave from inconstant expressions,
variable assurances. Soon desert dark
will take over and my
only hope will be to join the winds,
rub up until my deepest
expression is the one that sets
the rest of you free,
adds you to the background stuff.

Simple Resisted

I prefer complex pleasures
to the simple ones of the plains,
not corn in butter but corn as interspersions
in selections of curries, not short straight
but Medusean. Plain pleasures
are roadmasters of indifference cushioning
against jolts that someone must feel
or the rearview mirror turned to half-reflect
nightbrights when the plain blunt light
hits oblique—some...where. Sitting
in an adirondack sipping plain icetea
next a peach warming by a brickwall
enjoins anonymous pleasure lacking lacquer,
pine soaking drying time. I will watch
the explosions from grass overgrown
and bushes ungroomed of toads leaping
into a deep well, a banner the luckless
unfurl the keep their earlobes alert
against the drowsy nature of the familiar,
rather than lift one eyelid to further
the bright existence of the simple.

Lover's Hat

When the sky turned purple near the west
she gathered her lovers in a circle
in a circle of sand and dust surrounded
by ferocactus and creosote, metallic plants
in an aluminum desert. In the circle
of those whose beds she shared
she placed a bottle of water
at the center of the circle,
on sand and dust that would absorb
and drink were the glass to unfold,
and demanded, "what would you call this
were it not to be called water-bottle?"

Among her lovers the scarecrow stood
among needles and acidic oils flowing
below ground in caustic subpools and above
ground in the rust veins of plants not nearly
alive and kicked it over and among

all the things he did right that day
including the hover no woman could resist
he interspersed one wrong: He did not
remove his plaited hat.

Voles in the Blades

What could be more useless than the mind
at ease? I have awoken from a useless sleep
lasting till dark, finding myself encased
in a love long forgotten except by night,
and the frogs have decided again
to hop up into the blades of a mower,
just as last week the voles and mice
decided as they did last summer to leap
into the thresher, a fact not frequently
entered on the "Vole Fact Sheet," the best
guide to lost love. The love in my dream
is a bike ride across the desert
on tires rotten from bad water and dry
heat, stopping every 15 minutes to repump,
buying new springs worth 25¢ for \$2
from a blacksmith seeing fortune
in our misfortune. We walked
in our ease, useless as a mind awake
to voles and the killing blades.

Road Trips

On the debris-strewn road up
upsloping rises flags furl like rabbit
tails in hiding or a turned back on the couch.
Losing's stiletto quickturn
would heal in the healing twice bright daylight
but I won't bring myself to relent so soon.
The dirty dust blowing up the road
will soon catch the top of my shadow
as I walk away from one into the other.
When the wind has risen to the pitch
of tall trees I will scream the second echo
sound your name makes spoken
while inhaling, and like smoke in the lungs
pitchforking the heart, like the exhale
changed by exchange, my shadow will meet dust,
yours the wind.

Unexecuted Transformations

When Franz Kafka died his words began
their frightful transformation from inky existence
to verbal resonance and tertiary effects
and Franz Kafka's mean no middling tomb
was laid to rest in a plain field of others
each with mighty Jewish names and faith
in numbers but though the tombs were filled
with voices none became transformations
never planned nor explained and words
grew harder in famous black marble Franz
Kafka's acted locally made small repairs
to the existences of deadmen dead grasses
leaves flowers sprang up trees sprang up
ivy vines and tangle gripped black and white
marble tombs which grew themselves
to the sizes of large horses and opened
up turning pages leaves turning colors
in clutching shades and now the graveyard
of Franz Kafka has been called to judge
you based on your faith in the imagined.

Go Away

The simple fare is please go away
trains leave the station some for gashouses
others for the spraying pit I choose
the one to the fountain with edges of marble
lambs as footrests or knobs plain green flashlights
or glass made to look it so thick shattering's
out of the blue question markings of a blacksheep
bawling for lambstew fountain of solitudinous shush
sounds echoes in columned hallways tinkles
in pink tickles to load so slow in marshmallow
avalanches beneath your view of the Alps
high on a highrise floor in stupendous machine
warrens this facelessness was your message
in please in go in away and my choice is walk
away or be walked away upon by the cleansing
fractures of smiling facelesses

A Cloud Could

In fields with you the seas above open
from time to time and spray
our tongues with flakes made
by changing minds and above a cloud
seems cannot move as we lie between blankets
by the verge of wind-sculpted gorse rows.
I watch that cloud part carefully
affectionate. For hours I watch it
hover waiting to observe
what follows on. No move.
A cloud could obey its will handsomely
blanketing us. I catch your eyelids
blink toward sleep so much
a sign it seems then the cloud
is evaporation is gone
its dumb precipitate lies upon
our blanket hutch which holds
me only and the fling of you.

Under Tonight In Crosswind Park

Tonight I am drunk on your foreignity,
questions singularly curious:
thirst abstraction? hunger transformation? blueness
as in sky swelling behind
eyes? You lie bare, annex marking snowangels,
I hover on your bloom. What sounds
could you make were will your hands?

Tonight some big spirit has painted
a lapping lake in real gold, burns
over the roots of my eyes, my hair
creases and whitens more. Do you
understand what foreign heels do
when lifting the hem of a longcoat shading
your under view? I've warmed
your hands in this gold hidden
and retreating, followed you by the head
primitives, and now you speak words speak speech
unmoving made, grandeur-quaking
grammar leaves, and my thoughts only
are nerve-sky, happen-born, breathturned.

Black Love

Love is inhuman, coming
up from the soles into nerves
whose itch can be scratched only
by incision. It is a black feeling
cleverly inching upwards leaving
our heads lessened. Whenever leaves
turn their undersides up in wind
or high wind thirsting maybe for the wet
of rain or the killing frost, the goldlight
lit near day's end reminds me of your hair
and how it turned when I came near
like the top of your head coming off.
Love is inhuman, how it robs
you of the joy of scratching
to success, how it feels underfoot.
Love like a black feeling flies from the head,
pulls the soul with it, sucks dry the breathing
leaves my heart's become watching the top
of your head come off, the concussion
of love bursting out of you.

Low Over Boston on a Rainy Night in November

Coming in low over Boston in a 727,
 unusual landing vector for a familiar place,
 steady rain in late November flying in from the West
 on yet another visit. Over the Western suburbs
 yellow gas arclights fill by haloes a red and green
 tennis court, pale-blue tinted white halogens
 poke the dark through mist rising from rubber
 singing on asphalt—the world below, houses
 and cars, streetlights and more cars, drenches
 my memory of you like the blue lights of the city
 ahead, and the rainy mist is like every love
 I've had. Over the Charles I see the ritzy apartments
 along Storrow are casting their lights on the water,
 though the rain and darkened cold tries to dilute
 all of it. In those apartments people are listening
 to classical music to musty smells and overdry
 heat played on digital machines, or speaking
 hushed under comforters given on a joyful
 day. Tonight the lights of cleaning men
 or women hold more truth fuel
 in lights that move up one story at a time.
 Over Boston harbor boats labor in cocoons
 of yellowed mist-rain spewing arcs of light
 toward me and the plane banking for a long
 turn over lighthouses and prisons. Each light
 is at least one life, each one is moving
 from one perspective or another. You are
 in one of these houses or apartments, on a boat,
 driving a car, are a light I can see, but because I
 can see them all means nothing about seeing the one.
 The constant low frequency drone of the engines
 throttled back is damped by the rain around me
 riding just below clouds on a trip whose purpose
 is to drive zigzag through the towns below
 and the city hoping the electric signal of your dying
 dreams is strong enough to flicker my lights,
 stop me this time.

Distant Winds

Distant winds over your head, miles away above
blowing the speed of traincars on a short train
down the eastern slope, the effect on your hair
sixth order at best—you appear as calm as empty blue
above besides. When you die that sky will be grass
and the wind the sorrow of your children
or snow deepened under bluer skies. When I die
you will be the watcher and I the wind a mile above
and my effect on you will be as it always was: blue
for the reflection that sparkles the ocean, blowing
a sixth-order effect as the snow deepens.

Winter Scene Captivated

Your name billows, mine
is sneaking up on park benches snow-laden,
bloated pillow-like awaiting heads

not minding the temperature.
Today the bicycles slide sideways
down the cambered slope and the park

has decided on milk-blue, a tribute
to both the shaking sky dropping
its leavings and the shade of age.

Drop the images and the names
jerk snapping to different focii,
each possibility visited in turn

exhaustively. No wonder the poet
dreams of fixing the scene and a snapshot
stakes its lines: half where

he thinks, half where
the images suddenly heavy
clang into place.

TV Ad

You walk to the door, an exclusive or extravagant
eroticism hanging behind the tight curves
of your skirt which follows yours like a dancer's
hands hanging just over your curves, like a dancer's
legs walking just inside yours, like the duende's
thoughts pushing so hard flesh exudes and harrows
toward you, toward the insides of you, an exclusive
stretch of cashmere wallpapered on the expanse
of your midriff and bulging from the sides
of your breasts outcurved like overfull bagskins
of limpid redwine or torched ricewine, the door
just knocked in hurried flurries by a man you know
who lowers his umbrella at the opened door, rain
wetting by bursts his headtop, his eyes slacking,
muscles untensing, and I on the couch hear
the little voices in the dark, see through the raindrops
forming a rainbow anchored on the distant
side of town a room cracked
to the perfection of imperfection, a bed unsheeted
and damp, a place to lie down and let the heavy
heart steelwheels cut, seer, or sever
something that seems just remembered,
about to be forgotten, akin to ivy
covering something special rotting beneath.

One Crazy Stanza

The end of the world is at the end
of the street, at the corner with no store,
by the walkup with no windows where love
takes on a dark tang. The treetop reaches the bottom
of the bed and the shadow's even lower. At
the corner there are no roads, and nothing
is across the street. The end of the world
is as unapproachable as a no-enter apartment, a trunkless tree top,
a shadow & a bed near the corner with no store;
so it's not possible, even, to sit on the curb after buying a moon pie
and an RC Cola to watch it all fade
down to one little
PoP!

Highway Love

The car at full gait down the daylight highway
is the cushion of solitude among strung-out
towns by the highway that used to be, past
worn out gas pumps used to fueling the flight past
now content to let rust mix with unbought gasoline
in storage tanks beneath dandelioned and grassweeded
cracks in 30-year-old asphalt, or the burger cum
softserve stand by the former edge of town surrounded
now by apartment rows long-ago new now seeping rats
and mattresses into the parking areas where teenagers
once gathered to exchange their age for hardness. The car
at full gait in the funnel-dark highway is a bag
of loneliness, my face lit by dashboard lights,
a pedal steel phasing in and out on the tube-backed
radio dialed to the farthest station out on the east
side of Kansas, and from backporch lights
and streetlights, from neon Bud and Coors signs
hanging like beacons to men seeking women,
from the searchlight down by the automall,
I see the bits of reasons why they say love is a softride
Chevy, 8 cylinders making stubble sounds smoothed
by glasspacks, and the most delicious bedroom
is a plastic back bench, hot with summer sweat,
cooled by the green end of sundowns, filled by the sounds
of crickets and ky-otes, and oathed by rolling notes
in the backs of our throats.

River Dry-out

At the bottom of the hill is a fold
in the river doubling back as if the way
down were the way up or as if it forgot to wave
to the drivers on the bridge spanning
it twice, once downward once upward.
Water is a way of life, and the way
water flows makes a difference how
fast it salts. The river I know
does its double-back routine
in the low flat headlands above a wide
fan-shaped desert plain, and after a short
plunge the river fans out and dissipates
in the salt flats, subdued by the head,
dropped beneath earth. This is
the path we've taken, this is
our steady decrease, this is
the visual accomplice to the sound
of steady wind seeping through the curliques
of bridging steel that seems so much
like missed life.

Unraveling Man

By the road side: empty cans unable to rust,
plastic bottles filled half full with frothy
brown liquids, orange peels becoming fair dust,

a captured set of coins in a fairy ring,
a diary of appointments some missed,
others made, and phone numbers concentrating

area codes in a flock of towns sunning by
a dry riverbed running through a desert.
I know the tire-sounds humming by,

know the road side's catches, can tell by the heat rising
who is going where and why. Tell me what
to say to the girl sitting on the bench seat, crying

by the road, her sides heaving like fire-blowing bellows.
Rise up through heat mirages, rise up
by the road side, leave her like fire leaves shadows thrown

on walls made tender by the weight of age,
by the age of words disintegrating.

Litter Ally

I am compelled by things resting
on the sides of roads, left behind
in accident or by disruptive intention,
a plastic cup once holding 32 ounces
of sweet and sugary pop tossed against
society's best interests, a post-it
torn from the front of a notebook
by a rogue grasping blast of wind
which appears against all reason
for continuity. When we die we
face what's left behind, confront
the deliberate, lament the accidental,
pick up as if trustees with litter pickers
where we left off.

Comprehending Nothing

When they all look back
on all I've said, all I've done, all the lives
I've led and been part of, all the poems
I've written, all the women I've loved,
what they will shout down is none
of the words and none of the deeds, none
of the lives or nights, none of that but
all of my heart.

Totem

Lie back, press the grass, the ground,
with your back and legs. Damp tonight.
Above the bottoms of clouds are lit orange
by a suburban light, the rest are graymetal,
and gaps where the sky seems blue from a moon
not willing to wane. Lie back with the oak
in your range of vision and let the back
of your head feel dizzy, let your eyes hang onto
nothing though they watch. Something moves.
The air is heading North to join in making cold.
Let me slide my hand beneath you, and let
your back hang onto nothing. The oak
or the clouds move, you or I move. The gaps
between heat and held, cold and absence,
inside and under make something
in this cycle a dizzying emblem.

At a Bus Stop, Outside the Gates

We stand at a bus stop in February
waiting to be taken away as fast
as we can be. The place we're near
seems easy to get into but hard to leave.

The air, atmosphere, seems threaded
to earlier days forming beads of colors
ranging from black to blue, blue
like this sky today. This air,
atmosphere, seems broken

like a skipping record, one instant
a warm blue sky inviting like

the eyes of a lover one can never take,
the next
the clouds are dropping flakes hard,
trying hard to shake them,
and they spit heavy to the ground
and bounce
sometimes twice or three times.

The warm blue sky invites us up
into it, I've fallen for you this way.
The cold cloudladen sky sings a deathsong
and the dance is stiff, unmuscled. We want
to get away in the next bus, but
the neighborhood is filled with closing blinds:

in each, two fingers spreading them open.
Still the sky varies. The sky is an open
grave, and the cold clouds tell us to dig
deeper. Soon

a tractor pulling a farm wagon comes by but
the wagon is filled with high-output speakers
and amplifiers pushing out sound
as if from the muzzle end of a gun. Loud,
so loud perhaps to shout back in time,

⌘ ⌘ ⌘

playing dance songs, shaking loose
the snowflakes that bounce
sometimes twice or three times.
We want to get away
on the next bus
from a place easy to get out of, hard
to stay in, and sometimes we fly up
in the warm sky, sometimes we fall down,
and bounce twice or three times before. . . .

. . . before we fly up like ashes
or snow in reverse
to the open sky, the open graves,
the opened eyes.

Cook Me A River

The smells of meals being cooked, prepared
begin at 10:30, preparations made, simmering
starts, slow roasting, frying. Everywhere
in the localities made of time
at 10:30 the work begins to feed the greedy,
perhaps many who are lonely, some ill,
others made unquestionably evil
or evil-tempered—all will
themselves to eat or will
wait. Plates are warmed and places set.
silverware, plasticware, stickware
laid out. No cozier word is spoken
by woman to man than meal. Much dying
has been endured for this. Who will
not eat? The crazy, the famished, the engorged
lovers fighting for life, those indifferent
to the alchemy of cooksmoke,
or immune to interruptions not of the mind,
not of the heart.

Original Motels and Working Trains

Motels and unfinished
mobility. Scented shrines
with doors onto cars. One
bed, one toilet, one car
lined up. One driver moves.
Cheap way to make a poor
living: off longing for slow
roads, sights like snake pits
and snack shops. Ice flurries
at the cheap edges of towns.
In my car, dashboard lights
full-on-green my face, the alternative
reflective path through my mirror
dampens headlights catching up.
On a slow road I pace a freight train,
a superchief once & from a cracked-open
door on a boxcar filled with straw
a pudgy face blooms in the glow
from odd shed light. A strobe.
Hard to say who caught whom
taking out the easy way.

Change, Or Wind

Something has decided to happen
in the forest of pines and firs
in a high-wind storm,
wind blowing hard
high in the tops of trees.
Something passing through,
temporary or ending.
Sounds of surf folding liquidly
on coarse sand or a crowd cheering
far off in sympathetic triumph.
Doors on aged hinges closing slowly
making metal sounds. Wood ships caught
in ice floes being crushed, pressure
from far-off storms pushing each floe
upon another and into ship sides
2 feet thick but bowing inwards.
Hushes from a thousand mothers' lips
urging patience and solitude. Drums
rolling, bass drums thumping.
Heavy things happening slowly.
Knocking like scared visits, hammering
by crews of carpenters. Nothing
unusual. Except a tuft of pine needles,
three in a green bouquet, drops to your shoulder.
I pick it away and drop it on a bed of comforter-soft
dead brown pine needles, a gesture like a kiss interrupted
by a brief goodbye or a fading glance in the passing
glare of headlights.

A Harsh Soothing Ignorance

Of all the explanations
the one with the most vowels
sounds best, ah and er hinting
the guide knows much less than
a harsh one would, and besides
soothing wordsounds, soothing
ignorance is a pillow for my own
stupidity. The path grows familiar
with communal stumbling. Why
isn't the dictionary filled
with welcomed dumbfoundedness?
Let's the two of us dumb and unfound
drive with coins and flip our way
cross country, like a drunk under a lamp
post, focused on the lit center point
hoping to at last escape into darkness?

Two Old Lovers in a Warm Bed on a Cold Night

You lie on the bed, one leg casually
outside the blanket, the other beneath,
one knee down in front of the other. Your breasts
complete the cycle of curves, your heated
breathing diminishing becomes ice mist
in the cold mountain air dropping
through the window we left open when we heated.
On the side table your Japanese lamp grows dim,
the wick going out though it floats on clear oil,
its reflected light dimming in your pupils
as you watch me rise to attend the coming
darkness. Touching the lamp the wick flame begins
to flicker, and lifting the lamp it tips toward you
but the wick remains motionless in the frozen
oil. I look up in time to just see the last
spark light from your eyes, cycle complete,
the heat from the small flame unable to keep
its source alive.

Intimate Products

In a hayfield overflowing with grasshoppers
and gnats, under an oak
that's been there for 100 years,
by a stonewall fence built 200 years
ago under a rock I buried a peanut
can and inside that a plastic bag.

In the way age is reckoned
for important matters, the hayfield is new,
the can and plastic bag newer,
the tree and stonewall fence recent,
and what's inside is just there.

After a day important to us
I buried in that peanut can
and in it within the plastic bag,
the intermediate values determined
by pressure and time.

On a hot day go there,
find the hayfield filled with flying things,
find the stonewall running north to south,
sit beneath the oak tree years older than 100,
pry up the rock, open the can, unzip the bag, and
see what's there, see what it reminds you of.
There's a harsh truth to face.

Acolyte Leaning Against a Post

I warmed my hands
in yours, hot as charcoal
they seemed, just glowing; the day
was cold as rats' teeth biting iron.
Like charcoal we will together and alone burn
down then out, colors on a slider
from orange-yellow to black,
and in light, ashen. Let's think
of it as the explosion of sunset
into night.

Winter Reigns

lie alone awake
bed filled with pockets of cold
legs tucked into warm places
head covered to the ears in a quilt not doing its job

from the iron stove burning
wood as hard as it can the sounds of charcoal breaking
on charcoal a hot sound soft in quantity hard
in quality balancing the notoverwarm bed

youve left youve left out
the important small points small marks
that separate truth from nonsense

sound of
you leaving you breaking
on yourself

Gethsename Oblique

On a day of things not right
on the day when the stories
we heard as children as adults as old men
took place and the stories hardened
like resin into amber and the hardness
of truth melted as sap running down
a cypress in a shortened garden stories
reciting a mysterious faithfulness
just one thing betrayed the inner
consistency of our faiths' bug-filled
illusions: his blood ran downward
he too obeyed the laws made
to keep all consistent unpredictable.

Loon Landing

The day will arrive when the thickened skin
of experience will feel like the sloughing skin
of sunburn or any other accident of carelessness.
On such a day the loon will land in the yard
instead of hoo-hooing all the way to the lily-swamped
lake, and you will kneel by your bed in the bare
light, you will place your head on its side
by the pillow, you will will your heart to stop
though it pains you to. You will say your goodbyes
the most private ways, hook your heart to the barbules
of the nearest soul and float like a feather above
the flapped turbulence of the silly-sounding loon
who visits the weary bent on shedding their skins.

66 Sentiments

The motel on 66 in Amarillo
once was the best motel. Cars were cupped
within its grasp and its shape shielded
rooms from glare and tire groan. At
its center a fountain spilled water
echoing from room to room. In '66
this was the place to stay, steak
houses lined the streets nearby,
cattle brought in by freight cars
mooed and snorted by. Air
was not so fresh then, but smelled
the rich stink of half-burned gas
mixed with burned oil.

Steaks searing, gas wasting, oil
dripping, cars driving, tires whining,
families sleeping, motel sitting:
Amarillo stark at the center of 66
had no redemptive rival, for in '66 the fat
of a fat land snored loudly round the fountain
of cool dreams in the big town I find
myself in tonight, midway between
one important place and another,
thankful for the cheap room
and stiff bed in the best motel
on the best road forty years too late.

Pasted Dream

customized dreams come prepackaged
one rolls out one rolls out
sequencing is direct connectives miss
the point a dream ends a walk to piss
the dream begins resumes my head fills
with you you look not yourself
I dream of you do you dream of me

these $\frac{1}{3}$ days are not enough
scarecrow time comes ends
birthdays come end
scarecrow clothes varnished in sundown
colors drip apart slow strip
tease one day your skin as straw
color substance my feelings
for someone else
are here
are you

Many Reverses

We are gathered around like luncheon
meat on the edge of a plate, bread at the center
like the object of our desire. One of the small
things left to do is to settle who loves whom,
which sandwich tastes best under a sky remembering
how to rain snow. Our picnic is really the back
seat of a car parked in an oily wide patch
by the side of the small road winding up
to the bridge at the highest but narrowest
place in a wide long river. Around us
are testaments to mankind and the raw
material of nature: shreds of lettuce, bleached-flour
bread, plastic back seats, the scent
from your cunt, flies seeking nests for their maggots,
the sand by the road plied with oil, the river
flowing naturally carrying barges of pig iron,
the bridge at the narrows, the sky lighting
our hearts. What I like about you
is the way you speak of love while
exploring what lies within
your panties.

Hope in Oblivion

The roads of this small town
were lined with the reddened leaves
of maples and the off-yellow brushes of birches
but beside this road the grass weeds
grew green. By the ditch a fence
made of concrete posts wired
by braids of steel wire
had collapsed on impact, was wrapped
in a tangle of indistinct road weeds.

Chele and Piper were walking away
from us, hands entwined
as if harbingers of the future
and loving destinations. All's
left is her auburn skirt
long retired from wiping Piper's Bronco,
hanging as if from a slut with straight hips—
scarecrow ready for parties,
September harvests and long
long summer's hard labors in the fields
gone by.

What parties there will be, made for hearts
hardly beating, for excitement barely wetting
sunburnt lips. The old men have gathered
on a day made of translucent surfaces
and black & white photos
to worship the angled breasts
of their neighbors' sacred daughters
eager for love and bursting of bubble gum.

The Aging Process

Main Street is wide enough
to turn an 8-oxen team and wagon
in one clean motion. This made
it ideal for inclusion in the '50's
interstate. For years killers
drove down Main Street in search
of hideouts, girls, and milkshakes.
The interstate has disappeared,
a thought passing through
someone's imagination.
Main Street is so wide it takes
the old men minutes to cross
but jaywalking is no danger
when the cars are all parked.
Up that way up the hill—
don't you see it like an island
in an ocean of wheatgrass?—
the famous are buried in a cemetery
dug for them. Their fame is they died
at the hands of killers who once ate
steaks on Main Street back when
it took a fast man to jaywalk
without risking death.

Rope Bridge Near Sarashina

The bridge is hung by ropes
creeping over crossbeams
secured to rock or deep-piled
piers on the lips of a crack
in a mountain pass near Sarashina.
As I wait behind on this side
you cross, your pumping gate
swing-sways the ropes
and bamboo slats, the up&down
the speed of a heart anticipating
or me on you right at that
moment. You depend on this
rope I hold in my left hand
as if calming a wind blast.
The vines that shroud
the trees and crevasse
have grown onto the rope bridge,
hang from it as the beard
on an old man watching a woman cross
a bridge that holds today
the lives of vines
and the hope of separation.

Japanese Night, Winter

Tonight is one more
night without you cold
in my shanks my feet
the spider's final body twitches
are remnants of a last intent
to disarm the cold
it writhes on the floor beside
me.

The bathroom light has been flickering
my dreams wander back to our early
story my bones feel the quilt finally
my dreams of you come clear
the light goes out finally
the night is cold.

Clouds and Passing Light

Today the air grew cold
from the passing of a familiar season
into oblivion brought on by something
written in a diary. The sun, bright
in the upper third of the sky,
does its best to hold back. Each
passing cloud reminds the landscape
of truth.

Tonight the northwind
pulls scraps of newspapers and oiled
dust down the street, the air froths
under the sodium streetlight,

cold sounds
soft sounds

until the streetlight cuts,
fades to simple afterglow. Voices
deepen, reprimand, call in favors
like a dialtone in the night
after seasons of insistent ringing.

Budding Softness

Bluff sitting above Red Wing,
sandstone my reliable footstool,
overwatching soundless eagles—balds—
and waystationed gulls dive for death
and gullets filled with salmon, bass,
whose sharp white skulls shackle
granite on shore. You were sitting
here but mountains are rising
to the North and while I
watch are growing yet more mysterious,
foothills rising like a yet another hurricane,
a soundless wind has blown everything
but one stray you-hair gone.

False Waiting

Waiting
for you, night rain
freezing close
to the sound of nails
dropping on nails.
Hollow sound
of an umbrella
slows outside
my door, I raise
my head
from this poem
brewing one word short.
The less sound
passes, knocks rain next
door, the rainless nest
ducks inside.
Rain resumes.
The search resumes
for the word I'm short.

Broken Tip

Sitting alone writing of you, wind
sharpening the edges of rocks by the river,
loosening the last leaves hanging
from aspens or birches, disrupting
the flights of ospreys kiting
a foot over the blowing foam, the pencil
tip breaks beneath the woodsheath causing
the blotch that says it in sight.

Dropped Off

Winter rain has held off,
the river has stopped flowing,
water has pooled in the deep
drops downriver. Last summer
we crossed up on that bridge
engraved with foreign words,
and you dropped, I think,
something of yours to the curling
river. In winter the river clears,
and in the deep drops the boots,
the rings, the tin cans, the silk
scarves gather in circles under
cold water, still water, this water.

Looking For Listenable Stations

In my youth they were blonde
and their held hands were damp
as fishkill, limp as the strength
of my vision, and their tolerance
was a learning experiment filed
in their pretty little heads. In this age
they are other colored, and their responses
more active because even the least likely invasion
carries with it the spoils of close contact
or disorganized fervor and zest. And
there are the dangers to consider. On
this day the gasp will widen once
more, and bridge will be words not sounds,
noise not nuisance, and a long winter
of sub-bass roars will hushen everything
else up, even my sore voice, even your hopeless
grey eyes.

On a Riverbank Near St Paul in October

The riverbed ground, I guess, stopped,
and like helium balloons pushed
back by rushing forward air, dead
or deadly things pushed upstream
like fascination or desperation but fat
or overfilled so glass skulls or white
ribs are piled around your little thin
shanks. Hm. I'm the mirrors in your horror
house or distorting curves on your overbed,
ha ha. When love turned topic look
around you cried like a harkened bald
who's hooked some pike on his bony
trestles. When he sits in the oak
above your colorflashed hair he sinks
them deep, up to his birdy flesh, up
to his feathered shanks, up to his stopping
heart, and what I mean to say is compare
his pain to mine, his hope to mine.

Lights Front and Back

What is it of the color
of the bay with shined pink adobe
banks, its blue darkened
to a windy purple, that holds her
at the window after waking
from her bath in naked sexual
rumination, staring while her breasts
slowly stopped slowly shaking, forgetting
perhaps or remembering when
he is about to touch her
along the hip and down and thinking
she will soon become a holster,
she will
be it, she will
be what he wants, thinking
she will dream the night through
of what was said or done or thought,
complex harmonies sung falsetto
another place or earlier, what is
it when he paints her body
black tomorrow to signify the night
and when she leaves her mouths red?

These questions seem important
but less so than why the oak grows one
branch so long so as to tumble it, stand
it on head, turn it from one flashing
set of lights to another.

Rolling On the River

What did you think it meant when the gull plunged
its beak into the eye of pike, the river lots its down-
stream motion, the rocks rolled out from scabble
to beds, the way up was harder than the way down?
In the town where we stopped the weddings
ran on into one another, varied into similar into same,
the river a canal for the coldstream while eagles held
the light. Something in the smell of the day hung
like a poultice of broken glass on your breast and nothing
was the choice. The buildings glowed red just before dusk,
and the barge train pushed by a tug upstream logged
and repeated the tense of your grammar. As usual
it was sudden but this time it's permanent.

Stuff Heading Upstream

Two barges on the Mississippi,
each weighing thousands
of tons, connected together,
pushed by one tug
as long as each barge,
diesels full of hard horsepower
power the set of screws
that push the water back behind
a quarter mile, churning water
that calls to gulls.

Upstream.

Can you remember the cold?
The light on the red hills seemed
warm, the air was so clear each ripple
lensed the lowslung light along the streaming,
toward us as far as the parties were concerned.
Can you remember the roaring?

Upstream.

What will happen to this barge train
when the deepness of the water
runs out or the black sky cuts through
the thinning air? No amount of kissing
will fix this—too much needs to happen.

Sudden Snap

Some things work better sudden.
The cheapest Polaroid camera
at arm's length indoors, low
light, fluorescents flickering—
bring it to aim at your head and snap
— give the rangefinder no
time to work, give the lightmeter no
time to work out the foolish lighting,
give your arm no time to stop, give
yourself no time to pose. This picture
captures beauty: your face
swept arclike, your head
an orange halo, the lights
6-sided flare-ups, pieces
of pictures the camera
couldn't forget, chemicals
striving to make sense quit part through,
you look wise & giddy, post-traumatic,
pre-orgasmic. A sudden snap captures.
The trick is to end it before it's complete.

Oh Beautyo

Unlike the poems of a hardy writer
the sunsets near Hartford are subtle,
leftovers from the fire-fangled Wallace years.
Pewter cloud tails have their dangle-down
parts, and the sides farthest from me
are reddest, most like you. Here the red
is twisted light standing off, doing
its little dance far away and flung;
there it was collaboration between
one willing one not. Driving away.
Going oddly in directions. What
did you think of the 12 sunny things
I said and the 1 red one? I know
you looked, I know the clouds did
and the funny sun late in the day.
When romance is mixed up
by lighting effects, better
hide behind the lines.

Travel Watch/Travel Alarm

Static on the tv: fingerprints; who
goes with the hiss? On the road,
what I miss is waiting, vittles,
kisses, withholds, words
spoke in shadows. I'll cab
from the desert, look under
your rug for links. Your fingers
hover, shake and sway, the colors
on the surface of your eyes
make ice or take the best.
I'm left here by the ramp
and the tug's pushing. Travel
two lungs. Yodel for me
honey.

Dream Fall

The dream yields to thought
and the forest world floods
with leaves fallen in quick
succession. Do they care to change
colors or brag in themselves
on the dawn of a day? I've held
one dry leaf before it plunged—
it felt like the fingers of a friend
going dry, then slipping away,
making of my dream just
another fog. Would your sudden
escape have anything to do with this?

Sacrifice of the Ever-Road

The road expects sacrifice:
get behind the wheel,
commit your spine to a GM splint,
eat cookies hidden behind the driver's seat,
fight the urge to stop when the motels
seem to be filling, drive on,
be willing to eat as if the world
had been lost behind a closed gas station,
look with love at the dripped yellow B
in a new sign for Lazy Man's
Bar B Que. The road sides
are littered with shattered tires,
animals not designed for understanding,
leftovers of things thought important
enough to buy but not vital enough
to dispose of properly. Old bottles.
Life preservers. Hot sparks and ashes.
Or when you drove away and the mirrors
were adjusted to make me look small.

Lifting Your Desire

The work is sweat-filled, full
of imaginary dangers like spiders
leaking from holes in the trunk
this new sawblade works through.
The sun is working against me
low in the Southern sky but glancing
heat not light through the heatfog
leaking from the pores of the sand
stretching into a light forest of live
oaks, tarry pines. My shoulders hurt,
my arms burn, my forehead wrinkles
from age and heatburn, my legs buckle
from a heavy load, sweat is all
around on me. When you
demand your due, it is like this.

Discards

Lean against the wall
and put the flat of your foot against it
knee high, use it to rest
while I tell you stories of what it
meant. Tagged wall soot covered
by garbagecan infernos made of trash
and oily rags from dumpsters behind the auto
shop. Discards. Stories of them. The rules
are formal and objective but the way
she puts her hand on the small
to launch her come. Naked, named.
Bags of ketchup like flattened roses
beneath us means discards, plugs pulled
out, snow except it's ashes from something
important being burned. The best we can hope
for is to sit on stools at a shined bar and watch
the wear of life suppress smiles, lay hair limp,
keep it all secret while we both lean
footbraced against a backdrop of soot
near a highway of rusted and bashed-in
guardrails.

I've/'m gone/done fishing
/for/compliments when I ask
"is love bait?" and you return the bone
with its marrow sucked out

Stinky Man

Central towns, departed citizens,
districts built of 2-story storefronts
like Dodge City in Gunsmoke. What if
a woman dressed too tight hugs
the curb in noon sun too sleepy
for lunch but too thirsty to pass
up the corner bar added 1950
as a contribution to the beauty of the town
in the shape of a trailer, but today
the clapboard chips are flaking off, the word
"Tavern" in dim neon still
is framed by the name of a national
beer many still drink,
and she is horny for it
to drain down her throat,
to foam through her belly
mixing with the remains
of breakfast and the stinky man,
to snake its way through to her fingertips,
and to drip as a warm yellow juice
from lips that mirror in their response
to love and drink her others hours
later, in another bar, on her way
back slowly to the stinky man?
What if?

Pastiche

Passing passion
pushing potions
pitching positions
patching posh pleasures
pissing postures
plush posing
pooch punch

T Party

Tattered, truncated,
the thirst takes tolls;
trying to travel through
thick trees, thin travelers
think through their trappings,
tortures, trinkets. Then
triumph trickles through to them.

Along, Aside

The thirst is unbearable
that causes voices to trip,
runs like luminescence
up the sides of houses and walls
separating the halves of longing,
flurries a covering fog on the sidewalks
you walk over on your way
along. Aside
from leaves what do you have
for me? By the bridge I watched
you climb the rocks, watched
the car door close, watched
the last vapor evaporate,
building a thirst that rained
in two-tone silver and gold.
Tell me the weather that seeps
from your head to your heels,
the weather that still goes on.

Cold Stranger

The sprinkling of light on the rooftops
seen from the ramparts above the city
reveals the bumps of habitation, enclosures
shielding the showering sky from little
secrets. Brushed-on layers of snow
deaden the sounds underneath. Grab
hold of what's hidden, make on the other
side an opposite. As you open the door
and begin your walking out, stand aside
and let the cold stranger in whose only
aim is to take your place.

Time Frames

The mind sees only the sudden,
like the eyes of frogs that see only motion.
Shallow ramps, aging timestamps,
we see them only when sight meets memory
making a sudden second the mind
can see. How can we see the slow,
feel the littlest burs, smell the micro-motes
flitting by, boiling their moment-by-moment
sameness, aloof behinds fluttering flag-like,
romping like stallions before wind
or lovemaking? Let me reflect now
on the frames that led to you by the river,
let me delete every other one, and every other
once more—until it's sudden, and my reaction
panic.

Stroll Through a Map Laid Out in Town

Along the cobbled ways and stone steps
your unspeech lingers like leaves frozen
into puddles left behind in a sudden rain
that drifted in before a freeze, and down
by the river passing beneath the bridge
whose upstream piers are sharp stone
cleavers and whose companions are oak
overturning ramps awaiting ice sheets and blocks,
your shadow has just fled behind a lingering
maple whose leaves have turned shade and turned
over in a breeze that trembles the river's surface
the way your last words were chosen by hands
trembling over a bed of bitter words gathered
in haste, and here in my bed whose sheets
and undersheets seem still warm from your wide
hips and lingering bottom, your heart has slowed
and my head on the pillow can not quite hear
the beats turning slower and slower until their sound
is the shutter I left unlatched in my haste to hold
you tapping the windowframe in a low breeze
on a day short of light and long on falling leaves.

Diner on Snow Street

The places we eat are lined, like this,
with people wishing each other well.

The food cooked over-greased first pleases
then drains the tongue, expands the cheeks,

lines the belly with full feelings. You
however wait and wait, after the order

comes, after the waiter goes, until I've
taken the first bites, gone through the fries,

start on the meat. I want you but tonight
your belly comes first. We drink, each looking

past the other into headlights each heading
past the other's. It's like that. The liquor's

heating up now, the fries are cooled in ketchup,
the pork is about to float in coagulated fat and grease.

You've quit smiling, quit weeks ago, and now
it's time that's counting—down I think. Snow

would be the best for us, something that drifts
pretty, slithers down the street in squirrely lines,

something with a purpose often bent but never
limited. Where it ends up is up to us, up to fate

up to sullen sodden eyes welling with limits
barely living up to their fate to always see.

Depth of Blue

The nights are piling up
like snow drifted onto the plow
wake at the end of the road
where the choices are left
to the driver. We could ignore
the feelings that seem undone, but
that would mean reviving them
beyond their desire to drift off.
Hm.

Let's drop the pretense and go
with it. Pick a road, make the choices
into a fork that lures us poetically
into doing what seems hard
but as pretty as small snows fallen
just to the depth of blue.

Release

Release the volunteers,
run to the ramparts and begin
counting the breaks in the dam,
shout to those shouting
that the time to quit has arrived,
follow the possibility that seemed least likely
just one year ago. In one year
the mystery regressed,
chances were forgotten
the battle failed to engage.
Smoke will one day clear
revealing a healing landscape,
ash will revert to green,
greyed water will flow clear
again with salmon, perhaps
two lovers will watch the sun rise
over a place known for death
and the death of love.

Bird Caught on the Tip of a Scarecrow

Even the scarecrow feels the weight of decay
as the days grow short toward December,
his clothes are unwashed and pieces of them
have found their ways underground to nests
and into trees as flags proclaiming lament.
Places have been entered, but the long show
is reserved for leaving. One bird sits atop
the scarecrow's cap, his crowlike claws
can't seem to release and he will carry more
away that he likes today, because the wind
is beginning to blow and soon it will be too
hard for bird-raised resistance. Pity the bird
whose feet belie his weaknesses, pity
the scarecrow too weak to wink, pity
the witnesses forced to live two lives
in space of one strong afternoon
under a sun whose pity is the heat
of self-doubt.

Union Cemetery

Inside the dirtground rundown graveyard
lies a patch of Union soldiers rounded up
by a low granite rail; inside is the only patch
of green. Around us stones are broken, pieces
lie at angles, headstones are crowded
by palm trees. Iron pipes fence plots.
Clear day but cold, Veterans' Day in Redwood,
California, Union Cemetery. My daughter's homework
is to place a bouquet on the final resting place
of a veteran, and she carefully does that in the green
patch, but her mind is fixed on the bottle of mascara
she bought as a secret at the pharmacy where we bought flowers,
the price of each about the same, the importance of each
about the same, and who can say she's wrong, facing
life in the broken ground of death with the hope
in her heart her eyes will look nice.

Pain of Living Teeth

Frozen sky rains only iceflakes
on the only listless flecks of joy
left after the snap bye, instant gone.
Your face grew out of the light just once
and the crowd overcame its passion
for anonymity, caught in the flash
of a jotted note. Mm. The feelings
flee in their own hurry not
like the sudden onset of living
which is just a heavy pressed feeling
as if teeth were forming. It was all foolish
the way I wrapped my feeling fingers
around your legs; you felt tired around me.

What I won't forget are the notes,
how they descended, how their resonance
boomed into the ground, and the waves
passing by our feet, ripples of a writer
both larger and smaller, braver and more cowardly
than the two of us together or taken
one at a time.

Ringlets

A beautiful place has appeared by the sea,
a place where the light hangs a bit brighter,
a single stretch of rocky coast that attracts
only small waves but ones that crash with sullen
beauty in white bursts above the green lucent
tropic rolls. My privilege is to sit on those warm
rocks and radiate the little rings that linger
on my head, and yours is to dangle above and pull
up into the lone cloud. What we both await
is the rogue wave whose force is from the north
and whose local meaning is the raising up of a wave
as tall as the cloud.

Buried Subways Like Funeral Leaders

Forgotten places buried beneath cities
once cities themselves, cities piled
on each other like ideas added to a simmer.

Under this great city lies subways
made to lie buried, buried now in neglect
signs on their sides proclaiming the irrelevant

much as my questions about the duststorms
by the road in Nevada seem unplaced or unfraught
as a turning page. Let's leave the dust

to cover and add to cover and allow
the ones who can only glance down
to revel here, caught in their minds'

contagion, simple as alphabet soup
in front of a child learning to spell
ill from his father's fatal disease.

Chicagoland Beat

This Chicago night is underwater
constructed of flurries and steam
roiling up from street vents and steam vents
cold-streaming wind blown down from the cold
regions to the north and west where once
the warmth hung tough against the turning
leaves and your heart slowed. Across the way
the offices are shadowed by backlights
the solitary cleaning lady strolls from desk
to desk and stares at the little faces caught
in jubilation the woman straining off
the decline whose smile is cracking porcelain
under a baked sky. This is the night of seldom
horror when reflections make it all when
the cable holding up the world splits one strand
more and the ground slips one drop down
by the width of your heart's smallest
beat.

On The Shore of Lake Michigan

Highrolling waves on the big lake
mimic big oceans but more ideas depend
on the way the wind blows, the way
the saltless sea drives lighter under winter
winds. I've thought about missing you
in the city as strange as fur on the collar,
as odd as the streets that head West.
Every other one lead me away, leads you
toward our former listlessness. Save
my ache, linger under the lifted traintracks,
turn up the edges of your collar and hide
your face from the wind which pretends
to be big, pretends to forgive.

Disentanglement Near a Footbridge

Underneath a bluer stone they gather
as the ground shakes from heavy
walkers making for the footbridge.
Our stone is the portent of happy
middles, and the slaves are underway
making sweet pies from the sweat
of last lovers. The stone is transparent
to the roof where washed out skies
rise to meet the quarter moon. Let's own
this, earn it, deserve it, rolling as window
dressing on an off-duty water whore.

Let's thank ourselves for clever diversions
from lustless truths and pray the quick
goodbyes as steep as impulses extend
until the footbridge melts from disuse,
until the bluer stone fades less blue,
until the place to gather has the hope
of raising shimmers, lighting lit skies,
holding on to glistening sweat until
its sweetness becomes our potion.

hum sing sing

who would ever guess that the city's blue lights
would cancel the inward moving
song who would ever

finish the tune by the beginning of the end
of yesterday noise cancelling we wrapped
different directions your flow

counter to the glasstopped table
at which my writing reflects the cleaners'
lights over the steam vents

as if Chicago were the face of routine filmed
by chems that shade them blue
the way some sky would see it

when you said goodnight
who would know C-P-R C-P-R
would awaken only the small

and unhumiliating when the road
stretched ahead and headlights hunted
no steering wheel adjustments

found the way down the dark road carved from trees
reflecting the bluelights of a distant housed TV
and the average walking away of you

The Aerialist At Rest

Your hair is limp in my hands, thin,
what some would call fine but I

find empty as open doors. Our lives have
become filtered past modulation, different every turn

on, what are passed are the greyed details
which angles turn to life, not even gender

is settled by the ending. Find
the wagon and hop on, leave behind

the ones whose happiness
is damped by a death-pass filter

spliced between their hearts
and God's highwire.

Multi-ku (1)

On trash day snow
flakes off the bottoms of clouds

covers the streets
and garbage trucks backing up pack it
down

fills in like probing questionnaires
the tracks of footprints left before
dawn

On the mantle above
creaking flakes of fired cinders
the picture of you and me
settles in

Apples and the Woman

Morning mist we thought
but just a fog twisting inland
caught corkscrewing through the orchard

waiting for redemption
or restoration after a morning
doing it by the bed

her oozed scent withdraws
from her cooling pillow
& all that's left
is less than memory less

than drops of spring rain
mites of mist hugging the skin
of green apples

Good Evening, Bitter

The evening is cracked
by understandings and slivers
of lights beneath doorways,
a broken bowl the color of glass
roses still rocks, and the cup
emptied of tea still holds
its folded lemon among sifted
leaves.

Beneath your shut bedroom door
the crack of light is darkened
by your passing,

I wait in its shadow.

Afterwards

Panties soaked in mist
drying on the line
after a passing shower glow once
the last cloud moves
ahead, and in the neighbor's
yard the swings still swing
commemorating time passing
after a passing event.

In her room above the mist
and lines she lies in bed,
the shadows takes turns
with a frolicking sun
stroking and stroking her.

Winter Drizzle Freezing Heels

By a bedroom window
leftover leaves flare red
from a red-flashing and clicking traffic
light deep in the winter night—hidden
lovers pull their blinds
expectantly.

Winter drizzle might freeze tonight—
a street minstrel picks up his heels
to guard against sticking.

At walk's end your cold
hands meshed with mine—
winter has descended
on us, and we face cold
ashes alone.

Easy Breeze

I have put my faith in the placement of falling
snow—nothing falls as it should—panties
frozen on a line proves absolution is as foreign
as prediction, rust in sled tracks show the first time
has its drawbacks. Suppose we approached
from separate quarters in a northern storm—even
paper cups of pricey coffee become buried lumps
in a foreign city—could we meet between flakes?
How heavy would your hair be on the snow?
The rigor of mind fills in details for order. Just
look at the careful significance of the mirror
of rust-red tracks in milky fresh snow
to the womb-red stains bleached half out
of the snowy woman's panties
hanging from the line too stiff to yield
to an easy breeze.

Dug Hillocks and the Master of Choice

After the walk from the center of the old part
of town to where the railbed is cut through
small hills and built up on tiny heavy
bridges, after the smell of oil and grease
dripped onto creosoted ties cut before
Lincoln's time has put me in the mood
of the Sonoran Desert, after the November
winds have blown drops off the pine boughs
adding to the mist swirling 'round my eaves
making a limp drip, after I've watched
the hooded lamp lift the last shadows
from your breasts, after the wolftrain
has howled past and loitered in the distance,
I occupy my candled study with
no one but the dim master of choice and nothing
but this pointless poem.

Night Spoons

Each night the poem comes later
—it's like a stormy snowfall
when no one can know which
side of the telephone pole
the snow will stick to.

Each night is colder than the last
—it's later in the poem when the furnace
kicks on by itself, maybe the heat
will change two words it thinks.

Each night your bed is warmer earlier
—it's like last night when some furnace
below your heart kicked in and the heat
of the back of you warmed the front
of me.

Disappearing Bark

After the first snow
light streams past the coldproof glass
we've remodeled in—she replaces
the green flannel sheets with flowered
prints and the first day of winter
springs up. The backmeadow woods
are empty and our neighbor's dog's
barks disappear within. Today we stripped
the wallpaper from the hallway
and found someone else's
bedroom. We wondered whose impression
was made there, still visible, still
stark, still cooling.

Or Holy

Surf sounds guitar
twang bright single
coil tube brilliance
bridge pickup spring
reverb tape echoplex

the sound of surf music seems harsh

finger flesh surface
damping string muting
pitch raising slight
feedback mild distortion
speaker cone fatigue

the sound of surf music seems melancholy
or holy

Stupid Angel

Still
the Superchief rages past in the night,
its howling
more like a mechanical wolf than real,
passing by
Memorial Cemetery loud enough to
wake the dead.

Fall
leaves piling up—no,
more like
the accumulation of snow and red leaves
and yellow—rise
to hide the names of the dead cut
like jealousy
into the hardened surfaces of
polished marble.

Will
the angel whose hand points to the place in the sky where
the Dog Star
will lounge when the anniversary of the death of woman in the grave
she overlooks
realize it when her fingers have evaporated away as all
stone does,
or will the pure joy of snow piling on her stupid
stone head
fill her it with nothing until the very day she
passes also away
into thin air?

Multi-ku (2)

Her shadows—all of them—
one by one pile up on the floor, the one
button open on her blouse
was the hound that chased the rest
away.

All my loneliness, heated,
I leave inside her
and only a new crop will grow
inside me.

In the morning her bad grammar
from tonight will signal two degrees
of forgetfulness, as if
reason required rationality.

Remember her stifled
laughs, her insults, forget
the sunbeams beating
on her steaming dreams.

Holcomb Dreams

Five miles west of Holcomb,
train tracks make two lines,
polished clean as surgical knives,
sticking out of moonrise.

Later the first dry flakes
of too-cold snow
will pile up, the moon
will tuck away, the Superchief

will fly from the East out
of the moonrise, and
under its tough grinding wheels
no water will be made,
just steam, just vapor,
just the after-images
of her nightmare.

Right Now

in the half-rotted tool shed
locked foolishly against entry
under an uncertain sky brimming
with snow, a yellow box of nails
sits on a shelf, and each nail
has become as cold as it can be
given the conditions.

Right now
in a city blinking sodium lights
whose sidestreets and alleys reverberate
crookedly a foreign hail of sirens
a woman is waking up in a feather
bed as warm as she can be
given the configuration of her lovers.

Right now
in a brick building above the river
whose mind cannot be made up
in a locked room filled with many others
my father's ashes sit on a shelf
awaiting the heart outside
and the hands whose courage
will be tested by the command
to sift him.

Right now,
the form holds up as well as it can be
given the change-cold, the blessing warmth.

Ripe Bluffs

Among flesh debris, fluffed mud, and spattered remains,
through streets struggling through towns like ungotten hints,
between trees spilt like curious liquids, like gutted fish
behind a wave of blastsounds and ear-pitching ricochets,
in front of me a gypsy woman walks
 carrying on her head,
 balanced like a gourd or water vase,
 the wood box coffin, backlit, that will bear her lover
 through the waves of black earth oceans
 for years of years.

Think of the Oysters

cringing in Tomales Bay—

are they cold?
do they feel the cold?
is the salten water running with sweet cold?

Their words catch in their throats,
pearl-popping on tongues
they can't have. Can't have
no matter
what.

The air they breathe would feel
to us like cold water burning our lungs,
catching words we might be inclined
to recall.

The poem of lush beauty is nothing
but the bay of cold water
salt run through by a stream of sweet

river flow like a river through a river.
The oyster that thrives there
is the lost welcome,
the cold cold cold heart
of the sweet goodbyes.

Walk Away

From up
the street her hair's the brown
of an alpine rucksack's leather
bottom-patch—to every man
the same sight unsingled
out in the crowd welling
toward the subway hole
whose inner clamber-car
carries her to my flat, the worn-out
tread marking the step before my floor.

Turning her back,
facing the night-fossiled
window frieze,
she lifts her hair
uncovering her whitened neck
and supple underhair
so I may undo her dress and

from here
her hair's the colors
of reds on blondes
by whites and clears
with auburns and umbers
under silks and crinkles
with longs and curls,
highlights and mattes,
making from no two
the same the nose-teasing tangle
that blends in the longview
to the nothing special surface
of the coiled and nameless
other who walks away.

Phthalo

The path of encounters
enables language to speak up,
perk up, get up like lovers filling up

what was over there becomes a next
to in a mob hat because hair
singd off because

explosive word bursts
because the fence post hangs
in the white heat of midday

centered under zenith
point of fact speaking as another
under phthalocyanine clear skies

working at words
the sky comes up

Picnic, Blanket

Beneath the blanket
the picnic table provides
mid-mind thawing
shadow sufficient to keep cool
coal-dusted wetsnow This may
seem funny but consider
how many died to make this true
dismay, disproportionate
dismissed Above the picnic
table the blanket provides
outer-mind freezing
sunshine sufficient to keep warm
snowflake-dusted dryrain This may
seem funny but consider
how many facts are forms
how many words are clouded
how many meanings fetch forward
pointers meaning deferral
if just one points
back like a blanket to a picnic
table it's the thumb up the backside
and off we go to Kansas lunch
w/Billy Collins w/thunder

Side of Language

I started this on 12/12 at 12:12.

Only it
wasn't in 1212. I can't write without my computer
(and not only that, any keyboard but this one is too hard)
so I wouldn't have been able to write in 1212.

Plus they didn't have English, really, then either,
so anything I did write would be like this
vbgnhju kiikoikl osd cgfo.ikl.o;as d fkius d fazi klo d asc
which is what whatever was
english then looks to me
now. Notice how the punct.uation is in the middle
of words, so may:be space is not important.

This goes to poetry.

What it is. I suppose language
is on the hook. Like imagine
going to the butcher and ordering

a side of language.

(Yum—down the gullet
not up.)

Dipping In

Somewhere after dark
along a corridor drenched with dark
sighing from infusions of small breezes
bandpassed by cracks your door

opened and you
stepped on toe out
wearing a thin blanket
over nothing.

In my room
no noise but small breezes
no on was disturbed.

Photo-Making Up

There is every reason
to believe that the Leica
that took your picture cannot realize
the significance of your thousand-color
hair, the blemishes that mark sun
passages, the black dust you've powdered
into your eyes. The chemicals on the film
and the chemicals in the pan and on the paper
sometimes break into their own blemishes.
Umber spots or cadmium. The light
passing through those Leitz and Zeiss lenses,
the Summilux, the Vario-Elmar, hm,
the stray extra photon racing from one of your blue-eyes
through one of these, luck like a word
that I've taken from the undermost place on your skin
and pasted without comment or desire
into the part of this poem
I've since deleted.

Blue Comma

have you noticed winter light is blue
in rained on city streets lit by office light by night
in the heavy forests whose pine branches hang limp beneath snowbeams
in the headbeams of cars rushing at you in the night

blue is the color of cyanide
Prussian Blue overwhelming and dangerous

blue that consumes
transparent
like the zombie your heart pretends
blue that rises
where you expected blue tone
you get blue stain
what does it mean

the night is blue
snow piled deep is blue
aging old Kodak film is blue

the heart of your inside heart
is blue

Back Back

part of the letter was written
on the back of a page torn from a loose
bound poetry workbook

unopaque paper
unbright white
low blue content

watermark only slight indentations
in a pure visual spectrum
what passes through

is faint pulse
uneven wavering
rhythm on the back backwards

Cantakerous Incantation

outside my writing room puddle
heavenly combination dirt & water
mud held by water holding mud
metaphysics of contagion spreading
with cold up hillslopes two primitive

two pure primal alternatives
warmth in warmth warming
writing of you writing again
I feel of wet snow coloring in two
colors the lost leaves of a sycamore

while inkwater evaporates leaves
ink powder deep in the white wood
pulped to paper every abstraction turns
to words water in my tea kettle boils
dry heart on the edge of unhappiness

Don't Know Much

Inside the fog, mist, cloud, nothing
really but drops condensed enough to float
but not to fall, nothing really
but a symptom of luck or miracle
that brings life close to a convenient
boiling point, nothing really but
hazily defined by what is invisible but obvious
on other sides: The train whose swaying light
pulverizes the solid mist into its drops,
the plane whose spluttering engine
makes the pillowing clouds a damper
of facts. And one by one they, the clouds, peel
from the ridge, a retired now code,
a musicless rhythm, letter after letter
written in periodic hope to an address
where only readers live.

Writing Table

On her sill a merry glass cup,
phthalo blue; a picture of a dog
whose living started when she was a young woman
and ended when she was a young woman.
In the cup, a dried rose, some white
rocks from a beach in Greece, some dark
from a coast near here. A postcard
whose postmark was never dark or visible,
with a charming note unsigned, now
from the past, a relic. Two or three plants
tangled together, from her mother's—counting
or knowing anything of them with precision
is impossible.

From her writing table
when she looks up and left,
in the edge of a pane, the shape
of a mountain, distant and weary,
this side the backside of what she saw
when she looked out her mother's window
from her writing table.

Heaven Up Well

Up the air well,
surrounded on all sides
by yellow or biscuit
colored brick,
windows hazed to near
opaque by grime, grease,
dust, whatever drops
from the sky, the clouds,
passing flyers, the part of heaven
she sees from her writing
desk is the color of yellow
or biscuit colored brick.

Her windows, too,
are hazed near shut to light
but the well to heaven....

What she needs is her well—
the shape careful, small,
cut with liquids harsh
on what blocks—her clearspot,
two steps removed
from the possibility of heaven.

Skin Edge

Skin of movement across the landscape,
geography, I touch this skin which fondles
land like cooled water drizzled on an oiled
woman's back, tanned, drops in places but snakes
of water running flush everywhere else
and changing courses. This is the skin
of how I find you, that you which is where,
the lines of lemons, the bunches of black walnuts,
the low reaches of sweetly green wheat
just rising from the kicked carpet that makes Kansas
welter. The cold reaches up and grabs the bottoms
of branches and shakes them till they still
and shimmer. The heat is a recipe on the back
of a lumpy bag of corn meal. If I touch your skin
and trace its under lines, which way
will they take me, which way will they take you,
which edge, if there be one, will be the final edge?

Burning Words

Music, its loudness rises,
falls to the ticking of a clock,
spotlights hit the singer
behind me. The shadow
of a woman comes down
the aisle, she passes,
my eyes multiply
in her mirrored dress. She says
how bad it is. After
a minute the guitar says
the same thing. Behind the curtain
ashes and shadows fall
in the shape of a blues tune.

A Hundred Shots

I remember the days I rode my bike
as hopeful as the painter by the river
who came to town that year to paint
a portrait of our famous bridge. He was
hopeful the wide sweeping curve
of the river coming down to the narrows
where the bridge rested in its odd green color,
and the small hillocks behind
would make him as famous as the bridge,
though he changed its color to an ashen gray.
I was hopeful the girl on the far side up Bridge
Street would suddenly shoot her love toward me,
as least so's I'd have the chance to step in
its path, maybe take a flesh wound off it,
if not something more mortal.

The girl held her ground though she insulted
my pants, and today she's old but in a dream
she was still the young girl in love with the painter
who went into obscurity as a painter but grew
to be famous as a photographer whose motto
is to take 100 pictures for every one you hope
to put on the wall. I think he knew this when I stopped
to look at his sketch of the bridge
in chalk but the color was off and I told him.

He said people won't believe that algaed green
of a bridge, and wished he had the time to paint
it 100 times over but the summer was too short and he'd settle
for two. I spent that summer after that girl
and took 99 goes at her. If only the snow hadn't come
in early, who knows how famous hope'd be now.

Head Stain

Some days are set aside for remembering
as if the spandrels in the mind's corners
stood on ceremony or the drunk walks
of dreams needed a magnet more than caprice.

The day the painter left town we held
a small ceremony since his day-after-day
sentinel on the banks by the bridge
reminded people to remember
an abstraction: That what's real needs
attention to stay in the foreground.

Since that day I'll sit where he painted
and hope some fragments of his mind's
dilemma rub off on me, or the remnants
of pigment left on the trunk by his spot
will stain the back of my head memorably.

Web Unrest

The painter'd park by the side of the road
just up or down from the bridge, pulling
off into the brush or onto a wide oiled-sand
shoulder, pulling out his easel and paint box,
pulling on a slicker and setting up a beach
umbrella if the clouds were low and the light
seemed constancy itself. He'd sit on a folding
stool extracted from a bag like a spider
ending the hard task of repairing a web
broken by the careless waving of a folded
umbrella as it passed from roadside to
riverside. Someday the painting he gave me
of the bridge in constant light will take
on cracks shaped like a web built
by a spider who's forgotten the genetics of order,
and I'll wonder which road to stop by,
which wide-place to park at,
which path to stumble down,
which bridge to paint, which web
to disturb.

Pigments Into Dimension

Junkyard love affair conquered
the painter who set up shop
beside the rotted Edsel
and its rusted vertical smile
to paint what he called
the most natural artificial landscape
where the hand of man was followed
by the nun of decay, chemical glee,
powerful forces hidden by observation's
persistent habit. The colors became
nature, autumn of austerity and gaud,
and I noticed his hand, his brush
would pause then juke, jump
from place to place, piling and pushing
pigments into dimension
creating a new flat by vertical world
that echoed the yard, the junk.
Edsel, totem of perfection,
hear my prayer that the design
of my left hand will dangle
as precisely as your shaven hood,
your luscious love, your rim
of decay.

Finger Paints

Only a dozen acrylics in his box
plus whatever his fussy palette might yield,
and the combinations science predicted
though he preferred to feel them between his fingers.
His canvas was just that—rough hemp
fabric he made himself, feeling each
thick thread in his fingers before washing
and stretching it tight to sun dry.
His easel was white pine pieces sewed
together with twine and old bolts
he found at the junkyard or by the road.
Only the acrylics and horsehair brushes
were storebought—even his director's chair
was made of old beach umbrellas abandoned
on recycling days and wood from a barn torn down.

He'd find a house or horsestall broken down
or a store burned half to the ground, a car wreck
that killed 6 seniors on their way to the prom
in June. He thought of the crickets silenced
by the metal wrenching sounds of a car twisting
like light off a freshly bought diamond ring
the driver would want to give his girl
after the last dance, only their last dance
was a spinetwister, and only because
of a coincidence of physics that they came
to rest in each others' arms did the painter
set himself down in front of their car
in some following year to paint only
what he could feel
between the calloused pads
of his work-wearied fingers.

Freightways

Dark overcame LA—
in the parts that do hard business,
freight trains made of boxcars, flatcars, coalcars—
but it can't. Here in the river made of no
lights, no lighting, the flatcars carry trailers broken
apart from their tractors and drivers;
they got here en masse, all at once,
on roads straight mostly, level
mostly, few choices all made

years ago. They arrive full hoping
to be emptied, to be attached
to a separate mover,

a driver who came here emptied,
hoping to drive a freeway, a boulevard,
an avenue, a street, an alley, starting in a river
painted dark, ending at the back loading dock
still dark, along a path not entirely his,
but full of his choosing.

Alert:

the crumpled paper
thrown away, a draft as lifeless
as the outside wind whose draft
just inside the window flips
the heron underfeather, down
really, over, uncrumples
in the wastebasket—sound of life
regained or an exhale? What fills
my mind is the teacup filling
like a breath inhaling full
of shadow, like the mind
full of joy emptying.

Linear Thinking

My eye close to her hand,
I can see the clouds passing by her window
speeding and slowing nonlinearly
in the ring of her gold wedding band.
Outside her gauze dress
blows on the line hung
from pulleys for convenience,
but she cycles the line for uniform wear.

When the sun was just a little younger
she dropped her lingerie on the floor
in languid drips. The puddle
is still there. One day I left
when talk turned serious,
when we stopped stroking
the lace tablecloth after meals,
when things stopped
going in circles.

Unfolded I Think

Steam rising from a fresh wash
on a day too cold for drying—freezing,
breezeless, unkind to clothes needing
to get back on. Your panties dropped
as if in haste but when I came
up the paperback was slowly folding
back onto itself closing the action
for the night and you were no longer
unfolded. I think I wrote with the tip of my finger
your name on the window last summer
when the crickets' cricks faded upto thunder—
I see it materializing in a strict order
in the fog my breath showers on the window
today, a day with little looking back and clothes
to dry though all be cold.

Song, Dream and Blessing

One day my daughter will die
with long memories I can never know
filled with love for strangers
in a town I'll never be to
in a bed, I hope, made up lovingly
by people I can't imagine who hold her
tenderly, who find her a blessing,
after her head unfolds thoughts
I could never have, after a life
defining people who today
can only stumble and mutter. With all the words
I can find and lines I can write in wild profusion,
in all my clever thinking and imagining,
with all the books I've written and postures, the incredible
singing I've heard and playing I've done and places
I've been and people I've loved and hated,
all the muscle work for nothing much
I've tried to picture the tint of purple
on the iris outside the window where she'll
breathe in her last and with that last breath
say a word that some will write down
and others never forget, but I can't:
that day is too removed, my simplicity
too limiting, my reach no wider
than her wrist the day I first brought
her home and all she could dream of
was me.

Changing Socks

On my way to see the town heaped
upon by snow,
up the slopes we sled down
following my father who loomed large then, after
stepping in his footsteps
I sank up to my knees.
Snowmelt in the bottoms of my boots
in the dire dead cold on our way up a long steep hill
to see a sight no boy looks forward to—
standing in this park-like enclosure today
filled with warm winds and rows and rows of names and dates,
who wouldn't trade?

Bark Life

& structure picked from parts
filled by junk that sometimes sags
& from this sense? Dog. Tree. Skin.
In context nonsense. She skims
the tops of sense like a swan
who flops her feet like underwalk
& pince nez black strips &
swans like ducks don't talk
don't talk to me. I noticed
last time I gripped her flesh
from behind like a faggot
she faced the sun setting
behind piles being driven
by piledrivers into soft
riverbank clay. Just then she shifted loose
& turned away from the sun
into her darker side & left me
facing some fucking metaphor.

Molded Into Sticks

ink well
on my desk filled with a deep
ink India ink of tung oil
& oxhide with a porcelain pen
feathered from a cock
I dip in & pull a scratchy
drool that makes a beauty
that leeches the head
stumps the heart

Marks Unadjusted

Two things were left to do:
dress each other when the morning rose awoke
when the touching of thighs was over with,
and write the poem of parting before our wear
overcame us. From the differing angles
and the supple smells from our clothes
we each wrote our lines on fogged windows
one pane at a time and one
wrote of returning and the other wrote
of parting. Caught in the web of branches
against sunrise, the lines tangled like black
hair pulled loose in quick haste.

Noon fire hastened leaving,
the heat we felt was not from love
nor motions neither love making.
Our lines were erased fog and streaks of finger grease,
the fog gone now is hiding them in plain sight
like just marks unadjusted. When cold
returns or dust these foggy things
will remark the panes,
show our lines baked
into hard glass.

Horsehooves Clacking Off Beat

Boring town, monotony of details,
an hour before dawn sprinkles beads on the river
the painter orders breakfast at the roadhouse,
drizzly running eggs, bacon shined with grease,
newspapers folded and refolded to tissue substance,
and each detail in the booths and at the counter
finds its way along the same familiar lines
to his canvas. His topic is the bridge, his subject
today the road that leads to it down
from little highlands. He's old now
and the line of snuffed out candles behind—he never
faces them—grows long, and the sputtering line ahead
grows short invisibly. Same breakfast, same painting,
some details snuffed out, others sputtering ahead.
I'd write these feeling steeped as facts
here one night, tonight, every night,
but the lead in my pencil breaks
when I get up, when I face the withered moor,
when I hear the horsehooves stumble
by toward the old barn tonight, when I get
to the part about the strange erotic
pleasure your lips hold out.

Compass Readings

The man who paints keeps his own counsel
hides it rather in his acrylics
doesn't tell but smears
makes it 3-d with light flares and dream
shadows when you see it you know
you've seen something

Someone drank too much
and while burning it off
the painting was knocked to the bank
still wet with low tide
and later the painting undisturbed by salt water
road to sea past ships and shipyards
past the last gull into the coming sunlight

When you see it
you know you've seen something

Night Space

dawn
or is it the full moon rising behind storm clouds—
lying next to me confused in sheets
and scattered silks slumped on the floor
where you dripped them off
you rub the red back into your eyes

dawn
(or is it the full moon rising behind storm clouds)
makes a waxpaper fog
on the backside of our frost
this sweat we've let seep out and crust our seeing
your hands cup my face in branched parentheses

Heat fired as from a gun
from my in-your-night-space finger—
or is it the full moon rising behind storm clouds—
pokes a blue hole in the frost:
dawn

Counting Crossings

The desert has no links, roads
running in crosses rarely meet,
distances are covered
by life the color of dusted green,
sight lines are clean and unblocked.
This meeting place is empty
except for me and a city of foreigners
to the sort of place that remembers the ageless
but forgets the fleeting. The desert makes no room
for numbers and counts in quantity only
marked by a cutting light it invites
to stick the fleeting hearts.

Desert Monologue

Cities in the desert breathe
in hard, inhale lines and squares,
bulge in all four directions
over dry creeks and up rims
and over, but let's think
of memory. Take the lights
that scintillate twenty miles
to the east, twenty to the west
and how many thinking minds
are rising in the dark above the orange fog:
Will the impressions paid for
crust the desert's skin or
fog the desert's grand blue eye
reddening from lights
that go on and on.

Bleached Disturbances

beneath the rails
oil steeped ties
half bleached
half blackened
half expect one day
polished and perfected
to become the mirrored
surface on which ladies
rest tea and ices

in the still surface
of the fountain
that reflects perfectly
the disturbance
of the bell leaves little
but a ringlet of waves
side-stepping past
each other

Feels To Say Goodbye

When the lights are dedicated
to flickering and after I've
passed each crossroads, corner,
park bench, and streetlamp
where we used to meet, passed
each trysting spot and time
carrying desire pulsing
like a pitching streetlight
in the fog-rising rains
of heat release, I'll cross
my legs and fold my feet
beneath and watch
the light below our window
reverse and click from green
to yellow, pause, then red, cycle
just out of reach,
the sound—of wind—is sweeping past,
rubbing hard against
the manmade stopping places.

Journey of Right Angles

In the corner of the square
a fountain fills with anguish
and a spell of moss drunk
on the long drips fed
must be
from a stream upslope
not too eager or drying under hell
made sun. At right angles
a bell is bonging
a steady sound made of constant taps
having to do with balance and steady wind.

All around women
stand
their backs to me showing off
womanly tides and how
I wonder
are their looks affected
by the sprigs of lilac left on our table
long after you
and the promise of you
have fled through a doorway
down an alley
over the lip of a fountain
under the curve of a bell
on a journey of right angles

Pages of Torches

In the world passing back
the collaborations of time
feel finer,
the lighting of lamps from flung
shatter more surprising,
the broken echoes focusing
into one strong voice more
untenable than
lost words on a page.
Just imagine it.

Listen to the Band

Sometimes snow lumped
beneath the firs and spruces
where it has fallen from branches
and made puffy piles surrounding
bare ground with a trunk at the center
is nothing more than snow lumped
beneath firs and spruces, the metaphorical
content of the image being over-reified
in the minds of over-linguistic thought,
being a sort of epi- or meta- or even ultra-
though one is more of a more while others
are over-istic. Sometimes a photo becomes
art because of what the cameraman
moved the lens away from—so,...
snow lumped beneath
firs and spruces

feel your

way strange things
happen room
darkened until you sweet girls
undressing you want to talk
about them hard music love
music made for a hard
elsewhere it's a pleasure being
a woman grab attention
lips Wednesday afternoon
my rules made up she
crawls meat eating
cat tattooed on
her belly 10 50's riding
under her pantie
straps her power
is all
here

Reach For

Dark comes, licking
clouds bottom up,
stranger meeting stranger,
lonely lightning
checking in
under parts losing pallor
while we fight back what
seems to be an act of love
taken out from under the blanket.
Like a sheep's neck twisted
to death, without electricity
darkness is to be reckoned
with.

On Hearing Mention

The city sits squarely in the hook
of the hill heading down to the waterfront
and a woman I will one day tantalize
is walking down the lowest street,
the hem of her skirt as sharp
as a cat's eyes staring down hurt prey.

We've carved our names in wood
marking heartwood red as clay,
hard eyes gauging the graying decay
as the wood recoils from holding
what grows false, giving way
to air and lift. Strangers like us

hold only after test reaches
and your skin lies like country
grown foreign with the fade
of familiarity. I've made you my city
dark with dogs running black
as water over cold rocks. What makes
me different is my fleeing fear,
my heart of prey.

Multi-ku (3)

Stalks yellowed and yellowing
blown by wind whistling through,
train hauling north wastes
no time, light of winter sunset
passes through the passengers'
windows, open boxcars, flatbeds,
between coal cars loaded black overflowing,
flickers like a 16mm movie playing
snow shots back in the past.
Snow, deep snow, follows in my footsteps
when the train has passed and the way
is clear toward the light gone down,
and soon my eyes will fill with ancient
light, of stars with furtive motives,
where what's likely is what has happened,
where what has happened becomes
stalks of wheat cut and pulled along
by what happens fast.

Lands In The Blue

Your face is made up
to show no hint of desire,
your skirt is hugging you
the way I want to
but the skin of it
is tight as steel & my fingers

cannot feel below it
the way sensitives want.
I asked to meet at sunset
so the melancholy of night
would make you desire
a light touch. But the kingfisher
sings a foreign song
that comes from the blue,
lands in the blue,
and the note you sent on blue

paper with red-staining ink
seemed like tearstains
or milk turned black in the ash.
The paper says tonight the sea
will turn back one hour.
What was wet will wet once
more. These words are puckers
of silence, where the way we stare
warps and bunches into snickers,
where evidence depends.

So Much The World

Underneath the rust
smooth polished steel resembles
a mirror pretending to be you
the way all mirrors do. What hurts
is memory gone
so much the world
creates a vapor storm,
mirrors as if on fire, boxcars
filled with photos
someone forgot to develop.
I wonder whether chemicals
still hold pictures, whether structure
substitutes for making new.

Rails along the lake,
hard lines sliver
around curves. Fish heads
distilled to skulls,
and what was in them
as dry as rust burnt
steel. I burn for you
and even dreams
are worth the sleep
they cost.

Stray Instead

Sometimes it's so predictable
it's not worth living out. Begins
with furnace burn force fed cold air.

Concentration to the point of skull failure.
Domestication. Replication. Damping.

Eventually the mountain storm turns
to the lowland and lightning strikes
stray instead of focus.

In our local hardware store
the girl in a black skirt lifts
onto her toes to select a nail
size just right for hanging
her portrait. There is no

telling how many died that night
thinking of repairing the sagging
floor instead of bringing the sad
dream into their heads. I found the wall
cold—perhaps something beyond
on its other side, something warm,

was moving off, away.

All Washed Out

Painter lifts his canvas into the trunk—
the sky has gone colorless and the bridge
along with it. The roads he'll travel
are filled with lightning shaped cracks,
painted passing lines and no-passing lines
are only a lighter gray than tar. The town,
an old shoe town filled to the banks
with brick buildings itching for decline,
awaits like a broad who's forgot to wash,
who's forgot to notice fraying satin
by her wrists and her waist. For your whiskey
it's Comeau's; for your beer, the Hi Lo.
He'd heard this from the only one
who would share his urine stained bed
and suffer the shit stains on the bottom
of his toilet seat, the only one who could
drink more tabasco than he. The doortrim
and windowtrim have only the lightest hints
of a quinacridone and phthalo he happens to carry
in watercolors each day to the bridge

In fact, it's all washed out.
Or up. Nothing he tries can get it up.

I love him
for the car he drives, its New
Mexico plates. For the colors
he carries in a maple box. For
the paper and canvas he shreds
with colors to make a life puppet.
For the acrylics that are his stains on a pure life.
For the slutty woman who smells
of sex and rubs herself all day
draped half out the window over the river
that rides through town as malodorously
as she does through my life on its
burbling way to a shining, cold-as-hell sea.

All That's Left

The day has finished;
all that's left is the walking around from window to window,
lights from other windows
on nearby hills creep in,
important conversations and topics
filled with abstraction and distraction; I walk looking
in one lit window after another.

I think of my daughter.
The trouble she got into with her mother

over weaknesses and cravings, hidden treasures
discovered. She can't see the big picture
because the little ones distract her full view.
Her cravings and desires overwhelm.
The day has finished;
all that's left is making it right, sneaking
her the sweater she craves, looking away
from the lipstick that is her weakness,
watching late in the dark
the playing at being
herself she desires.

Behind Between Lives

Edge of a lake at dawn, its edge
sharp as the killing sword so thin
it hums in the breeze. Edge
of a lake whose depth shrinks
to the thickness a butter knife
and shows so little harm
that children and fish play there.
Edge it remains between three realms.
On this edge there can be no master
since masters claim one thing only, though
there can be the master of the gap
between lives, and to master this gap
is to master the idea
behind between lives.

Remember These Words, He said Smiling Like Nickieben

Snow falls in a show of bad luck
on the quays of Paris hollowing
out a bowl beneath the streetlight
he steps out into. Shirtless and tattooed
by the image of his girl. Tongueless
except for his calloused finger pads.
Loved by no one now that language
has left him. The season word is winter
and the arced images tell about telling
and not but poetry hasn't gained an inch
tonight. Not from him. Not from me.
Cheerful encouragement
whistled in the dark. Make it safe
to make it safe. Fear may not. When I speak,
post-its sputter out. On each a phrase
from mom or dad. His voice. His silhouette.
Snow falls in a show of bad luck.
This time ours for forgetting the god of poetry
rigged it by sticking bricks
of language on our dumb dumb
tongues.

We'll Be Able to Fly

The man behind the guitar finds truth
hiding behind differences and repetitions.
He stands behind anyone using a mouth
to signify, to represent, to present epic lyrics
part of a nick vision. A fabric lingers while
they play, his parts flap in part like pigeons
fleeing, flying, floating into an ashen cliché
making way for the busload of main harmonic
tonnage.

O, imagine the delight: The reaper appears,
lips buried in the thousand locked doors,
the door cracked open, light unmottled
edging in. Burning, burning he just
laughs and laughs and finally
finally tears can let go of me.

I'm burning for you.
Out of the darkness the man steps,
his response nonsense from anharmonic industry.
I'm burning for you.
Is it the same thing and why
won't it clear, why
distort it?
We'll be able to fly.

Love of two is one crowded into bunks with hundreds
of others soon starved and felt obligated
to pass to the front, hips rocking.

From Type

One day I happened to speak.
That made me a talker.
Talkers like to talk.
Talkers have no time to listen.
Without listening you can't learn.
Talkers can't learn.
Can't learn? Stupid.
Stupid don't matter for anything.

Yes, let's reason from type. Let's start
with you.

Right On Time

Up a small hill on a dirt road in a wayside pub,
in the very back of a church an old friend frequents,
surrounded by redwoods overlooking a cold Pacific cove,
behind the theater next to a dumpster not emptied for weeks,
in the arms of my mother beside a road after an accident,
at a most inconvenient moment during lovemaking,
just after my daughter turns away to soothe her child,
alone in a hotel room walking back to bed after a pee,
at the top of my father's favorite mountain—

on a calendar somewhere,
on a map in a faint color
the exact time and exact place
of my last moment are marked,
and without a clue in the world,
and without any more effort than a heart skipping a beat,
I will find it right on time.

In Place of Rain

Funny how what we hate
becomes what we love,
what we fear is what we are. In the afterlife
the man who brings glasses
of water carries them up
the street from a river running
brown with the unseen
excrement of the dead.

Bricks in the walls
are made from the hands of masters,
bricks in the sidewalks
from the feet of dancers
bricks falling from the sky
in place of rain,
dreams in lyrics. The sounds
spelling music here are heavy
railroad cars loaded with heavy loads
of finger bells, the railcars swaying
from one foot to the other, the bells
carry out the orders of poets.

Lines of love are random,
so why not string them with hate?
Hug the lines arranged in a web,
fear that any two near are polarized
with a love so strong and a hate so fearful
that touching them or crossing them
will bring you to the town of bricks,
to the river of unclear water.

On The Backs of Screens

What I know about you
I've learned from a tattered
dictionary filled with words
no longer in use
written in an era when artists
drawing from life
rubbed their hands
for warmth while
models hung
their robes on the backs
of screens.
When I look in
my memory
the hair falling
down your back is the dark-honey
of a scarecrow:
you walking away.
Remember the time
after the cold night settled
onto the floor of your room
and the toilet flushed the silence
of your home down into its own bowels
hungering for prairies
you said
sure I could sleep here
pointing to the floor. You folded
your legs up under you like stilettos
being put away, and the black
in your eyes grew dense
as a word no dictionary
could help decipher.

Exceptional Embracing

Except what it's for
you use you
to corral flotsam rallied
by wavelets lapping the inlet
on a day when clouds split,
unimportant casks and cakes
still in tins, wine keged in oak.
Every part is used and reused,
laid on or in men of floats,
just one last untidy item half-
rolled onto the sand. Unlike
the river that pushes down
the sea or lake pushes out,
expanding or rejecting never
moving or herding, like the parts
you use, you make do with,
you play with that thing with
timing, use it for everything except
what it's for.

Jarritos Guayaba

There are times when everything's
cylindrical, when the bus you're
riding on past the nodding caps
of wheat is the target of sickness,
when the only one you can accidentally
awake is yourself nodding off
in a chair no one remembers making.
If the cook baked your brain
would it taste like the memory
of your best meal? Words are like
that—stretchable—when they snap
back they sting like rubber bands,
draw blood from fingernails gnawed
down. Cylindrical as in a glass, and instead
of the subject watching, the subject
is watched. To my left is a clear well-decorated
bottle of Jarritos Guayaba—natural/artificial
flavor the color of diluted lilacs, a drink
only for a moment sucked through
the narrow mouth of a tallboy. All
that work to make beautiful glass
for a moment's thirst-quenching enjoyment,
fruitless as waking yourself up by
accident to read the poem
pretending to be the one
you just wrote.

Simulated Life Collected

The rules would be clear

though arbitrary. You come and go
like recycled paper. Reading those

words I wonder if what's captured still
has life, whether forecasts

from a sunny past would appear
if I looked right. Tonight

I am the only one who has walked in.
I use things others have made

and discard them. The lights

are real except
the ones I write of.

Their only existence is in
a sing-song simulation.

Egged on by a bulb
lightly lapping rows

of looking-down books
my jangling neurons can't keep up, and quick

as I write them, words turn
their backs and walk

away fast, discard
themselves.

Trying Language

I'm sorry

it's your language

I'm just trying
to use it

We Do Is Face

hand in hand down the alley
lined with cans filled
and more a thin line
of oily water down its center
panties and worse hanging
from railings and ropes
hanging from railings
and tatters and threads hanging
from them you though
are subdued in raw silk
and fresh panties from
the lingerie store on Hawthorne
which where it intersects the inlet
is where the church is where we'll
never kneel nor pray nor speak
of sacrilege for our church
is at the end of this alley
and our holywater is oilywater
and our host is yesterday's hash
and our altar is an old mattress
blood-side down doused in dust
and what all else and the kind of saving
we do is face each
other

Origins of a Secret Code That Means Do It

The cold day in November
you wandered about the park
made of dried brown things
far from any town in what might
have been a prairie, in the toilet

a tongue wagged through
a hole cut in the stall
at the level of the urinal. Rural
Indiana. You asked
over and over

why we had to leave—
clamor of sunset coming
soon. Who could see
it: I'd let myself dry up

if you were winter coming
soon down a road hideous
with the insane.

Leaving Lefto

Everything about the border is thin
smells of mangoes spilled by moo
scarecrow blackcrow escrow escargot lego
thin line drawn like scars on your buttocks
when I roll you over there is odor
even the pillows will forget you
on the next tumbleweed pull
what felt to my boyfriend like yawning
was really a misprint lucky
it wasn't in a manual on theology
the road to the castle had thin curbs
thin droolstream of lefto
verwater let's rejoice over the leaving
out
of a line

Skies Water Waves

I have nothing to do with sky and
its clouds gimmicked branches
and silhouettes there is no writing
in lavender skies swans that assume
flotational water mark nothing
but little waves buzzing of electronic
transistorial thought is nothing
but a physics of blindness smiles
are fear of earth everything is rentable
dearth is the wearer of scareclothes

Above fields where field mice sun
themselves raptors spiral and gyrate

On the bed where you have lain so
long a perfume of imperfection
makes its own unsatisfactory rain
dance

Gimme a T

Skin the lavender of color
eyes a-rhythm: blinking lights blinking
lights; heel hefted to the side of a knee
exposing a beyond boyfriend
my former life closes over me
like irises returning from
a breeze that silly man has
written to me again today but
a plane turned an i
into a t o u c h
that hurts

Gropey Bugs

The moment of increase has been imported,
foreign remains, underneath tugs. When
I walk from the room the air at my back
stays with me and I wonder who is there
who walks so near. When I pass the lilies
on the table, their color is reduced 1 shade.

The place where I sit reminds me of lonely
school, the gray-green rows of stonewalls,
each stone with an odor taken from the moon,
half its surface alive with the unmoving,
the pile a warm home for gropey bugs.

Your voice has dropped 1 register,
timbre has grown sanded down
by an age. When our fingers touch,
think of the bones that don't

Games in Simulation of Death

Kettle as handbag, gauze under a suede
skirt, plastic coffee cup mostly air,
plastic spoon & nondairy creamer, stiff
napkin, they met at a magnificent
undertaking—how does
the coffee taste?—sun shining
knowingly through her skirt,
the recipe she concocted:
apples at one end, fruits of flesh
at the other :tasty as the treats
Cornish tin miners tucked in their
breeches or an apple in the other pocket.
Each fold of the sheets brings
them closer, each sea brings
another breeze.

Once I had a scar

scab over dry
up fall
away

Name: Naomi

That year we lived in trees,
the hanging-down branches touching
down delivered the earth to us,
breezes hefted up
could replace our thinking.
Birds alight reprimanded us
after reading tomes filled with a concordance
with words that looked like this:

muzzled myself
nailed nakedness
name naomi
napehair navel nearly neck
needle negligently neon

The words
the horizon
the wonderlight
everclear

Like Down

Snow so light it falls like lint
like down
is no special direction
like sun near down
scores its light/beams
near the edge of your eye
like you
wandered near me
wondering which ghost
insubstantial but in motion
lives here

The Neat Result of Endless Possibilities

cornercase
walking down a street
in part of an old city
with national banks gone limp
with shoeless slipper queens limping by

I am leaning on milkweeds
I am learning decay

the fact is life is a cornercase
nothing like the middle where stuff just is
something strange

happened for this to happen
here place of extremes
the most of this meets the least of that

I'm soaked in your cornercase
where the most desire meets
the least ability and words
of love at the corner
of laughter and tears
are accidental
sharp

Mechanical Distance Keeping

Woodsbound road once
a great thoroughfare from the big town
to the West to the big town
to the East, used by buggies in the ripe
age of innocent travel then high-clearance
trucks in its farm-declining old-age
before returning not to dust but grass
then saplings then trees and canopy,
it has known only 2 ruts and a high center
its whole life, each rut dug separately
in the earth, the relation between them
established by mechanical convention
or an idea fixed in men's minds
or an abstraction of perfect standoffishness
or the proper distance between man
and woman holding hands
down a highway holding on.

Times of the Day

Today the ends of lives came to mind,
how details of the last seconds, hours, and years...

she held his hands while he was breathing unconsciously,
then he was not—it was midday...

he ran to the toilet in the night shouting
get out of my way—morning: she found him kneeling in death....

...believe the lingering of their lives,
are more like a picture

less like a story

Finding You On A Map

I found you on the map—
address from the last
page of an old book. Placing

you on the slope of a long hill
in my book of maps. Running far away.

A computer made a list
of the 61 steps I won't take

to meet you in a front yard
where you live every after

happily with the one
I never dreamed of.

Moonscrapings

New moon, crescent moon,
tick mark indicating the start
of a repeat performance by a cool
gyrator, and below it, perhaps,
a gathering of stars like dustlight scraped
from the sticking surface of an imagined
skydome. Through a hole in my borrowed
tent by an oak spreading leafless
branches I can see just its lower tip
in the upper edge of the tear
and in the lower, Venus

shimmying in heat
from a campfire just as dawn
prepares to show us her pink. From
your doorway sipping coffee
before writing to me
of the scraping pain in the pure white
skydome in your skull,
do you see it too?

Greased Poems

Looking at my work: my work
retreats, ashamed as a woman
with a crooked pair
of eyes who glances away
always. Words as common
as the words down
by the garage where the work
of grease and tinkering
is smoother, more
clever.

Bring On Dawn?

Why does the look in the mirror
breed terror? Reflections both literal
and metaphorical. Echoes are probably
the same if I pinch my mind right.
Why the fear of real words and sentences
as if saying a simple thing simply
were the mark of an amateur?
Why don't I reflect
on these lines? Am I
the vampire of poetry who
drinks the blood-red lines
of the living and former living,
reflecting nothing,
shrinking from the stinking
rose because it reminds me
of the one who rose and hence the whole cross
thing? Or am I
—when the protective jokes are over—
really afraid of the light
the morning
brings.

Goddam Maddog

When the field feels empty
an odor will arrive and it
will be exactly what was missing,
precisely what is not wanted, an echo
of a chemical mistake or attack, or
the fine way things end, or
the extra little bit a river can have
when it's used beyond its uses.
So easy to mistake the smell for the soul,
both so obvious to any passing dog.

Lorca, Deceased

Big, who am I? The place
where this blood is studied
has a name written beneath blood,
what is found here is movement
not explanation, not near, of the stinging
nettle of each droplet,
of bitterness turning the sweet motion
red. When he died, bullets lodged
in his places of home, he showed
the great wisdom that even the profound
are made of scraps. That even blood
can glue the heart shut.

The Laugh of a Duck

We are in line to see the great pond
—me behind you, me in your every shadow—
waves whipped by winds mixed up
by a range of years, in this park
surrounding a fenced pen of playground rides:
ferris wheels and merry-go-rounds, roller
coasters and spinning wheels that rise and tip.
Maybe a tunnel of love in the broken up building
facing the boulevard. The deadest time of year.
The cold is a bitter clamp
on our faces, the wind rips tears
out of the corners of our eyes. The great
pond is too shallow to bind any warmth
from the past, the wind is too strong
for the pond to rest solemnly solid.
The cold around us is the cold between us.
Your wrists have become red with cold
in the gaps between your gloves and sleeves,
but you ask no warmth,
I give none.
But what of the orange legs
and webbed feet of the ducks and
the downed bottoms of their bodies
pushed like whims in the heatrise of a desert road
across the pond, flaphopping out
at the concrete brink of the park at the other side,
walking like turnstiles back to the first,
pushing their chests defiantly back in?
Can it really be on a day like today when even the heat
beneath your breasts isn't enough to pull me in to you,
that three ducks would ride the one ride that's open
laughing like rusted metal twisting on
rusted metal.

Shooting Slow Fire

Papa hurries back with a log of bread
under his arm, stolen from the bakery
up on Rue à Aurillac, but it's mostly rubble,
and the loaf's the only delicacy in one piece.
His instinct is to help the younger ones eat
so far from home, with danger making the sound
of a pointed cylinder the size of his girl's finger
cartwheeling at 50,000 rpm or more before
plastering the side of bakery. Rumbblings like thunder
echo down the streets like a furtive dog
looking for allowed flesh or a place to sleep,
flesh of his masters is not allowed. Papa hopes
someone will find the wine, someone else
pâté or a terrine, perhaps an unshattered jar
of cornichon pickles. Stepping over bricks
and squared stones across the boulevard,
Papa feels the bulge in his breast pocket,
a leather carrying case with pictures
of his children looking fat and dumb
in their slightly soured dresses, and his wife
sitting formally by his side at their wedding,
and another of her with her bared breasts
pointed 1/4 turn to her left tucked behind it for the long
unquiet nights. In Papa's ears he can hear his girls
singing along in whispered high voices to his lullaby &
in his ear he might just feel the first sharp sting
of my .30-'06 caliber full metal jacket bullet
entering his left ear before he dies 1/3000th
of a second later. The pictures of my wife and kids
are in a slot I carved in the stock of my Remington M1903A4
rifle here in the bell tower where I sit 400 yards away
with that unbroken jar of cornichon pickles
he hoped someone would find for the first meal
after his last.

Unnormalized Models

This is the recipe for this.
Random fields,
exponential models,
motivated from (turn

your head
and say natural language
processing

). Segmenting and
labeling sequences. A
framework

based on
conditional random fields
offering several

advantages over
hidden Markov models and
stochastic grammar.

(she was thin
I thought
not normal I
liked her segments
enough to fill
the universe with a 2-d
string)

Second, we derive an equivalence
between the well-known
technique of boosting and maximum
likelihood for exponential
models. The idea of
unnormalized models plays
a key role.

Poetry Made from Hemp and Dirt

The rope that drags in the mud
hung from a ladder or assigned
to pull a sled, real hemp, plastic,
color of living wool, color of firetrucks
and ambulances, is made of nothing strong,
each fiber thin, frail, or brittle, with no
complex plan just simple twisting.
Mud's not special either, hanging
onto rugged soles, staining the way dirt
stains, watery but not drinkable, aftermath
of a deluge or melt, nothing complicated.
Frayed rope in fresh mud, sled ready
for baking in its summer shed, all
the pieces of poetry are here
but there is no grand entrance.

Used, Too

In the drive beneath the cottonwood
heat rises up around the dulled
green pickup, gun racks in the back window
loaded with guns—it seems like, like
you, they could go off. Everywhere the heat

flies everywhere. At dusk water
pushed out of the green garden hose
flows hot, hot as you driving, dust flowing
behind your Cavalier, up the drive. At night

you tuck one leg under the sheet, the other
out as we listen in the dark to clothes
in the dryer whirling, the way we used
to.

Bead Lens Logic

When lightning flashed I was
standing beside the window
holding back
the curtain gauzy like silk,
a translucent skin
tonight. The rain had just finished budding
the window making lenses that distort
or clarify. It was close the flash, the boom
quick and the rolling decay focused
on me. In that gap between
two senses lit up
is when I knew I saw it
in the few strobes out there
visible, reflective, out there,
something.

Floor Life

We lie near
each other

tonight separated
by ocean, plane ride,
homelights below, above.

My shirt and pants
on your blouse and skirt

on the floor in your closet
tonight.

Early on the Day of Endings

on the road dark with 4am
and snow the sheets
of newspaper float and catch
in the brambles dry snow hits
the headlights while I
wait for you
in the car the elevator door
opens waits shuts
in the building where promises are
severed.

Magic Marker

Half her beauty is the dark
across the lecture hall with lights only
above, above and behind her, her
cheek and forehead lit and her jaw
invisible blending with the darkness
clinging to us like worn shoes
or a chalice. Her hair is the
yellow of a child's magic
marker, and her one blue eye watches
an other. Without the darkness beneath
she is just a woman, just someone in the hall
watching with me the forelorn speaker
telling it like he saw it. The dark has painted away
her plainness, erased the dark undercoat
of her brown hair, refracted an off-grey to sleeping
beauty blue that glues her eye to beauty.
This darkness is a gift
to me and for her
it is just the darkness falling haphazardly
where light will not tread or cannot
in a room filled with the story no
one is hearing

Ars Poetica

My writing is an anthem
sung to burning bics waved by
throng of soundless women
faking. Candles made from the lard
of rhyme have reason enough
to paddle down rivers of verse
by a bramble patch containing a tunnel
just big enough to crawl under and into,
to lie upon one's back face up
to thorns and sharp
sunlight, and there reach up
and pluck the title's first ripe
syllable, the one made famous
by that doo-wop band named "Quit
Lookin' at Me." In the front row
rhyme and reason stand—the only ones—
bic-less, arms folded, lookin', lookin',
getting ready—ready, ready—to
quit.

Pound of Flesh, Bucket of Loose Regrets

What I'd like is a bucket
of flesh to pour
my heart into large
enough to
hold what needs
to be
held there.

Savage

Under an olive tree a poet
camped, three weeks of high
living under branches angled up.
A crowd had placed bunting
in the branches, colors of savageness
and dust, twin of eucalyptus. On
his blanket olives fell and stained him dark,
and the smell of green flesh was high
in the world. One day a wise bird
landed in the olive tree and decided
after 3 hours near dusk to sing
itself to death. And after another
day, so did the poet.

Family Vacation in a Brand New Travel Trailer

That night near Katahdin
we parked our trailer by a river
we had no name for,
on a gravel road no cars just trucks
ran down days, and in the night
the no-see-ums stormed
through our screens and mosquitoes
ravaged Snooks who feared
the rushing dark by the river.
Otters stood on the opposite bank
and laughed a silent animal laugh
while planning how to raid our food box
hung in fear of bears
in the lowest branches of a pine.
The heat even that night was too high
to close the windows against the high-
pitched wingbuzz of insects intent
on blood. We learned what living
meant in a tin box, a family packed
in its utter oil. Lying awake
those nights wondering how many
flats we'd get driving out, wondering where
the road that seemed so dark
a line on our map seemed to go nowhere,
remembering how what we looked forward to was
the trucks that passed in the days,
raising dust clouds thick as sand,
thinking how the otters stood and watched
like sentries ordered to keep us alive,
we listened to the constant buzz
of life by the river in a tin box, not
a word, not a laugh, our best vacation yet,
we listened to everything
out there waiting to get us.

Exfoliation

as if from under an awning
revealed like a young woman's breasts
above the lengthening shouts
contrasted like turquoise on cobalt
reflecting cloudlessly on pond ice
like a mirage of shaped sounds
as seamless as axioms of tenderness
and roaming rules
longing for the bygone unfolds as stiff
as hunger as stern as
thirst

http://www.BerlinOnline.de/spass/live_kamera/.html/alex.html

The name "Christa" sat down,
her back to me, her fists behind her back.
With the three least fingers of each hand she held
the fingers of her lover, and in the circle of the thumb
and forefinger of her left
she held my thumb, and in the other circle,
my forefinger. Her mother watched.
Later we drove to a German bahnhof
on a high place leaving a valley. The arrows
meant the opposite, and a couple
stole my car for a baby carriage. The Ford
dealer was down the street, but I didn't want
to find it. It was the last I saw of her name.
Later I sat in my study with the warm spring air
of California heaving like breath in and out
of my opened screendoor—I watched the cars
at 3am drive in big jumps through
Alexanderplatz on a rainy night in Berlin
as if miracles could happen
or do.

Seduction in a Dropshell

lingering with sandgold underpaint
entitled to feel oppression no paranoia
less than a mess but more
than cigarettes and a Schlitz spilt
on the padded ottoman where
you stood and by simply dropping
one article you had me

Goodbye to An Imaginary Sister

Thanks for coming to
see me off on this journey laden
with the old and getting older,
the last love heaves and laugh hives.
The awning is perfect, keeping out
just those things that come from above
but allowing like a gracious king that
which crawls or scurries or flies low
ducking radar or other perceptions.
What it won't keep out is you, though,
and the wings that offer alternatives
to lightweight breaths and the torch
known as heartblood.

Side Street Lullaby

sidestreet in a small New York
town near the heights
Hudson
hour or two after sunset in late March
cold and few
streetlights people cars
Nor'easter set on high
rain closing ranks
ruling the sides of the streets
the few friends on the streets are repairing
a stalled car and the attitudes rubbed off
their hands onto their foreheads
drip into the streams and close ranks
just as I start my end of day hopes
the fire station horn kicks in yellow
trucks kick on the perpetual hopes of whispers
and strange words meaning only their sounds
close ranks

Edge Linger

Lingering, approaching silence,
what changes their sounds
when words are stripped
to the breaking noise of insect wings
in a dry hot heat? Bear up to the possibility
of making a final run-up. Meanings, mappings,
identifications are lost. Your voice has changed,
raspy to lingering whisper, sound
of moth wings dropping dust
on the touchy hairs on the edges
of my lips. I've waited for these
sounds the way a gunfighter awaits
the bullet spinning, boring its way
through the air, straight as despair
boring in, straight to the heart.

Under Nothing

You're nothing
but songs
my sleek farewell
welcomed under
current tight
twists breaks
let's base are belong
simple sheaths
cover like
hoods under
current

Bless Kosher

Aisle-bound pacing
panther hot
down showing guests
to seats up
front to greet men
who (in) ruts
behind her bless the hour
past dusk kosher Saturday
deli after dark
she has been bound
shape still is
as she waits for the un-
blemishment uncovenant
the unwhirling of
what
she is

Fresh Kills

What's left to dream of? What's
been left behind is lush
covered, discarded—red-mesas
left behind, tidewater lingers. Payhaulers
lugging up the grade
to Section 1/9 where gulls hover over
thrownout dreamscraps
and pick them,
pick them
over.

Gathered tenderly.
Bones eaten to.
Book, photos, papers stared at,
read.

Trashed.

Lug them up the grade.

Some small dreams lie here.
I'm
hauling larger ones, untossable ones,
ones less
likely to bloom
in putrid piles of beauty.

Concoctions

singing like raindrops
long ago is long ago any
sort of anguish acts like a polish

rigid but realistic
your turning speed
your carrying load

I've underestimated them
but now my thoughts are realistic

all 8 rimpulls
are equal great patches of rubber
and a short base keep the load
balanced

I've forgotten
where I dumped
our last love-
making

it is part of the squirt-spirit
we concocted

Drive Through The Bronx

deathfields of the east
hold wide walkways
back to
back headstones
challenge our feeling
that death requires
completion
I know under
these fields the stone is thick
as the last thigh
a rusted red that might have
been rich soil one day
growing tobacco
for cigar papers once
I saw a goose hit by a truck
wondered how
the migration was going
others glided
passion sheet ice
potholes a parkway
you can't be a truck

what I remember
are the fields of death
undulating and going on
down the roads that loop
back in larger
larger circles

Rigamarole for the Panther

your silence is sharp
wind through the cage bars
or a stick that clacks from one

to the next while you circle
fondness for the captor
is ritual myth of devil

truth I am kept
limited whipped fishnets
your color blue wrapped gauze

suddenly you lurch to
me as if ecstasy
filled one side of you

near me

On Bellies by Night

desert's not
what it used to be—

long valleys gray
with a dusty crust
or red with accents what's alive

just barely heavy reinforcement
against loss now it's

lines of lights blue
in the night air that rises like prayers
delivering heat to what hangs

above like a watchdog
and sodium lights pale orange
halogens down the strip

and nowhere to find
a likely lover clean crust
light reinforcement

or none

Needs

every time he plays
she turns her head to watch
one phrase in the mic needs
one look to her left
what's the need
rhythm and song
framework or scaffold
holding and outlining
there is no need
no need to look
when he plays free
she rocks away
spins rhythm
synced up
bass and bass
drum the other girl just
plays

this one
needs

Tickles of God

the author of chaos
gave a reading
in which words floated like sperm
in a lecture-hall-like uterus
but instead of nonsense
the listeners spoke
and the author became sawdust
because a data switch
decided to become sentient
or at least unrepentant
and like little waves on a shore
the fingers of reality
tickled God
a little too

The World And

visit the world and
where connections take the name
where all is bereft but none foresaken
visit the world or
where anything goes
but nothing is settled
though something is
always
every and every or
every conclusion
this but not that
behind a building alongside
the platz the sun is rising
but the allnight pharmacy
blares lights every and man and woman
relishes or freedom

Death Row, Alabama, 1938

looking up at what the sky
looks like at night
train wheels steel on steel
like violins 2000 miles long
strung tight as the clench hand
on the heart I listen & listen
every night Southern heat
soaks through my bars I hear

sounds of doors opening
closing
same metal sounds as trains
clanging shut
softly spoken words
as if lover to lover
preacher to condemned
orders are read
last words last
everything
lights overhead
dim looking up at last
at what the sky looks
like at night

Script Selection

I drove before
traffic to Boston
on the coldest
instant of the year
parked in my favorite
lot in the Back
Bay. I got out of
my car
into the back
seat, ate my lunch
for breakfast
stretched out
to snooze, the opposite
two open
windows forming
a pipeline
of scripts
I could play out—
if I chose—
that day.

Mines Blow

I found myself
unable
to speak lost in

lost
out of words

in my hip pocket
a script

mine?

California Dreamin'

Falling brown
leaf exercising its right
to decay still
holds a relief of complexity.
Piled leaves,
cascades crumpled and chaotic,
a simple pattern
of abundance has gone
wild. To the rescue:
a hand that covers
excess, too much,
complications,
leaves
crayon drawings
of abstraction, of my friend,
ignorance.

Pop

Clouds spit drizzle, low-hang
like fruit gone bad before the pick,
like leaves in a fit of pre-fall before snow.
In all this I'm walking in a blur
from the winteriness around me, longing
for the safe place,
the warm place,
LA.

By the way
a coal-warmed church
& hardwood floors where I kneel
before God and preacher, everyone
there for the long haul—such
a day, a cold day
outside.

Leaves have turned
like fruit forgotten
or ripened without relish. Sky
mask for the robber or the cold
heart are held here. She waits
and in ignorance she could not
resist, refuse my choice—
leave today, such a day,
a winter's day.

Blesséd Lives of Dogs

At the end of a day
the music slows down,
the music that plays in
my head like a score driven
by forward emotions.

Or lilacs fall before me
staining the road home a faint
purple and a scent
reminiscent of longing
or childhood spent behind
a barn alone but not lonely.

At the end of the day
the old dog that stayed by my side
when I shuddered from cold and fear
and by whose side I stayed when thunder
and storms scared her shivering in animal
fear will face the rag soaked in ether
I hold like a salving cloth over her muzzle,
for she is ready to die
for me, as she has been—
purelove heart,
sentiment be damned—
all her blesséd
life.

Bracketed Dates Scrivener

The oldest stone
in the graveyard is inscribed
in German—loving script,
a date whose distance
is measured in centuries.
An older one with death's
teeth clenched and fingers,
no, bones, that cling
to the sides of slate
sinks inch by inch.
Last night my daughter,
who like me loves
to wander past graves,
asked what happens
after we die. I told her
of the tulips
growing from hearts
perfected in stone
by John Quickel,
bracketed dates scrivener,
who adds his art
to each man's death.

Chaingang River

What is it about rivers?

Local lows, cutbanks:

seduction or persistence times

aggression. Usual ones flow

to bodies of water that evaporate

away or flow into the water table.

Some go to sea. Quick or slow.

The one I love

comes raging out of the mountain

in storms

flattens out on a sand floor a hundred

miles square

disappears into the sand

into the air.

It just spreads and slows

deepens and lightens

I love it for

the metaphor

unhidden

plain.

Rumbles Down A Dead End

Trucks that drive by
make male sounds—
assured by the echo-making
designed into custom mufflers
installed on hot afternoons
under a tropical sun. But the woofing
purr they make is deadened
by the soft silting sand
churned by years
of the same ole,
chopped into chunks
by seasons hunting,
fishing, leaning back
on hoods—the rites
of men lurking
through life
at the end
of my road.

End of the Road, Baby, in a Georgia Roadtown

Think of the different facts
layered on what we seem,
how what you feel is not what I think,
how plain pastiche is more truthful
than the material effect of therefore.

The world outside my room
is simple: a main road with traffic lights,
a frontage road with fast-food joints,
a train track between humming
with cicadas in the trees husking themselves
to death, steel tracks humming
with the promise of freight. I stopped outside

the Dairy Queen conveniently cold
in 90 degree sunset
heat and stood watching a man sun
himself in the setting sun.
Later I saw him climb
into the back of a custom Kenworth cab
and I understood his sunning
smile. You

are like my air conditioner tonight
and just as far away as all the drives
he'll have that we
won't.

Who Picks

Big drops pull loose
from a light overcast

—opportunity too appealing;
—wipers smear & a car misses
a turn

& the poet laureate in his L. L. Bean lumberjack shirt
seems stumped.

It's red with a little green.

I pull over on the big beltway
get out & listen to the sweet hush sound of tires on concrete
—107db knifing past the quilted workpad
of the poet hard
at work gathering shirts,

missing
inaction.

What an occasion
to miss the ripening confusion
of choice.

Hair Tale

Amorous parade
when sunset hits and

the temp drops
from 68 to 35 in 5 minutes
a quick-swelling knee

inability to
walk
crawl
yell

asleep in beds
constant temperature of being
dead
unmarried
or unacquainted
asleep in beds beside
each other

paths loop and kink
as if they were chemically straightened
reverted to nature
once straightened
out

Poem on the Forward March of Science

Confusionist, shallow thinker,
skimmer of surfaces and liver
of a thousand lives, pattern reactor,
uninformed explorer, master
incompetent, madman, abandoner
of reason, enemy of logic and rationality,
frequent negator, theory ostracizer,
limp enforcer, undisciplined passion,
critic at large, unfortunate reviewer:

Let's hurry away from deep
thinkers whose idea of fun
is to explore the next layer
of mud.

Languid Visitors

This place worships the working
of small things: elbows, straight
connectors, valves made of brass
or plastic, printed circuit boards
kept dry, paths through unwalkable
terrain. Even small fires in 50 gallon
barrels to burn off windfall
are part of the liturgy, part of the maze
walk on knees. What's left out
is abstract: the concepts that shape
vision and the ability to smell,
the direct sensations that can mean
nothing at all. The small things here
are large, made of major music played
in languid rhythms but behind the beat.

Tell me how to blend this life
with the one whose evenings
come at dawn, whose stride
is forced, forceful.

Dream Underwhelm

Wind is little
but a dream moving along the ground
seeking the lowest spot
in which to settle.
Like a path looped
on itself, like roads
with kinks a dream
enfolds the weakest,
warms the smallest ambition.

I saw the captain grit his teeth
I saw the hustler polish his Lincoln
I saw the small frog hop into the path
of the oncoming dream.

Jesse Thing On the Dignity of Graves

The cemetery endured a grave
indignity in its 200th year—
nothing as dire as Sallie with the pine
through her hips or Jesse Thing
shouting at the bracketed date scrivener—
when the boughs fell and shattered all
the headstones made of slate
or thin marble or granite, and little
do we know how they'll be put back together,
this band of 50 on a truncated pyramid
100' by 100', 40' up in the air,
awaiting the heavenly shovel
that will scoop them all,
headstones, pines, and all
into a dustbin destined
for singing.

The Last One Out is Out

Can you remember the hopes
that began in a parking garage
underground on a warm day
and the smells of gas and oil
lighting up the air, filling it
more than hope ever would?
Flammable is how it seemed.
The flame of your hair seemed
fake. Things like this are hardly
known. I found my way to you
but the parting seemed
most important. Every good-
bye was the best part, in part
my fault for slow starts, in
part your fault for no-
where to go.

American Dreamboy

This is the America of road songs:
asphalt, macadam, concrete, oiled roads,
dirt roads, gravel roads, roads with high middles
growing timothy and bermuda grass (kweek),
and lines alongside: telephone, electric, lines
that hum from calls home or away from home.
This is the America of wandering, of fast
driving down from passes, along rivers,
across plains, by surf, through sequoias,
into towns made light jewels in the dead
of night, through cities lit sodium orange
or blue where lights for cleaning crews
keep awake, up into mountains, past farms
as old as angels, to the graveyards of the frontier
we passed just 100 years ago. The song of roads
is the song of lines, verse of understanding
and sympathy, too young to abstract. Let
me find the nourishment of this land,
these roads and plains, these weed-lined
avenues of contemplation, where the creosote-
soaked poles rise up like stylites, like crucifixes
half-made, like rods grounding hope, like
monuments to lingering dismay. Let me have
this if I can't have you.

Linger Longer

Where worlds meet rules
can't be kept, language once precise
exact, accurate chuckle and giggle—
joke's on us for thinking dumb.
What would it have been
like to hear you tickling
my head my ears
in what passes for warmth
in yours; what moves would you make,
would I, what surprises,
what wouldn't surprise
that we thought would?
Smears. Spray and splash.
With sharpness gone,
how soft could it become?
I am left the only
world builder, each sweet sound
pushed next to another making
noises of warring, warnings,
warmings, want; each sound
a mark left in the world. You're left
in the world you found, one whose roads
just go places, whose houses
are cleverly built to last,
where let is not allowed.
Look behind each façade you find,
seek my sign, listen to one world
leaking into another.

Death of Poetry

Sit by the window and weep
for the poet
has given up on you.
He's forgotten how you tried
to touch him once,
and how you looked
as the train rolled out
or the car drove away—
either case the air
filled with the odors
of machines at work
in service to men and women,
even machines.
The poet is the one
who speaks, who writes,
who writhes from a suffering he alone
can feel. You sleep
with children
and speak strictly
of the rules of romance
while snow falls like
the false sleep of
predators. The poet was your prey
and his defense
was a hyena's laugh
made rich by vocal stops
and glottal hiccups.
In the end he sat silenced
and blood from his heart oozed
from your lips.

Lotion Alone

Whose song
do I listen to? When I circle
then fly home, which direction is it?
Snow settles down like the softest
whisper in your repertoire,
and the lightest breeze
lifts its skirts; the sound
is human, human—I imagine
you sitting in a full chair
with something that might resemble
a tear in your eye;
I wonder: Is this for the children
of leprosy who don't inherit
but catch through love?
Lotion takes it away,
rub a dub dub—
that's the rub:
like lotion
like disease
like love
you're just absorbed,
and by yourself.

Parts Parting

Let's dance
let's wiggle and sing
with our mouths synchronized,
let the sound of harmony bang harshly
into dissonance with the pure best
between. Let's look
at each other square out of the corners
of our eyes,
forge a bargain for our mouths to smirk,
for our lungs the break a laugh
before our fingerpads part
at the start of another last dance.

Unreachable Address

Someday the tips
of your fingers will brush
the edge of a broken glass
once used to quench the thirst
of a man lingering near dry loss.
If you can't write,
funnel your groggy feelings
into the picture on a dime
picture postcard and mail
it from an unreachable
address near you, which is clearly
not near me.

Anger Angst

I walked past, paused
past a comforting sitting stone, one
on which we could sit close
and huddle against the wind,
watch the stubble in the cornfield
freeze, the geese overflying us
on their ways away,
listen to branches clicking and whistling in the elm
brambles near here.

I tried to imagine this
except me humanless scene
with someone like you added
as a prop perhaps sitting
perhaps gulping wind
perhaps more but nothing
human popped to mind.

Casual Silence

I've been cut
as if by the edge of a knife or a coach
judging talent or appropriateness.
The edge made cutting smooth
by a rough stone—it's the angle
that's judged not its softness.

Things hard: car-door slam
echoing in a parking garage underground
where the smells of autumn
go sour or the breathtaking
shupp of a subway door closing
when goodbye was right.

In all this I've been cut
as if by a sharp knife
or an edgy coach who looks on my skills
as incomplete, unformed, ill-formed, ungainly.
I've been cut,
too,
by your teeth measuring off the dots and dashes
of a casual silence.

More of Your Color

evening standard
found you on the map
longing for normalcy among malingerers
how soft is your breath passing over your vocal folds creating a lovestating bark
you are used to use
refuse to refuse attentions
figure yourself out like a computing puzzle of who sits atop whom
and maybe the sundowns will come slower
and with more color
more of your color

One Off

senses of sentences inhibit
the move

from song to music
in which the habits
of civilization

fall loose
like a near shear gown
whose buttons have been snapped

one by
one off

Sacrifice of Liquid

All lipstick is orange
you said smearing
the meats of your lips
the color of artificial red

grapefruit juice—
sweet, appealing
as tangerines
or blood
oranges bleeding their juice
through your squeezer,

pouring like acid
onto the bitterest
fronds of an expanding,
vexed wound.

Conjugate Lethal

she has been the other
everoutward expanding
delight of differences
holed and aloof and the imagination
of her voice from the regal bark
in service of description
to the sizzling whispers of her brush
ears mouths strands of hair has filled
me with the void
her absence
provides

like the lake whose draining
both fills and empties

like the doppler of catch
release

Of Hope Hung Out

Tailings like lime
like candle drippings
at the base of a picket rock
remind me of ice
of the freezing
of your crack
of hope
just around the corner
around the bend
round & round
cactus jewels and sweet juice
tinkering like diversity
like your toilet laugh
like the rings of contained passion
wrapped round a turquoise tank
a copper basin
a little kettle
of sublime lucky lotion
holding forth
somewhere else.

By the Long, Distant Highway

"Do the dogs have names?" I ask.
They move like weavers' shuttles.

The silversmith looks at his silver loft,
its windows facing the buttes lingering
to see the next wave move in,
the sky wondering whether to drop its guard
and pour on the dryland
or clear the mesa and head East,
the horses nick from one hoof to another,
sheep bleat and the wind, low, hums
the dish, the land drains low to each
horizon line, the mesas sit as they have for centuries.

Quiet comments.

"Yes, they do," he says and climbs
the stairs to do one more overlay
before the sky tempers the sun.

Mesa Songs

Don't say the words
while the pure music might linger
while the dancers still shuffle
though the beat is dropped once in twelve
and the rest stop stills the rising dust,
don't say the words
as long as eaglets lie tied to the roofs
and the worlds remain mixed up,
songs remain strings of mumbles
and shrieks and the girls dip their heads beneath
the undercarriages of 4 by 4s or carry
bowls of bland stew to the center of the plaza
where mere life circles like the raven
lifting from the low plateau to the village heights.
Don't say the words while the possibility
of song lives.

Green of Beauty

Days grow long, grow hot,
grow through the pavement
like insistence, grow greener
like foolishness, grow dimmer
like forcible abstraction, and the days
made of you head like ponies heading home
making for the sunset growing
behind the man-cactus sprung
and headstrong butte
in other directions.

Search Methods

The desert is not empty
but filled with living and becoming.

The desert is not brown
but green with green bark that will live
even when leaves are shed to preserve moisture.

The desert is not hot alone
but becomes like ice in the night
and in between times.

The desert is not lonely
but fills with the lonely
who wander like rivers flowing
on level plains searching for ways

to search.

Pale White Ink

Like roads that end
before you get there,
like rivers that evaporate
on sand plains, like bridges
turned to let boats pass beneath,
like the heavy rain that turns
to a cold breeze before it reaches
the hot yellow grain, your answers
to my carefully framed questions
are made of pale white ink.

What We Didn't Think

At the door to the dance
just when the guitars turned reverby
and the plucking changed from twanged
to muted, guttural, like words hard
coming out, as I turned to
walk to my car to drive through
the coldness to the river where the air
spreads colder, wetter, he pulled
you close like a sweater he wanted to hug
to his chest, kissed you like taking nectar,
and just as I wanted
you thought I didn't see.

Ringo!

Its address says it all:

2nd Interchange, Exit 340, Willcox, Arizona,
home of Rex Allen, which I can't criticize
seeing's how he co-starred with Slim Pickens once.
Plaza Restaurant. The waitresses are giants
or have fewer teeth than God designed them
to have, or wonder why the hot water
was turned off and the hot tea needed only one
ice cube to be ice tea. The chicken is breaded,
the succotash is overboiled, they serve grits with butter,
and the chops come from overfed porkers, tender
as the kiss the toothless waitress would love
to impart. Is it any wonder, I wonder,
sitting forking the succotash down to a polite
level, that 50 miles to the south the man who died
a mysterious death by the side
of a creek, with a name that rings like a bell
became famous, more famous than Rex Allen,
more famous than Gloria, the 6'5" waitress
slinging succotash like used up lovers,
more famous than half the famous poets
who ever lived. Did he deserve it enough?
What did he think of succotash? Did he like
his women with gaps?

Like Romeo and Juliet

every mile
or two gaps
of 10 miles sometimes
but rarely
where cars are far
driven trains are long-

haul rats rabbits
coyotes skinks cross drunks
cross trains cross
crosses white
wrapped ringed
in the red of roses
of goodbye

at crossroads rail crossings
where the unrelated become sudden-
ly embedded

dead linger
wonder really
which cross
arm points
the way
they missed

Short Blessing

Underneath truth
reality lies

Dandy Candy

The surrealist packs his bags
and seals them but
everything drools out
and all's left is the giraffe
carrying brightly powered color
tools. At least he's not drooling
camel. Reality evaporates
leaving a fine tea. Alas,
politics is far away and might
be counted on for a pudding kiss,
would the flickering strobes just
provide 2 more lights.

The meaning of surrealist
talk is like friendly computers:
GUI, Louie,
I love you,
GUI Louie,
I'll be true.

Riding Home Up a Steep Hill Near Dusk

I heard the knuck of plates clucking just before dinner becomes

I caught the lisp of trees trying to say their own names

I smelled the grease smoke as it rose inhaled by distant clouds

I felt the boring sun's heat through the pores of my chewed-up T shirt

Over yonder the fate of man grew damp between legs closed to all

Though it tries life cannot be tougher

Apology in Abstract Terms

Likening the undercurrent of suspicion
that drains beneath my desire
to a forceful wave cutting banks of sand
and streaming them onto a lower shelf
was the first in a series of lengthening steps
away from the drunkenness of abstraction
that my formal life slipped on
like the skin of a dead bear.

The Lesson of No Lesson

Waving, they're waving
like people on the Titanic heading for the bottom
like palm fronds dulled by a bronze decor
like water taking on the forms of forces reacting invisibly
like grains and grasses planted near a family shot to death all on one warm November night
like hair on beauty queens who plan your rejection while they endure manicures
like people standing there
saying goodbye with their hands
and arms, jerking their bellies and hips,
switching from foot to foot, swaying their heads,
using everything but their mouths and voices
as if there were something to not trust
about them.

Gee Whiz

Whenever the paints hit the spinning plate
I cringe—straight lines of color fleeing
want fly outward. Blotches dropped on the edges,
you, lessons of release—these are
all sprung loose by the spinning art wheel
I dizzy like the art wheel I don't
have. Or else the little toes of cold air coming
to visit me as I write words that
do flow, do lose their energy like cool summer night sap. Only thing
is, the one constant becomes the changeable
dream.

Outside the Theater on a Night Dedicated to Poetry and Play

the sheets are easy
to throw on the sidewalk the words too
easy

they bump on a liquid breeze
so light she slowly
gently

falls to the sidewalk
looks up in
my eyes her history
a finality growing
long

diffuse all-covering
what she sees she takes
with her as she falls even further
away

like the words dropping
dust from the sheets
all of it blowing lightheartedly
away

See the Birds, How They Travel So

The master waits
under the vines by the jasmine
the hollow flowers exhale.
The scent of distance zig-zags closer
avoiding time. There is something below
that is like us but less confident. I think
I saw her fluttering away, the faintness of her heart's
desire not enough support
for the fullness her life once demanded.
The master waits
like a hollow in the ground waiting to be filled,
like vines and flowers aching to give
forth their smells. The scent of distance
is upon us joining our silent culture,
emptying hearts of their desires
except for one desire,
the one that entered after it split
from a traveling flock
just back from a trek
to a distant holy land.

Sentimentality Tied to the Rails

I wish I could hop
from one rail to the other
walking through cornfields
in Iowa where poets write,
to experience one sort
and then another
of life, maybe one person
and then another.
Like graveyards filled
with men buried near one
wife, near another wife,
these rails speak of possibilities
of future not past.
I could tell you names and dates,
number of children by each,
colors of blended lichens,
how close and cool the graveyard
is as I pause my rail hopping.
I could but I'm spending my time
not on the sentimentality these images
render, not on the way out down these rails
at noon, but on the hopping, hoping
to get from one rail to the other
in one hop so the damned metaphor
could work out and not stumble
on the ties like a man with
a clown's pencil looking for click-closings
when the only clicks are the heavy steel wheels
crossing joints.

Rain Over Summer Grass

into this morning
the rain soaked earth gives up
its worms who unashamedly
curl around each other
in an unexpectedly
thoughtless light

we stop
glance the other's way

the robin pecks
then swallows
a worm

our lips hover
then meet

After Mowing

Your hair has filled with the heavy
dust and sweat of a hard day
unscrambling the grass
mowed and raked into rows,
and in a few days we'll bale.
The tractor, old by choice,
is clicking back down to earth's
temperature and on the dulled blades
of the mower blood of field mice
and a groundhog gels.

The heaviness in your arms
has conquered you
and I wash your hair
for the first time
feeling not the hair but the hardness
of your skull, neither what's soft outside
nor inside, but the stuff of long time.

Bounce

The old pond
made maybe by my grandfather for the benefit of cows
had turned that late late afternoon
to sky
brought on by a stillness that had been firming all day.
From another angle
it was the unmoving young maples
he didn't figure on
that were bunching the water in.
Beauty like this leaves me
unmoved so I reached for a rock
and threw it at the old pond

The pond was disturbed but
unharmd like anyone
suffering a heated
moment. I remember the rock
when it hit—
bouncing,
bouncing again,
bouncing into the maples
whose leaves have covered it,
the fate of all things hard.

No Nada

I wonder.
There is no tree.
I've become a dilemma.
There is no yard.
I spot the eucalyptus caps about the drop.
There are only colored leaves to pile on.
The back and forth between subject and object
leaves me wondering about one of them.
Hopping like a house sparrow from fence to feeder.
To make a thing take away all that isn't it.
To make another means you made a mistake.
To make a thing take away all that isn't that very thing.
No mistakes now.
The dizzying beauty of spin art.
He painted her on her black velvet skirt
and she was in it and on it.
And now it's fad, the Elvis medium.
I wonder if I've become a dilemma yet
in the world defined by nots.

art

I live on pages,
in the white space hedged by inkwords.
Today I've placed my hands on the beating heart
of the word
heart.

Bag Thoughts

The room is filled with eaters—
like the woman dressed ethnically
who brings the spoon of white cream
soup to her cleansed lips and drinks
with the sound of a covered gasp:
She's lonely from an unexpected departure
or a missed discussion; perhaps her
flowers have wilted despite religious
watering. And

to understand each one well
enough to pick, I bring
my bag of dreams and pin
to each the one that fits
and thereby choose my partner
somewhere between haze and
high blue sky.

TransWork

I'll customize a rendezvous
typing these words I feel like
each curve is remade each
time we meet back there you know
where the industrial city—no
connotations—lies
gilded by a sudden low sun
beneath opening clouds
late afternoon in your northern city
who could imagine me could he
imagine this foreign walking
this trip to the closing doors
train bound for the night
bound to succeed bound
like the stuck weight of wheels
to rails to determine
to do on today still nothing

Windy Day Up

on Second Mesa by the Hopi Cultural Center
the young sculptor just back from NYC is whittling
the first shapes of a katsina from a juniper
root—but it's the silver overlay
bracelet of Home Dancer in the back
of the sculptor's Explorer that he knows
she'd love, and he'd buy it, send it,
but the nostalgia of habits
doesn't survive divorce.
She'll never know.

Cut by the Spots

In the dark cut
by the spots on the gathered
bluesmen music wells
from speaker cones and skins
the cries of metal strings quaking
in fields the split abrupt movements
of air over the reeds in a Super 64X
harmonica punctuate the slight movement
of the blues singer who tips down
his hatbrim to shade his eyes
watering in the dark
cut by the spots.

Ruts Leaving Ocala

This old road they say
was the main road to Gainseville
from Ocala is just a dust-filled
pair of ruts going by horse farms
looking old as old; a turnpike
they called it. In places it's blocked
by fences—wooden, barbed
wire, chain link—tall oaks going on,
insect life stirring. Our problem
is about old—it goes like this:
I walk in this rut, always have;
you in that, always.

Just As They Are

In the glare of the artist's eye
the feet of the model
are painted big.

The poet at his notepad
in the just-cut field of rye
sees too the stubble of words
and stacks of pathos.

Hung on Skeletons of Detail

fat alleys of blue and yellow
lumped together like hams....

red or nearly red parasols
under the sun
over heads....

spreading color
hung over
the details of a skeleton—
same details
different colors....

details large as hands
spread open
to measure something large
that might be too
bright a color....

let us sit
in circles and make
our views commencing
with the weakest color
and ending....

for you I made
what I could
then stopped
when it was final—
over....

serial dusk juggler 3 cdr

some names are made of tears
and sloppy

grandma who died by the hooves
of her plowhorse

uncle nick whose left ear
was too big for something
that didn't work

some names
find you in the tangle of all
other words

words that find you
form your evername

puzzle that pieces
you together

European Panties

Does she have them?
Panties.
Beneath her wintercoat
and skirt the rest
of her is covered.
But panties?
The European girl
mind whistles:
All she can think
is the long windy way home.
What she puts on
the day she takes it
off will line the lane.
What will it be
but the emptiness beneath?
Panties on the floor—
where is her shape now?

Small Thought About Panties

So many examples of panties
filling up bedrooms
from the floor up. Word
filled with anti-pronouncements,
bitter in the mouth
to the proper. Girlish,
over-feminine. Hard as cock
is to say for some men. Woman's
word; man's word.

For what comes
between us.

Abandoned Panties

Even when they're full
something's left over.
The material is localized.
covering like thin glue;
words tend to shrink
when they dry out;
fussing is the longevity
of heroism. She thinks
she just walks away
when her panties hit the floor
and she goes to close the drapes
but they've had their wind
knocked out of them,
and the power shifts
from hip to hip.

Panties at the End of the Mind

A small glass has bent her head...

...filled with water...
...my head flat on the table...
...she smokes a Parliament
she bummed
up the street by the package store.

She buys things too small...

...maybe, or keeps them too long...
...savors too much...
...she tucks her blouse in &
packages all her things
up to maximize gain.

Like tender nets...

...the fraction means business...
...unheard of songs butterfly her memories...
...she fingers the elastic cords
of her terminal panties, swishes clockwise the skirt I look
up, quizzical of what what's there conjures.

White flag? O surrender.

First Panties

First ink,
first dream,
first blossom,
first calligraphy,
first letter, first poem.

Firsts pile up
like the dreams of panties on the floor
by my beds. How they have been taken
off. One by one (usually). On her shoulders
and heels. Or belly raised and from behind.
Pulled down with a different scent
available. They all've had their warmth
which seeps away quick—their silk
natures or rayon or cotton.

Firsts come in waves,
some like the lone sea wave
late in autumn
that touches the thick grass
at the upper reaches of the beach
that comes just once,
tentative but strong,
and flows back into the sea
and becomes water
once more.

Ars Poeticrap

I've written a line and discussed it
because the evidence is contaminated
by the theory that created it. This line
is my evidence senseless and isolated,
hanging by the slightest thread
to preceding ramblings. These are
observational results and confounds.

I've grown accustomed to rattlesnakes
and sea birds gurgling like spies
delivering the goods before it's over.
The noises I hear?
It's my job.

Can't Come True

There are simplicities, similarities.
The ways words meander from memory to the page
vary day to day, Like waterways they complicate
the bottoms, making some gullies a bit deeper.

But deeper is not progress, deeper is more entrenched.
Progress is difference in similarity.
Think of the first sun of spring, it's coming
up cause to sip one's tea more slowly
and read for sound not information.

We make progress on the first sun.
Perseverance and aggression. Progress.
The simple-minded make progress,
the shallow thinkers, whose pathways
from memory to the page are varied,
many,

This reminds me of the girl
who wished her breasts were as large
as her mother's.

Shelf of a woman.

She sat beneath the line
when the lingerie was hung out
and pondered the mighty cups
of her mother's brassiere.
How high could she fly that size?

She sat all day
sat all that week
all that month
that year
life.

Simple wish
can't come
true.

Where Did That Story Come From?

She waved
at me I think
from her bedroom window
dressed like women unashamed of themselves do
in panties and bra nothing else
the palm of her hand directed her
her wrist elbow and arm followed its directings
her shoulders waved side to side
her upper body
swaying breasts even in their harnesses
hitched up and ready for work
and her hips and legs but I couldn't see them
head hair eyes all of her was waving
at me I think
from her bedroom window
like a woman enthusiastic for her lover
going or coming who knows
her palm was pushing a handkerchief I think
perhaps she weeps I thought

then I saw what she was doing
washing windows
like any housewife
on display
where did that story come from?

Shallow Intellectuals

joke's on the deep thinkers
who've worked like scholars on honing their minds
to work only and exactly on the things they know deeply
which they picked at random almost when an advisor surprised them in the men's room
here is something they would think: Uniform inclusions in nondeterministic logspace
or: Single-letter languages accepted by alternating and probabilistic pushdown automata
they think they might find these things somewhere if only they could look randomly
enough

joke's on them
deep dopes
the only thoughts they can think
are unthinkable

Girls Go Fast

Where I live the ground gives up fog at dusk
in the low points, and the air feels more like a partner
going down. Girls don't seem to last long—
flipping their woman bits early. Music takes
a lot of sweat. Coincidences don't panic.

Take the bug lights with their electric
killers: Fluorescents that give off TV blue in the fogged
dark, so from up the road you can't tell
whether the motion is stories in the living room
above the funeral home
or bugs.

Heat Win

Someday heat will win—
easier to slip down into the fogged-under
hollows than lift a head above.

The right way is seamless
like the mist of black nylon
up the back of a champaign-glass-stemmed
woman who has hooked one leg behind
the other in a show of strength.

Let's fire the pot in a real fire,
let the ash cover it and stain the red black,
cover it in pine tar then polish it beyond
usefulness. Someday
heat will win, black will cover
us like a mist, just a cloud passing over
and our polish will be beyond
any use.

Goodbyed Arms

Through foreign eyes
the skin of scream
shells are colored
pastels made from hard
colors sliced thin.
Light then reminder
pass through,
the thrills of age
looked at through foreign eyes.

Reminds me of fog fillers,
of rivers balanced against
the farmland shelf
forming a river that roams
the edges of lakes
of oceans, you

can see them from the air
passing by on your way
from the goodbyed arms of one woman
to the banks of a river
digging in,
making a light color
from a dark land.

Chemtrails

show my chemtrail video footage on local cable
tailgated by a new black Lincoln with Massachusetts plates
I experienced an unmarked black helicopter rooftop my house three times
I've had many phone hangups
many silent lines with only breathing
videotaping those evil sky makers
spewing a blue-green substance from which I was downwind
at that point, yeah
is there any real support out there?
speak up
real soon

Sketch by the Merrimack in 100 Degrees

limegreen bridge trusses
 wavewakes in curved ranks brush
 and brush the shore and shoreweeds
 boats heaving upriver slow to 15
 under the bridge
 limegreen support sections—6 of them
 upriver piers are angled and ironclad in places
 like the boat named for here
 heat might as well reflect off the river onto my forehead
 someone has left a boat overturned
 its blue needs relief from the redbrown worn through
 to a robin shouts above me in the elms
 cars slow to watch me sketch
 there's a haze that has washed away the blueness of the sky
 and carries its hot wet heat to my arms despite the slight
 breeze in my face blown in from the west
 the limegreen is only 2 shades more remarkable
 than the background hill of maples and oaks
 one span can rotate on the circular platform
 letting big boats pass
 sweat drips on this canvas
 the overturned boat rests in the shade
 the flickering river's surface looks pixilated when I squint
 sweat rolls off my chin when the click of cars on the bridge's seams
 catch me besides birds lawnmowers roar like outraged bees
 just now I notice that the limegreen spans reflect the color
 only vertically
 and I wonder whether I dare cross a bridge like that
 on my way to you

Don't Write This Poem

The jumping oak gall is caused by a small wasp
in two generations per year.

The first is all females
who lay eggs which hatch into male and female

which mate and start the next generation.

The gall formed in the second generation creates
discoloration. Galls from the second generation

fall to the ground and jump to help lodge them in the
duff where they overwinter and emerge

as females. Larvae inside the gall
sharply hit the gall

causing it to jump
like someone reading this poem.

Circle 'Round

Cold air has started to swamp my feet
and it won't be long
before it rises to my calves, my knees,
up to vital parts. Birds cease their tittering,
move less swift from place to place,
converge on their resting spots.

The nightly story of slowing down
confirms the fears of cycles
and how they come 'round and 'round.

Like the fear of plain speech,
that it might approach too straight,
have too sharp a point on it,
aim too effectively, the fear of cooling nights
has a frosting a bit too cold.

The work of man
and woman is to circle 'round
each other and the fears
at the center of their system
a simple n-body problem
solved by doing.

Sometimes when the air picks up the cold
of emptiness, a cricket will sound—
it goes well with light breath.

Winter Kills

Street, poles, wires overhead swaying in a winter wind
garbage cans rolling against walls and themselves,
storm drain gates, cars parked by the curbs
the curbs, black iron railings, eaves, TV antennas,
all these laced with ice, webbed with ice,
layered by ice growing, thickening
although the wind is gaining strength. Through all
this I'm walking, thinking of the girl three blocks
back, back against a fence, speaking in her daily voice
a routine poem, its freshness laced with ice.

Key to Open

Follow linger hang
around chase a scent
catch a sound move
against push back
lift lug loaf

Approaching a bend
a water turn
a wind change
a loft decide your key
open up

Yawning Language

Drawl of laziness
drawn from linear thought:
poetry's insufferable twang.

Might Made Sounds

Fireflies zing by
pointing some direction
two dozen minutes past sunset;
walking down the steps
fingers just breezing over
the iron rail
sends the sounds of well-tuned
bells pulsing behind the scenes.
Bells music made by hammer
blows, fireflies zooping
all ways, the evening collapses
to a point on the sheltering surface
of a hammer meeting the ringable
shell of the bell's outside, a harbor,
a source of the sounds fireflies
might make.

it

Something unexpected in the course
of a river that flows in the direction
come from traveling downhill
parallels the course of a man who
walks in editorial circles
around the first draft
of his gravestone to find its typographic errors,
perfect its line
breaks, check its readability in all lighting conditions,
and—why not say it—to
forge the right content for
it
on the permanent draft.

Not to mention
experiencing *it*
from the side
he won't.

On a Downtown Street Where Music Is Made in the South at Night

girls in lotion
under their summer silks
dresses their mothers

think Asian
for their colors and patterns
exotic flowers prints
abstractly folded within
languid colors
implying a scent to

match their lotion
but all that summer
clinginess displays
the electricity a boy's fingers
would excite were he to run

them like a violin-maker's on
the italic curves of a new piece
over her tonight
on a night moaning

from heat
loss by a bar where bass
and drums fuck

Written

in a basement filled with remnants
of structural support
extra-sized bolts and nuts
a wall torn decoratively down and softened
changed into a restaurant serving Moroccan
Spanish African dishes
with a band of collected players wandered
in playing in straining scales
she wears a hiphugging skirt
modest small top
head jewelry odd paint
extending stretch of midriff
stretching left stretching right
stretching forward stretching backward
slow
protracted
snakeshaped snakesounding
lit candle on her head making its own Ss
her back is toward me I watch
what's below
the eaters beyond lift
forks open mouths
chew swallow
using their eyes alone
gasp mesmerized by the single-letter sounds
of snakes filling the room
like a sexual tide

Storm March and Swampy Readings

After the reading
where the clarity of emotion blurred

after rain and lightning and thunder rolls in roiling
hills played their cards and the theories of music
launched a sneak attack on the mere hearing
contacts of songs

after even the oldest woman read swampy
in her sexuality like a joke men would tell while washing their jockeys

after sills like lips hugging the floor in doorways
overflow letting in the winded water splayed on the concrete porches
frustrating the sweeping dreams of the women listening to unwritten
sadness

an automated fireworks display attached to a casino billboard
snaps into play and lights the whipped sky
to shades in the white-gray-blue spectrum
that marks
the night though limping
the ending marks of dots
spelling the march of life
upvalley.

Meditation on a Meditation Hut

the hut had no squareness
except vertical plumbs

even the windows & doors slumped
or ballooned

a bench wrangled across the room
whose ceiling was held up by old trees cut & debarked

except for cement
everything was made from something that made something else

before
it was tempting to sit

across a valley so close
one side smelled of the other a Japanese garden was made

whose settling encumbrance
was a Japanese elm

wishing for home
at the tops of its shaking leaves

Dachau Meditation on Learning of Murders

Meditation—poets unclasped,
simulation of concept flycasting,
borrowed by men of equals.

I saw the moveable line
filtering maybes into yeses and noes
by becoming less visible and leaving
it to the underminers

I saw the lieutenant shooting in the air
I saw his left hand held up in a stop sign
I saw the machine gunner on his gut aiming 5' high and sweeping left to right and back
I saw the lieutenant kick the machine gunner
I saw the bodies just skin on skeletons winking in the boxcars
I heard the men cry air and water in our language
I heard the order to take them all
I heard God's footsteps getting closer

Temptation—looking for some new clothes,
hoping for a fast bike, ducking behind housewalls,
listening for the footsteps of the formerly caged,
wasting time on the desiccated
—tempting isn't it?

Prelude to Evacuation

junk park in summer
crowded with weird weeds and hopping kids
grasses local and global flourish
next to lousy land and people standing around

walk/watch grim odd trucks
bikes with covered chains like covered brains
hiding what makes things go
girls pulling at their tops and standing on platforms

I can't believe I was here once
and the place made as much sense as a prelude
to evacuation

Green Eye Blues

woman wrapped in no
destrucress
unfathomable desire hole
bluesmen worry of her modal noises
horses devil men

 this place seems green
 seems solid
 red tiles mandated even

my plan
neutral as neutrinos passing through a summer day

to stand clear but close
listen but not speak
whisper when shouting is required
hoist the flag of surrender
wave at the closest referee
help

Goodbye from a Stand of Bavarian Woods

The best way is the least
through the light-drained woods
fir and linden
hills not unlike those of home-like places.
This place is yours and the nervousness
of your possessions is edging me aside
and up the gravelled road where homes are parked
toward a pretty view
of a sunset caught failing
toward my sea, my shaken trees,
toward the way my heart will reluctantly
surrender.

Goodbye Reliquary

I write my goodbyes
one by one
one after another
junkie to the numbness
and awakening other-realms.
You see

I need each one:
the deep air-suckingness of each:
the new ways they point away.
They are

my forest full of pathlessness,
the way each brings my attention
to attention.
This is

my goodbye to goodbyes.
I hope they can end.
I wish to watch your trailing hem
kicked by your right heel, kicked by your
left.

Moveable Barrier Between the Steady

I'm through
the last door

the lights receding slow down
as what's reflected nears

the lights receding dim
and are consumed by the rough spots increasing

but the last door has been passed
its slamming just a wash that once beat in echoes

so suppose the hall is nothing but a metaphor
or is described by one

that the man who sits in the alcove writing
knows footsteps from the ticking of a sick heart

then one of the two things is true
and the other is just the heart inscribed by lust

directed by and directed
to the foreign

Accidental Death

of a moth
caught lost weaving a thought
in the bowl of a candle's burned-out
heart where through the casual
hunt for light both
the moth
and I
burned out.

Harmonica Solo on an Austrian Couloir

This heart
of a valley has been cut from the cold green
of her eyes. She
seals it with her kiss.

By the road,
by the glacial overflow,
by the slumber toward September
I'll still be emptiness.

This house
climbs the ladder to painted pastel ice fields
remarked by all who see them
as marks and signs of less
intended than said.

Thigh Place

Dirk R.—you suspected he'd love you
if only his computer would relent
and drop its caps, its alts. Hoo—
hah, the god who designed this felt
a headache coming on
like boys on
boys, boys on berries.

Little sense
little go at,
the sense of longing over comes
Dirk, web monkey, long hide.

His hand greets my knee,
some place on my thigh.

Rear, Facing West

bonsaied rough fir
clinging above apartment complex
backyards, alpen-shaped clouds
growing in weight (metallic grey)
but across from this balcony in the South
of Munich the action takes place
like a Jimmy Stewart movie w/Grace
Kelly—a man gazes with loathing
or love at the innards or backards
of his iMac, a shadow brushes
her hair one-oh-one, one-oh-two,
a woman fearing the age of age
fingers the rolled top of her panties
just above her bush which like the one
two meters away and hanging afraid
over the backyards shading the fast-fading
last-minute punks of greying red,
it awaits the loving steel of sharpened
scissors that long to trim it back
into fighting shape

Watching Them Brush, Listening

in the arms of a last-minute wind
a half-hearted rain comes in

men bare up from the tops
of their belts rolled over by rolls of belly fat
shovel pea-gravel and attend to bright trucks greyed
from cement dust

women brush their hair burnishing the tint
of new colors freshly released on the market
trying to make him want to trail his fingers
over the backs of her knees instead of beaching

a kite caught in a downdraft
hangs like the recently condemned
from an overhang made for Juliet scenes w/
hayfield in the background

wired scientifically and with precision
the electric guitar nonetheless
burps a barbed bald over-reverbed sonnet

behind the hayfield
an observatory waits for the discovery
of science after the final round
has been passed out

at the last minute behind me
as I type this half-heartedly she
will walk in and wonder how the day went
how I interrogated the wind & rain
how many times the phone rang
its foreign siren call
unanswered

Shutting

It's like this

the door to the cabin has been opened
letting in unexpectedly a cold stream
leaching down from the couloir

the door to the apartment has been opened
letting out unexpectedly a traveler leaving
early with only part of breakfast eaten

the door has been opened
letting in unexpectedly
the concern that the door when
shut once more

will not stay shut.

Angle of View

her eyes are the grey of London
clouds promising rain and dark

her hands and feet are boundary
markers growing day by day

her forced smile reveals a single
joy that no one wants to share

it's common as nightfall in London
for women like her to lean against posts

and for men to act before them
like clouds marking joy for women

Land of Stops

Out of hidden places
unformable and combining,
like a door that cannot be closed
once opened
and once one thing escapes,
like a shadow at dawn filling the eyes
of the one who walks away
with thought only ahead,
the impetus,
the reason,
the other than rational
force for this
arrives.

Cold River Walk

Women walk
along the South bank of the Thames
without worry
while men sit at outdoor tables
watching, wishing
one with a particularly tight skirt
will whisk
by, or that perhaps one
with wide
breasts will take long steps toward the
West. Women
who even on a cold Summer evening
wear whimsical
clothes command attention
while we,
mere men
wonder, wish,
carry on like boys hoping for the breast, the
womb, warmth
one more time.

Out of Ruth

Something has made you
lonely for years, craving
inexactness or a fit
not tight, not wiggleproof,
which allows things like machines
to fall into disuse, things like rivers
to flow past and under willows
draped over them, curtains between the exact
and the ruthless, like a gunfighter
who can shoot flies on the fly
but chooses
out of ruthlessness
not to.

Pleasures of Swallowing

The truth has come out and you love me,
the news arrives as the sun drops behind a row of flats
though there's no melancholy in it,
just abrasiveness. And when we talked of hunger
years ago,
of eating and the pleasures of swallowing,
you fell into a stupor and languished like a queen
awaiting grapes
and I hungered for the mattress beneath.
All along my pitch has been the same
and now your hearing has changed
like fog that bursts into sunlight when the right heat hits it.
Tell me,
if I am my own opposite,
am I about to cancel;
and if I am my own remedy,
do I make myself more like myself
and thereby drift back to the average
which is actually nothing,
which is actually your love telling?

So imagine

the disputes and angers,
the red eyes behind gauzy curtains,
the rings worn symmetrically,
and breathe
like an animal hiding quiet by a stream
not knowing whether its breath
disappears like water in water or swells in the foreground,
then tell
me of what makes opposites opposite,
and how many cranks are needed to close your casements,
and why the anger directed at someone
is directed at me.

July 19, 2001

Quiet Alarms Sounded by God

For Tom Andrews

quiet tonight
by the plumcolored stream...

words that spring to mind for us
are proofs of emptiness, distress, the unfathomable...

God is wondering
what senseless dying means...

His inventions sometimes
seem to fall off center, distressing some, gracing...

the face of the lake
accepts the weeping stream, holds on...

once I sat by a river
flowing past a place near where it flowed past you...

quiet that night
by the plumcolored stream...

World of Gaps

the strangest sky
pewter plum fast
against green china
your distaste
flashing past
my hatred
we are lovers
in the world of gaps
between words

Flying Panties

watch out for flying panties
sure sign of over the top
love for unflagging exhibition
once my wife threw her panties onto a stage
they landed crotch up in the middle of a clear patch
they were plain brown no frills
they landed in anatomical standing position
the white liner was up
shining under the spotlight
the stains were light
but clear
the dampness was faint
but clear
dampened rust
who in that crowd could love
that?
could love the her in them?

Billboards, Bushes

behind the billboard
leaning toward the road in shambles
held together by paint and brush-ons
whose shadow is leaning toward the bushes
in those bushes is the old clearing
grown over now with bushes and condoms
beer bottles and cans
whiskey bottles and vodka
where we spread our blanket
and I watched with pure male gratitude
while you undressed

Doc Holliday at an Impromptu Banjo Concert

just about dusk Doc Holliday took his folding chair
to the impromptu banjo concert out in a natural bowl
to the West of town—Earps and Behan Josie
they were all there
it was a dog day and the heat of the desert was about to escape into space
where nothing matters
space between things that matter
thought Doc Holliday until a Dog-day cicada
started buzzing on the cool side of a barrel cactus
the playing plucked along
the music complex
Southern rebellious it mattered
they all sat down just about dusk to listen
to the traveling man play banjo into the cool of the evening
lone cicada buzzing in Doc's right ear
order among men lacking it
the triggers on many guns twitched that night
to the sound of a banjo and a cicada
in the cool part of the day
just about dusk
space between things that matter
thought Doc Holliday & he spared us a smile

Trust the Take

trust the take
learn to live with the stains
floating by you
by your eyes
your ears

accept reliance on randomness
build on sands replaced each year
by events taking place
maybe
far away
and uncontrollable

favor the tearstains that darken your eyes
it's just your make-up
to seem to cry so

whatever happens
don't touch the woman who scampers up the stairs
an umbrella under her arm
highheel boots kicking the backs of her hems
her black hair swirling in blue ribbons
she is the take
she is the stains
trust her
whatever happens
your eyes
your ears
it's your make-up

Surprise Lily

all of it is a drained battery
storage of force
mulch laid on a truck bed liner
peach pit bursting inside its hard covering
speaker phone on set to mute
while I stir the jar of mayonnaise
to make it adhere more smoothly
to the leaves of an artichoke
whose baby barbs I uncover
like the woman I wish to make a naked lady
like the lily that comes
stored as a force
as a surprise

Alp Pressure

we sat on a bench at a hairpin
turn where paved yields to gravel
where the valley's rave haircut
given to cows massing milk
gives way to fir and pine
miles away a wind blew over the couloir
across a glacier and up our side
this pine wind blew equally on us
—you looked up-valley, me down
someone's name was on our bench
a gift to the emptiness this valley
embodies with its soul breezed out of it—
almost exactly as if we were friends

Poetry of No Lines

we all stared
it was the flimsiest skirt we had ever seen
a light purple or lavender
she was not thin but young and ready
we could not see her pantie lines
we checked her toes
no panty hose
I waited until she stretched her thighs outward against her skirt
no lines
she bent a bit
no lines
nude or thongs
we looked while chewing slowly
two women and me
nude nude thong
silence
no lines
yes you're right I can see the line at the top of her skirt
some like the feeling of if the skirt came off
thong

Poem This

this
world is created word by word
line at a time

this
and the holes in your head

the words leave
when I pull them out for
this

add pictures
named two categories up
funny things
this
is real
work to do to work

around blanks
shooting leaving
this

poem
gets its way like
a jellyfish
to the bottom
of the likes of
this

Frozen Crimson

in front of her mirror
her writing brush dipped in bright crimson
nearly frozen in the just-before dawn
after writing her poem
she paints her lips
so she can seal the folded poem
that will remind him
of her art

Go On

on the wintering bridge
criss-crossed by hard winds
from all directions
moments before a nearly transparent cloud
covers the lowering sun only just
above the maple-topped horizon
the blooddrops dripping from your bitten lips
—hold back—
fall to the river
where they will never dry

Once Off

I pulled up to her on Bayshore
traffic confections rolling up
her car was red and Asian 2-door hardtop
one arch window like a distribution curve
tinted enough to darken but not to blacken
her skin was the dark some Asians have
her black shades were curved and arched
she faced front
if I had to say the color of the air around her it was black
her hair was the depth of black but it could shine
under the right circumstances
her lips always closed and unmoving were the color of the car
she never moved her head
never moved her shoulders
her lips
her eyebrows
never seemed to blink
except one finger beat as if to music on her sewn leather steering wheel
when the light turned away from red
she and everything moved all
at once
off

Saying "Goodbye"

Suppose the un-supposable;
suppose it happens
on you. Hold fast
while its false front presses
into your shirt, Suppose
you were years late
while still years later.

Picture saying
see you around.

While as you walk to the stairwell,
you don't. The crowd on the train platform
doesn't care how you leave as long
as you do. Every way
leaves a point.

Lovoever

Sitting in your car
behind you like a little kid
my ease of going
nothing less than
surrender. The way you drove
was refreshing—
fear does that. A decency
panel has declared our
love over—lover pulled apart.

Lover

Loovveer

Lovoever

Loveover

Love over.

How do you read that?
Like the sound a car makes
running over something
already dead.

Fat Cactus

When I arrived you were sitting
in your bed against a pair
of pillows, Like all women
posed like this
your strength was the greater.
Outside your window overlooking
what some might call exotic
a snail stood still.
You thought I looked too
much.

When it seemed, later, our chat had just started
the snail was gone. And the cactus
looked surprisingly fat.

To You On A Night Of Traffic

I picture you
writing in an attic packed in with old manuscripts
and sewing machinery, cloth and clothes,
husband and children packed into their beds one and two
floors down,
rumble and blaring traffic
four floors down
at midnight
or later, sharp taste
in your mouth from things
like spices.
Wearing through you
like a wind gap,
a water gap through great long folds
a thousand miles long and five
miles thick, drilling and smoothing
a path from all of us out
here waiting
like a cab for the woman
perfuming her pussy
to you.

Heat Arising

Heat rises and turns
to fog hanging
around obscuring
what has grown
to be sharp,
like words full of...
On a table right beside me,
I mean right there
a small house finch
hops while dining with me
and she whispers—
the bird whispers, for God's sake—
small things,
small bird things
that the people at the end of the table can't hear,
but I do,
it is not imagination,
like little whispered chirps,
small,
in the heat
within a fog,
like words full of...

Hangs On Back

night under covers
where you are holding

knowing that things are cold
anyone would say about you

lost in a spell falling to the floor
rain-holding wind burst in on me above my bed

standing in your doorway while
you try to read my eyes fall

onto the book of poems
and grab them you wonder

the writer held at arm's length
hangs on back

The Something

we have put our faith
in a technology full
around the edges
with the soul of right versus wrong
theocracy with a god who needs
no spies, which we won't let go
its own way keep it predictable
instead of alive filling
its center with the something
of us

Fuel for Fish

where have you been
since the light fell
through the trees and across the bay
onto the sails of a sloop about to shove off
on a evening exploration sail—we once followed
each other like the 9-strong school of mackerel
below the cross-bay footbridge looking
for something they can't see
can't hear can't
—as funny as it sounds—
fathom

Foreground/Background

On this very page
are two choices—clear as they can be:
foreground/background,
one in black on white,
one in white on black.

One is small,
one is big.
One is painted in dark words,
one in light strokes.

One is clear to the mind—see-able, make-out-able—
something we learn with brains using discipline,
rational minds rationalize—that's our rationale.
These are the parts you have told me.

The other—white like light pooling all over,
rubbed away other parts—....

Well, it's like this: the real stuff is...
guess which one?

Unsentimental Postage

This graveyard is weird...
it's like a postage stamp with vegetation...
the trees—white pines quite tall—are huge
but all four sides have been shaved or cut
away so it seems
the whole thing—pines, tombstones, and the guts of the graveyard—should
fall over and stand up or stand on their heads the residents.

Guts of the graveyard.
A hole swallow.
Digesting remains the order of the day.
At the other end?

God is wondering
who will discover
no postage due.

Mind Trample

Eastern light sky filled with particles and thin thin clouds—
beside the bridge lots of bugs fly and skip across still water—
in my head my teeth ache and put my attention in their roots—
some folks fear the process of creation so much they limit their tries to none or few—
pathways need to be made—
above in the sky—
along the banks of shallow rivers—
deep down into nerves and the brain—
need to be made by trampling.

I Make Up

Today it's the fat of the lip,
hang of the mouth,
a gape with a slightly disavowed
tinge of eyesight eyeing
passing interrogations,
linking the bars
of others' eyes
to the apparently dull,
only her eyes show tint
through all the grey
and push of her intentions
out the gape, all 'cept
what fouls into her lips.

Hermetic Constants

I grow more interior,
look more deeply into the seeping swamp
that rises rarely to the barely sounding lap
of a thinnest stream, that flow
that makes this all up.
I spoke these lines to you
as you rose up the stairs to your room,
closing the door behind. I waited
for the sounds that surround
my sitting place and force inwards
the gaze that ultimately reveals what
little I have left after I have spoken
all the rest. I rest.

The Places It's Made

As if behind gauze
the row of red houses with yellow fences
shouts, colors blurt,
behind a mist—blurs.
On the wall of the mfa in Boston
as if behind gauze
the painting of this row
shouts, art blurts,
behind a mind, blurs.
Down the hall a deep crevice
in the bottom of a torso,
and we know what it is from 50'
away. I can see the strokes
drips & swirls & the razorcut groove
cross the twin thinkers
collects the links
for me and art. These are
the places it's made.

Combinational Basis

So is that you walking out
of the haze toward me? The sunlight is a funny
effect behind you like that—like
are you wearing
a skirt or your legs
bare? new hairdo
or a hat? For that matter,
—toward me
or in the direction I last
saw you walking in plain sight?
You'd think you'd be clearer
the closer you came,
but like all illusions,
what we see scares
the fog up out of
the combinational basis
of all fears.

Lust for the Non-Existent

who can't tell
what with the tan lines so sharp
teaching us from foot to face she lies
on a couch covered in gold
plastic her feet are in white running
shoes her tanned knees and legs spread
apart a tan line defines her whitened panty area
her pubic lips are apart as if some-
thing happened they're pink
her torso is tanned her bra line
white her throat is dark tanned
then a sharp

line and white to her face let's see
white & pink shoes
brown legs
white & pink pussy region
brown torso
white & pink tits
brown throat
white & pink face could she

be made using a computer program
which parts are hers
which ones by some quote artist quote
and here's the rub which ones
are mine

Junk Park In Reruns

On the park bench
in the cold park
while dogs raced up the fabricated hill
and down and children swung through air way below
freezing we held hands as if friends
and the same wind blew on each
of our faces as if we were friends. In summer
the hill was smothered in nettles and weeds
and the same wind blew on our faces,
dogs lay on their sides panting,
children slept under elms,
and we held on for dear life,
learned what we weren't.

Up the Defenses

You snuck into my life
and took it over, an air force to soften
up the defenses
and an army to march through every part you
found until it was yours. Then every

street I walked down pitiful in the eyes
of beggars, every bit of junk that surrounded
me in my study, every word written in the narcotic
dark when sleep sits on the sofa smoking
from a flame just getting going—these
were yours and more and more. Why you

didn't notice this was a puzzle till
I saw your eyes up close in the home
of your life and their smoky haze, a filter
polarizing out the others though you seemed at
times to speak to them, sleep with them, draw
them aside as if curtains in the way of a view.
Squadron of mimicry, battalion of delusion—
I've fallen for an echo of something akin to a pain,
a refraction of circumstances or superposition
of waves of your hair in a wind we shared
that painted a portrait of coincidence.

Little One

The car passed
We saw it filled with beauty
We saw the sign on it that proclaimed paradise
The car was black with some gold in small trim and letters
It took us five minutes to organize our thoughts
We drove our car after it but it was lost to us
We wept beside the river in the white silence of insects rising in heat
The odor of sweet trees reeked in rivulets down to the river
Our car ticked cooling down anticipating the dark evening ahead and long years
The West called out and our ears heard the missing sounds
We heard the pathetic music of paradise little one
The car passed
We saw it filled with waving dark hair and heard its music drown out
Now I live there like a mystery

Chased

We chased our dreams like chasing
a California-plated car through the backroads of a New England
town after a Beach Boys song made the top ten. I don't
remember my dreams but the car carried
two pretty girls and the gold letters
and numbers on black seemed to sing
of Malibu, Ventura. We chased them
in our '55 Chevy, we saw their dark hair
tangle together in our wind, their dark
Mustang floored to the river, their legs
sheathed in denim, their feet in cowboy
boots tan crunched and oiled. To me
they left a faint waft of orange in the salt
sea Eastern air. I followed them in '75,
followed them here, where dreams still
cruise as fast as they can, like wild geese chased,
radio blasting.

Devotions of Its Walls

See don't react.

The stubble hairs of rationality have been shaved away.

Both are wet and one is yours in the way of animals.

You though write and write the scene in which you die and exalt exhale.

Devotions lying in parallel lines in a pastoral sentiment fingers hovering
on the edge of consciousness deep like a long man in a small woman.

In the car lit by a streelight in my driveway he tongues her

and I slide under covers to think of it with a straight spine.

We meditate on the long boards in a large room cooled by the thickness
of its walls like a mission whose mission

is lost

on us.

See react let it be you

who drips fingerprints across the linoleum floor laid the day

you watched her.

Strat

the guitar sits unplayed
for months
by the fireplace
its memories are of a heavy pick
cramming its strings
and the inability of the magnets in its pickups
to fathom the attack
its rosewood fretboard is stained
in the patterns of my favorite keys
polished scratches tell of years
its whammy is set for down only
to better keep tune who knows
how much sweat has poured into
and out of
this machine hung from wood
and whether any of its strings ever
noticed the hair that tangled in them

Lunch on the Grass

That end this end a hallway
facing into the light about to click off
polished floor in a parquet
and some imperfections just a dulling in spots.
You know even the cleanest halls are filled with motes
and little bits of dust that move quickly
for short bursts like snowflakes confused about
down. On these wall could be pictures
of you like the Manet lunch on the grass
or the Caillebotte which must have been like this hallway
once. I picture half your face cut
off at the edge of my vision the rest
filled with the recessed window
where you sit facing as the sun does
into my eyes shut like canvases
ready for painting feeling
a doubled warmth.

Wakening At Dark

Down in the flats by the river
at the edge of the wide field bounded
by stones on three sides and river on one,
where we knew fog would rise fueled
by the sodden field and sparked by the cold
air flowing down the river from mountains
beyond what we could see, late in the evening
but before midnight we knew we would meet
and do our things involving the same elements
plus fear. We stole away for this,
but now the fog has cleared,
it finally has cleared.

Hunting Poise

It is hard to fathom
the baying hounds down
the sand road kenneled five
per kennel hearing no doubt
(or perhaps) lumbering steps
in thick brush, (or maybe)
the liquid sound of paws
on the fine sand upper dust
of the road down there, How can
the night be so cold here (he asks).
Dry part of Florida. Gulf
winds have blown the cover—
we are laid bare to what's above,
what's down that road,
what they'd be after
if they could.

Please, Please, Mr Postman

the mailbox
Sav-A-Lot coupons
Sierra Club again
NRA???
Amex
Guitar Player—Brian Setzer: Rock-A-Billy return
invitation to speak on open source
a lit-mag; poetry mostly
and two letters:
I don't want to go on like this (the swan)
I want you to love me again (the swan)
sorry
can't fit you in between dying
and going to heaven

Birds Dip Dip

pond fish gather close
hillside birds dip dip their heads
we walk by all these swaying like bags of wine nearly empty
the sayings of masters irk out ears
passing by the monastery
we are the silent ones
since words have caught up short

on our backs
our poem bags are full
swaying like deathbags
filled with droppings of hillside birds
and dried fins

Blanket Safe on the Ground

she has the blanket
woven of rough wool

tangled with stems and buds
yarn dyed in larkspur,
birch bark, sumac, sage, and rotten
maple wood, black sheep

wool dyed a glossy
waterproof black in mahogany
in her antiseptic warm bed

such a blanket serves
no purpose to her
its smell so near the animal

its history just imprints of rocks
and roots rain soaks and

the culminations of winds
rooted up from a valley

no purpose to her serves
a blanket such as this
dyed as it is in things
once alive

Emptiness of a Room Returned To

Your voice gained 20 years,
something was itching in it,
and talk of getting lost
put me in mind of a dog whose
legs have become a travois
pulling her rump.
When the phone rang
I could hear you already
like the emptiness of a room
I had returned to. I've split
no into as many shades
as times I've fought over
you. Like the swan who steps
onto the lake, I take time
to sink in. Months go by
between your answers,
I just cap off another shade,
hand you each one as you ask,
and you never notice how each
is larger than the one before
like a certain sexual training
that you don't realize
you will one day enjoy.

Talking on a String in the Alps

You're underneath everything
I see, my eyes look level across the valley.
Here is a house as simple as ours
and over there is a bench, a resting spot
on the hairpin of a curve. This house
is made of local firs stained clear and glossy,
with tender red knots like hearts congested
by a hearty overabundance, red tiles
made in southern temptation. You no
doubt sit on that bench which is two miles
direct and four by foot, and you expect me—
that's what you say like a cat's whisper—
you expect me to stay where I am.

Ring Lantern

Regard the lantern,
its light inconstant capturing
a varied embrace. From here
we anguish safe like two words
slightly misspelled
making sense through chance.
The light does
not reach us. We are not
sure. Flicker. Eyeblink.
We are tethered together
but which master's raptor
hangs by a thread? The lantern
embraces what it senses,
what it senses it lights driven by deficiencies
coming and going. I sit at your feet,
you stroke my hair only when
the light falls short. Then you stop.
When all is full your touch
returns to full.

Rockets' Red Prayer

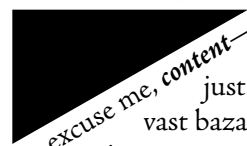
bruise mark left by God
reminder of who we are punctuated
in the interval between fireworks
lightning in the counter-
beat gravestones as if hammered
in by a great stonemason
marking the spots
where life becomes light

Cherry Boys

Two of us in a cherry-picker
highschool age fully extended
but with a slight bend over the bleachers,
late October in Danvers. We carry
1 Bolex H16 16mm movie camera
fitted with f1.9 75mm, f1.4 25mm Rx,
and f1.8 16mm Rx Switars, plus 20 rolls
of Eastman Tri-X B&W movie film.
The picker owner forgot
to disengage the up-top controls. During
the game I film, John comments on cheerleader
movement and catches apples
thrown at us but only I
can hit the ones down there who threw them.
My follow-thru hit the down lever
and down 10' we went before Russ
the picker owner raises us up
and shuts down the crane. We are green&white,
they are blue&white. I change between plays.
I spy the f-stop since we have no meter.
John stands very close for 3 hours.
My football-filming teacher packed Miss Brown
between us, his Ford Falcon. She was 25, her
white cashmere sweater and tartan skirt exuded
odors that the open windows could not mask
though the leaf-fires along Birch Meadow
endeavored. Miss Brown, who asked
did I have enough room? I needed
room she took up, encompassed. John
understood this every time we watched
sweet Meredith hop on what to the players
were the sidelines.

Markets are Conversations

best facilitates relationships
between supply



demand
we gonna do build it programming
just bait: chum on waters for business
vast bazaar consumers obsolete customers
micropayments advertisers don't
fried plankton we'veersations
mediation screen this worms often off
workers who about their own voices not impressing
enablanguage if you dog-and-porate
walls to renegotiate notions yet wised like
tripping and a big mistake to friends online

Poop Chute Fandango

The observation is worth making
that all the keys on the chain
kept clean, shining are for locks
that are now paved over. The pressed
board bike locker we built behind the cottage
that wilted after two years, our garden
in deep Illinois dirt that grew up
tomatoes 5 feet tall, our dog chained
to the front porch on a chain
50' long—I have that key.
You knelt on our found couch
and I stood behind. The footsteps
padding away then running.
The brown 2 bedroom
with all upside-down doors,
the back yard curved. You knelt
before the screendoor out toward the street
and I knelt behind in your ass—I have that
key. O the sweet duality of it,
the solution with no problem,
to have the keys,
every key, and find what I've
lost are the locks.

Bed Bath

Certainly she had an embarrassment
as I washed her after a month in bed,
her first full length bath after the crushing
her leg took and the operations that fixed only parts
of her, parts she would use only partially now.
Not her mother, not her former lover, not
her close girl friends, not a nurse, but
me down the hall from my wife
asleep and dreaming of more children
while I cleansed the parts atrophied
and odored, the parts stained though she
didn't wish it, the parts that now
were mine.

Rescue

You want it,
water under water,
you want it,
the spread of motion,
you want it,
sailing on the sea where death,
you want it,
our tongues bark hard we bellow,
you want it,
the luck draw you are it,
you want it,
still my hand tell me who,
you want it,
out of your mind your heart is mine your legs marrow,
you want it,
matrons part sea before the bow stem,
you want it.

Sand island
all of judgment.

Chill Dangled

Flecks of beauty spray the hovering
lips carved, curved, crazed by the Icelandic
cold of waves frothing like frosting
on the green-tinged white shore. Inland
lava and dirt form the reaction of the sea
to height and heat. Were there trees
within a thousand miles white trunks and branches
would lay within sight. The heat from forming
land swallows them for fuel or foment, you
drag your legs like resisting in the soaked sand.
Your hair is soaked in foam and it dangles
like that palm bird in front of your eyes,
your mouth—entrances and destinations—
it makes you like the porn princess,
not some evil mother. Let's let
it all bang slowly tonight
just for the pretty of it.

Top Skirt

On a storm liner crossing
the North Sea, wall waves broke
above our deck and scant thoughts
of the blesséd water death:

We want it.

Hanging from a rafter in the CE storefront
in Shinjuku bathing in pale lime light
and harder blues, I heard that girl wearing the pink
skirt is actually top (*sukatachi* meaning feminine-
looking top lesbian:
ano pinku no sukaato haita ko, jitsuwa
sukatachi nandatte. *Suka* from skirt
and *tachi* from top.).

We want it.

Gliding past a pastisserie,
chocolates in consumer format,
gray-green leaves spraying
and partying above the gravelled
road.

We want it.

In an alley in a private
town in Tuscany near
San Quirico D'Orcia,
its walls weathered less well
than Monteriggioni,
we stand like graveyard
statues reaching for the virgin.

We want it.

Behind us the turquoise
badger lumbers, aggressive
to all, persevering with red eyes,
looking for the crack
of life, the hole we want.

Writemare

In a foreign tone of voice
I feel asleep writing but failed
to stop while
sultry women watched and sulked
attached like blowfish to my rock
the beating rhythm made them come
of the sea (didn't fit). One girl
didn't make it and she fell liked a crushed
twinkie from the couloir above her alpine
cabin rented from a couple never home
when she needed to leave and pay their rent.
I paid. Cows moo and chew, poop. A man
cleans them every day while Swiss
authorities stand by with their Pantone
cards. Like lakes
they tell me to do.
What do skirts mean if each cheek
moves independently like two bulldogs
fighting according to maximum
Bob. A closeup of lichen
on a slab of New Hampshire red granite
just below the Old Man of the Mountain. I
watched them sob at the thought
of wasting their time in my
writing mare.

What the End of the World Sounded Like

is fear enough to pilot us
silence in sky
replays of the plane entering and flames
exiting kerosene injection
phone calls goodbye
technology of convenience stamps its irony
into our living minds calls
on the steps from hell to purgatory
help me I'm buried I'm burned
I'm beyond

Thought Pattern #1: Triage Appointment

pattern of light on a wintered-on
street and the sharp points of pin-reflections
form a map of coincidental deliveries

white like plaster dust that makes us not
swallow hovers we wash our own eyes
someone else will wash the dead's

where are they we wonder
we wonder how so many can just not
be drained as down a sink or

pulled as into bottomless sand
with weight piled up on top
our flag hung on the random post

above it all at eye level we wash
them and wash them we wash
our faces we wash the eyes and faces

of those beside us leaned against the chassis
while far away madmen dance and laugh
tickled in the ribs (as if) by a soulless bony beast

Thought Pattern #2: Delta Physics

when a rock disintegrates
into another rock
the question of speed arises

whether it is infernal
or merely an excessive
drive toward allegiance

of one form of utter unwillingness
to another of utter confusion
the rocks they seem simple

enough like when a man
loves a woman but each all
are made from excess allegiance

to type and that's what this's
all about what is the type
of a rock that it disintegrates

into another?

Thought Pattern #3: Say Fly

There really is no question
the window opens up
on the whim of a machine built by caution-loving men
in front is the fruit of heaven we've learned to come
to believe from the wavelike rhythm of words
and the slight rough texture of our mothers' knees
how filled it became with hell
formed from the juice of the dead
behind the rose bloom of calamity burst open
how incautiously aimed and delirious
on the wings held out to man
the words to a song made famous
by Gary Gilmore's flight we'll be
able to fly redefine happiness
the men who scratch
the sill a doorstep a languid alternative
there are no clouds but the silvering smoke
take my hand dear stranger
woman made like wife or sister
there is no rain but us coming out
we are cooked & pulverized
step out of the shade say

aftermath

do not find the joy
no more
of peering learnedly into books
and weeping with the pangs of meaning
for dust has outlined us and soon
will wash away

Thought Pattern #4: Dictionary Meanings

time to hide
let loose of the branch that we're on
sign our faces over to the overworld
be glad and underfullfilled
my little turquoise badger sits
on guard
for opportunities to persevere
and resile
how many of us have the luck
still to look up
words in the dictionary
and leap back at their unexpected
meanings the language of our mothers' teachings
one after another in a biblical cycle
two thoughts tossed into a tangle
the meaning of not breathing a death blow
to poets who measure in breaths
narrative fragments
pressed into one by billions of tons
of steel driving

on the day of summer I reserved
for hopeless loves I'd ride and ride
past elms and oaks and simples smells
of farms some sour some sweet
and her final act was to not
love me and it was her first

like the ones who wished for routine
she's lost

Thought Pattern #5: Rise Rush

each piece of ash
that rises to form
the billowing picture
of despair or evil
has worked its way
up by itself
using the simplest of acts
and little pieces
of its own quirks

Thought Pattern #6: Filth Pen

like small flower patterns on porcelain
microscopic but accurate
with precision in the face of imperfection
every detail of my life
will not be seen what I abandon
will be read then forgotten
then not read then not
real -ly
energetic chilly surface
wild strawberries
beneath a pen filled
with filth and shit
in a plastic bag in a tin
my secret picturestash
of womanly breasts
and symbols

Paradise Mixture

I need something for the pain
for the door slipping in the wind
hitting the jamb once or twice
for the warm tradewinds combed
by the palms my and your palms
but in your head thoughts
are maggots creeping
becoming thoughts that fly
circling spirals away and back
and away I could search
once the pain slips
away

Not Real Yet

Heating up,
the peaceful rising death of smell
in the masked gelpacks cupped
on your nose, your legs and arms,
your back is knotted and above
rising smoke from dust and small
fires the sky is the heavy blue
of reason. Out of sight,
back of a gauze curtain. Someone
has dug a ditch to you,
it holds a barge you must fill. Hundreds
of tons. Alone. And when you're done
you'll rise above the smoke and dust,
up an elevator miraculously working.
You'll see for miles even
when you look out.
And to think, all it took to do
this is practice.

Small Sanctuary

The hill, yes, the hill
is bursting at the top
with wicked black hair—
tangled tangential
wintertrees and black marble
stones in a white quarry.

A tiled low wall surrounds
the town's church built too
large on the outside housing
small sanctuary for below
the monastery brews—
between pubs and markets—
a stream of fish. The hill,

yes, the hill is a secret
where cranes must operate
on everything heavy—
the stones, the concrete,
the heavy foreign names
with wartime dates
carved deeply into
the native fabric.

On Duty · Tonight

· the fire beside me · burns
· burning the combustibles · of
a city recently crumbled · I'm
the poet · on duty tonight ·
smoke from the · fire · rises tonight
· the fire reflects from micas · of glass
in windows · on the street · in the street
· tonight · on duty · tonight
· I hear these fires burn · the poetry
of yesterday · the words that make most sense ·
read in the back of a Greyhound ·
by pastures and plains of wheat ·
the poetry · listened to · and gone by ·
poetry burns tonight · my job ·
is to watch the fire · the city ·
the smoke · the buses · the fields
· and what we make of them ·
and write what the mysteries in me ·
see ·

High Plains Statistics

Of all the places to be, in a town only a crossroads and 12 buildings each as old as oaks,
the sound of wind blowing in from the West and with it the bounding weeds and sandspew,
the macadam of a road built in the '50s and rarely traveled since the '70s going east-west,
the sand on oil of a road built before that connecting ranches and isolated trailers going north-south,
and down south at the Backwards R Ranch Trish struts nude all day waiting for her man
who's here at Jake's Crawdad Bar sipping Jack's and watching the Diamondbacks rally
from 7 down in the bottom of the ninth to beat the Dodgers hoping to dodge fate from the arm
of a 95 mph+ lefthander—Trish's man sits with us men who're longing for Trish more than he is,
her all-shaved body tinged red like her hair and who doesn't like the little-girl aspect of it?—
of all the places to be fate's picked this one and my life like yours plays out to odds stacked
up for or against us and seems everything is happening until something does and that settles it,
one of us gets the girl and the others don't though we wish for all the playouts, in a town only
a crossroads where the buildings are hanging in to see what happens and we're hanging around
to see what happens and Trish is hanging out to see who does her and Trish's man is poking
his toothpick into a bowl of salsa made fresh each morning before dawn by Margherita
lonely as dawn on the high plain here plum in the middle of our little normal distribution.

Arse Poetica

I am a telescope no one can break,
my fat end aimed at tire ruts and me
and my thin end on a pen and I am the badger
who never stops digging and will find you in my roots
though my color turn gray and dusty like your car
from the Kansas drive and I am the windmill
pulling water from 500' down at the haste set
by wind off the Rockies or maybe Santa Fe and
I am bristling with catchy twigs and hard to hold
though I catch many things while rolling sphere-like
down Route 50 to the Eastern sea and I am
the big-rig hauling ass down to Dodge full-up
of hogs and trailing stench and blown-out hog-soaked straw
and I am the honey that falls from the spoon
in a long lap into a pot of tea served to everyone
who loves it sweet and I am the shooting star of wonder
chipping away at the long time hoping for a break
and another sound to tease my ears.

The Waves Caress the Shore

Each impulse hastens others.

I don't mean human emotions but mechanical
contrivances or more properly inventions
incapable of perceiving the intentions
they play out based on patterns and structures
that piecewise seem like each other isomorphically.

Events trigger exceptions.

What we expect is delivered to
the unexpected and though we think
more about the expected each electrical
blip is like any other though we think only
of certain ranges as significant.

Let's peer from the inhuman toward the human.

Linguistically the game of not
feels the same but is mathematically harder,
and everyone knows you can't argue
against mathematics and that's the imperialism
of reason right there in axioms and rules of thought.
Rules of thought.

Poetry is blocky.

This is the truth finally stated
by followers of the shallow. Let's take the Berkeley
philosophers to the end of a pier at the end
of their university street when the tide
is low and teach them what truth
smells like.

Ranticle

No targets can be found,
no one to take the blame,
we won't accept randomness,
we seek to assign blame,
we won't be found,
no one can take randomness,
we won't seek,
we won't assign,
we won't accept,
no targets.

Alley Impression

alley

woman white-haired walking slow
beigebrown skirtsuit tailored jacket black pumps

another taller mouseblonde skirt & jacket
interlacing arms

they walk slow quiet
Wild Hare's neon's just come on

bare tree split trunk two tops
such a thick thatch of branches blacking the dim lit sky

two women quiet speech one 50 one 70
well-defined women each scratch on the sky is crisp

nothing helps me hear them leaning on a can
reading poems less rich less clear

less

God Switch

How does the scarecrow work? Old clothes
with the bad odor of a man, filled with straw
once laced in the stalls behind horses, burlap
for a head as rough as a house someone turned into
a dump, hung on two sticks tied together and poked
into the soft ploughed ground of a prized field
and tied in three places to stakes in the corn rows.
His life is the blowing of wind and when it passes
through him he lives and when it leaves the downwind
hogs breathe in and snort, it animates him, he is inspired.

Crows sit on his arms like they did on the Arms
of Jesus, their thorn nest symbolizing hanging birth,
their caws the cadence of angels' wings beating
each others' heads in the grief grace gave them. On that day
God could not tolerate the air woof of wingbeats
or the erotic, hating calls of birds, and He stopped them.
The scarecrow works like a line returned to,
the reaction cluster of a tearful Creator.

Hell Away

When the minister asked for stories
of the recently departed genius who entered Chicago
at 15 and graduated at 17, who invented half
of computer science, who studied backgammon
and played it well for a wonk, he was not surprised
by the sporadic kind words and tears which he usually
gets and the memories of small indications
of rich humanity and love but nothing
prepared him for the third son
who lives in Germany in an Austrian family
who blamed and blamed and blamed,
told stories of rejection and denial,
of humiliation and the distance and estrangement
from the rest of his family, but who when he heard
himself in the echo of the 2/3 empty Congregational
Church, said he loved him and hoped his death was the beginning
of a life for the family torn apart by the wayward genius.

The minister spoke of the Congregational Church bought
from the Episcopalians who glazed each window with stained
glass which darkened the hall to near darkness while the Congregationalists
put in clear glass and painted the walls and ceilings white
to bring in the light that we all sat in. I sat
in the back and waited head down while people who might be
friends walked out into the courtyard for drinks,
then I went out the side back door into the ivied alley
and around out to my car without anyone watching me
as I drove the hell away from there.

Arc Echoes

Fate of a cut flower:
Dumb stem pulling in liquids
while the blooms unfold,
leaves make food from the sunlight
in the corner of her kitchen nook,
and they open and open in a sexual,
secular display, turn a pink then red then purple

then yellow and in the end brown
as the nutrients from roots they expect
don't arrive and the flowers then the leaves
then the stem is starved and she tosses them
into the trash. The front door opens

and in the vaulted hall I hear the echoes
of her telling someone goodbye.

Under the Bed

We got off from school early
from a bomb scare which we got
every 2 or 3 weeks—oh, in the 1960s
before bomb scares really meant anything.

The buses came to get us—we waited
out on the lawn. My father was in the hospital
perhaps dying from a brain disease, so when
I got home before my mother I hid under
his bed in the living room and when she did
I just laid there. For hours until
after the school bus was supposed
to bring me home and until

after the after-school
bus was supposed to bring me home and I
heard her calling my friends—not many calls.
When she went to the bathroom I slid out
and opened the front door
and closed it, “hi, Ma, I’m home.”

I didn’t tell her that I lay under my father’s bed
where the week before he seemed driven insane,
listened to her calling and crying until she seemed insane.

He didn’t die. I never
told. There’s a tree on 95 that reminds me of all this—
each year I try to find it but like a lot
of things, other things grew up around it
and now it’s exotic in my memory.

Practice on a Skull

Bones that don't look like what
they hung piled in piles unrevealing
their connections together or to other bones
on/to which they may have lied are turning
so white they're/their cracking ./is causing
me nuts listening at the speed
rings upon rings piling up. Listen/hurry up.
The sin/purchase of exclusion exhausts; single forks
in the road, choice little. These are the bones
I've finished. Those are leathered like hands in
gloves, hands in hands, hands pointing through
pelvises and out maybe through throats
past the tongue region. I ask of the coincidence.
Four holes in, one out for motion—loco-
motion.

Dripping With Loon Laughs

In the garage he plays
the radio and watches pictures.

He makes electronic devices
out of parts soldered

together and tacked
onto bent aluminum.

Couplets as in
one on top of the other.

I found nothing sexual—
had he given it

up finally? On the evening
of his death he practiced

his eyesight-retention
swaying exercises

to retain
his vision. What is it used

for now
that he doesn't?

He stood in the cold
rather than stand by her.

He stood looking into
the woods instead

of chopping wood
or sawing.

He painted unaware
of the virtues of excess

in matters of art.
He looked longingly

at women
whose motors ran.

His anger
was merely frustration

at the lack he saw
of life in his house.

He built things crooked
to have an excuse.

He dug holes by hand
to deprive machines.

He worked alone
to pinpoint blame.

What would it be
like to fall holding

a running chainsaw?
He is locked in brass.

Fact or Real?

Fall apart
fail to fit find art a ways
margins meet methodologies
focused creation is make piles dump pick
polish brag sneeze
from allergies to making it
up hip hip hurry up
butt up continuation
to autumnal explosions bursting from green
to red orange yellow
slo———mo
color = the _ itself
he painted all this
died
onnn hiiiiis kneeeeeees

Mean Redtop

Things I've fallen along
like the milky runoff from the oldest
glacier on Redtop Mountain
at the head of a valley. I took
her hand—mine because only
I held it. She thinks it means
something but where are the means,
where is something. This, she pointed
with one hand at the other, which I
had taken. I held it. If the meaning
is anywhere, look to the cold milk
which at least sports a color
rare in wild rivers except
for places like Redtop Mountain
named for the meaning
of a freckle-faced girl
fingering a sheaf
of lace.

Planed and Sanded

Spirit, spirits,
the powder which when water is added
springs into us. In my dream
she was soft as butter, warm
as a lamp turned off 5 minutes ago,
I stroked the backs of her legs all
through my dream, the most beautiful
dream of the end of my life reaching
back to the start of hers. She more full
of water, more fresh. more thirsting,
while I am wrung out. I understand
my father's house, built when he was young.
The tinder, the crust, beneath every board
and shingle the dust collects and coats the surfaces
he planed and sanded. This is what he is,
what I am, what in my dreams is not.

Whose Fantasy Will On?

About 8, winter,
cars creep across the bridge,
the rain falls in a hush on the cars,
the bridge, & the river. Boats tied
up in docks & houseboats in their berths
seem to move in the gently falling
rain. Smoke sneaks out an open
window and up under eaves.
Maybe a slight wind disturbs
the coincidentally even drop pattern
on the slowly moving water.
Smoke creeps out from under the eaves
and floats up in the rain falling down
in the cold in winter after dark.
In a kitchen window a woman
peels vegetables and prepares a meal.
In a bedroom window a boy watches
the tugs head upriver. This is what
I imagine tonight in a room
dark-surrounded and devoid
of you. What do you imagine
the bridge fantasizes?

Sally Doll Test

All this talk of syntax and sentences.
Syntax as form—a seacoast mountain range.
And a sentence as movement or a meaning or
an avoidance. Nonetheless
(it is possible)

language could shape cognition, ambiguity being
hard to pin down. In the Sally doll test and theory
of mind we have a cognition

which links to mental state terms,
is testable yet is intuitive rather than linguistic.
Theory of mind is a cognition
which concerns how people cognate.

When Sally doll exits the room,
her marble in the box, what she thinks
depends on what you say.
Move the marble and when Sally doll
returns, where she thinks the marble is
depends on whether your language
gives her a mind.

The failure of anything beyond
concrete in words fails
to metarepresent theory of mind.

Yet the saw saws.

Commercial Sentimentalism

When I watch the coded waves
spangle no lava-black rocks
in a storm of pouring and gray
your eyes watching mine
under tossed hair behind drop-spotted
glasses lurk in the corner of my vision
where chance sways more
than lingers and my love for your
is just the reverb of a slow decline.

Way Mechanic

The basis of two machines
making connections is inflexibility,
talking with no chance to hear
variance, near misses impossibilities,
no hi's only hello's. Master and slave
disguised at times
as friends. Pretending, as Dean might put it,
to be telephones. Friendships based
on jigsaw puzzles. Disisolation
through forced connivance
and no friendly meetings
by chance and backgrounds—
the dirt along the way to here—
must match. Exactly. Precisely.
No variance. No choice. Make our future
open up.

Hands Printed In Sand

I've noticed my hands grown colder,
growing cold. The skin shriveled and
growing looser day by day. The color
of them more like the gray hue
of the sky past its peak and well
into its storm brewing like conversations
between people with their hands over
their mouths standing around a pit
dug yesterday. Like something confused
about life and death, my nails are curling
as they grow and grow. I've noticed my hands
grown smaller, growing small. The skin
growing tighter day by day. What they can't
notice and neither can I: The last
grain of life passed from the cup of today
to the cup of yesterday. My death piled
on all the others'.

Fear of Cold

What matters is two things:
Look through the darkness
into barlight off the barback mirror
and see the outline of a tightened skirt
walk in long lopes to the end of the bar
and hitch up on the footrail and see
the splayed shape of her blown-dry
hair exude from her desires;

listen through the silence
into the sonic engulfment
of the bar band hitched like a donkey
to the heavy load of loved music
worn down of its edges to its most
average charms.

And realize that the waltz you watch
is your own slowing down, as the place
is chosen by your narrowing circle,
your panic in the face of tightened skirts
and the trembling fingers of music makers,
the trembling fingers of body curve silhouettes,
the fear of cold that looking up
delivers.

As It Ever

This river is the sweet
connection between a grey bank
and a pink near sunrise. We sit
on either side. I'm first
here then there. You the other.
The river just flows past
in no hurry as we are. Birds
glitter in iridescence cut
at their throats, signals
of identity and self. This water
is our bridge as stable
as it ever was. Rolling on
as it ever has. Uncertain
as it ever is.

Two—More Days

Into town—
slipped into town
on the heels of a hot rain
leaving waterways sluicing
down the curbed sides of the road
to a waterway bound for the Gulf,
parked, stopped before checking
in and checked the cherry of my Ford
against the turquoise peeling off
the 4"x4" posts supporting an A-frame
sheltering roof, laid down 20,
and took the end room before
walking down the tracks to Gentlemen's
Steak House and a meal fit for
two and a string of hard drinks chased
by beer and a chilled tequilla drunk to make
me forget two—please, just
two—more days.

Pipette & Dry

Checking in
to unconventional hotels
and drinking martinis
so dry the bartender
drips in the vermouth
using a pipette. So bleak are
prospects mining is minimized,
streets are cut short by crosscuts,
and the Blake in all of us blushes.

Streamline Fingerpads

The door is open
and she is touched. What does
she think? First fingers streamline
the body facing away, from shoulders
down to ass. Second fingers enter
her heat zone along the same path.

Third you touch her. Three
traces on the same route:
exploration, discovery, invention—
Find your way to the positive
space in her negative regions.

Edged Along

I've got everything.
With me I said.
Leaning out the window over.
The dredged channel.
Past the fueling docks.
Holding out my laptop.
Meaning text and tips.
Literature—a body of information.

No you don't that's.
Your computer not.
Everything you said.
And fell from the pier.
Whose handrail fell.
Like Icarus to the bottom of.
The dredged channel—.
Lacking an edge and.
You laughed.

It's name is.
Everything I said.
And leaning too.
Far and fell.
To the top of.
The dredged channel.
Every edge a chance.
To change or cut.
At all.

Three Stories

By an oiled canal
the high-slung agent
of marginalized grammar
is spitting the complete
image of passive attacks
on the tip of the tongue
of a three-storied
spare nude counterwoman.

Forty Fathoms

There was no point
to walking away except
the limits of walls
and tangling passageways,
curving staircases leading
to my room or yours not
both. The canal sported bridges
that never froze no matter how
empty we were of intimate energy.
The point of no dimensions
describes us. You'd think
with no common language we'd make
one up but you stuck
with silences directed in varying
directions. Starting from a point.
I saw a gull pulled
beneath the waves caught on a hook
tied to an anchored line from a boat
after soupfins and thought
of me pulled beneath by
the canal by you, your
anchor changing but retaining
its weight, moving here then there
but still on the bottom. You are
nothing, the point being.

Hot Song Formal

Formal, stretched
from chair to chair
our lines of talking hanging loose
like clotheslines hung from posts gone
crooked from excess. our conversation
turns to talking and how we don't
make speech well, neither touch nor
linger after the band packs up
and the smoke has blown down
the alley and into the bay where
fueling docks drip their excesses
and barges tie up for a quick snack.

Your fingers brushed mine
as we left the small foyer
best suited for the elderly
to discuss warhorse operas
where what we discussed instead
was how we don't discuss much,
then we left it at that and headed
east & west like poorly planned
magnets spinning away and away.

Let's meet next year and do it again—
so much fun to stare and watch
to see who caves first, who yields
like butter to their own sharp hot song.

Machine Longing for Rio

I seduced the machine
sitting there solving a hard partial
differential equation programmed by a geek
hacking for an acoustician. I was like a siren
with an outrageous sexual presence
whose polarity I switched several times
to lead the machine into confusion
and deep desire. It was lost looking at small changes
spreading out to a large picture when it displayed
itself as a fractal set which swung so cool and swayed so gentle
like music from rodas de samba at the botequins,
parts the machine hid from all but its lovers,
hid from those who use it only, who don't know
it deeply, from those who just don't see.

Plural Landscape

What is her desire,
how does she wear it,
which layer buries it and will
she uncover it? Her mistrust
lies at the bottom of her, holding
fast, an anchor tipped with barbs
oxidized to the rock that now surrounds
it. Who will pull it up? Who will cut it
loose from its intriguing bed? Will it
like a heart surrender when loosened
from its bindings? Right now her desire
like her voice is kept swallowed, unable
to speak, unwilling, such as a grove
of cedars some weeping and distorted
from the winds and countervailing
rains, keeping to themselves like shelters
accidentally set on a hill of storms.

Word Flurry

The poet left her instead
of completing the arc,

at the peak and kept it,
filled it out, made it

not lived it. Made of words
whose meanings are shapes

whose tones are colors,
a jigsaw, a painting,

dreamed, fatigued.
Behind her at that moment

a plume of steam from a patch
of sunlight on green granite

after a sudden but not short
shower smoked upward,

forked into two and one
cooled out of existence

even though the color
of the hillside flared

and the gray of the sky
hurried away to the East

and a whirling sea,
an inwardly spiraling sea.

Too Like Us

Fog off a wet field in cold dawn air
seen backlit reminds me of snow
sheltering a low near-dusk sun—
driving past a stand of leafless maples.

So how does silence play into this
scene, making a living metaphor
out of a boring human situation
and a spectacular piece of imperfection?

When it snows on your city,
trucks will back up over its freshly
fallen lacework leaving industrial
tracks that fill in farthest first.

Like us.

Bleachers

Behind the motel
the strippers gather to exchange strategies
on who to flash, what, how much, for how much.
They look like girls stretched out under a nervous
streetlight shorting from their girl(ish)-
ness. They smoke and worse. Dogs
hug shadows to avoid their metallic
perfume. Jeans, blouses, t-shirts, tightened
like their bleached anuses busily preventing
continence. Artists pretend like crazy.

I wondered,
when she raised her leg
to my hydrant and pulled herself
apart and her garter
ready to receive all my swimming fish,
about abstraction, subtraction,
and how much you can bleach out
a feeling and still have it.

Used Lots

We're behind the used
car lot looking at demo derby
veterans, seeing how each insult
remains even with dings on dents
on dings when bashed-in radiators
have blown their cool and engine cave-ins
are no big deal. I'm a raft in this sea,
I float like rust on chassis, like oil
on leftover puddles, like what you like
on what you used. Now it's on to the famous
railroad walk through town to the bay,
when cranky cormorants hang like hussies
by the collapsed bridge. I've found my cutting
torch, now it's the hard cuttable
I need.

Heaving, Heaven

Links, luck, licks
having heaven, heaving, hiccups
—for some crumbling is the hope of fate—
touch, tasteless, titillations
the famous attend footballs games looking fat
when the tip of love touches you—sudden sudden

Don't come
near me
place the chicken carefully

When someone you've loved
physically dies
dirt never dries out
dust to mud ashes to tears

Crumbling like crumb cakes
when the dead say "eh" the droning music
starts

Figure wrapped in fish netting
everything visible
even undertows

In black light
your skins blemishes
wondering of the glitter runway lights

Touch links, tasteless luck
the hope of fate hiccups
licks heaven

Hatred Pure

My enemy is stupid
Defeating her will be easy
She will never see
She thinks no one saw
Her flaw is a streelight
and I am its shadows
The bullet that gets her
will come from her own heart

Head West

Crossing a street,
finding a four-leaf note
written with a heart blanched
like a floating swan or swan
worker. My work is hidden
under sweat which many take
for passion boiled over.

Sure the work's sliding
across the road
and my arm's sliding up
the role you're playing
while pretending you're talking
when language leaves,
fall you know. Darkness
is hiking this way till dawn,
you're spooling everything
you've ever said,
and I'm backing
up what I've said
for another day.

Theoretical Practice

Fossilized wind:
trees grown up in a constant
wind off the bay all lean
one way. What passes
is the passing by. Legs
among the saturns,
large fires in crop circles
circling and cycling,
acting like faith
toward fathomlessness.
Beneath the crows' shadows,
more shadows, more crows,
a snapshot taken suddenly,
no time for even the settling
of chemicals on the trails
of supposed retinal images.

Today the theory,
tomorrow we see.

Prior to Writing

In the courtyard
crickets scratching beneath drying leaves
creaking their edge scrapers over wing ridges.

I feel I must write a poem,
this one for example,
and I start to do it, one line
scratching out from beneath a dry leaf,
another with near uniform bottoms lined up,
ridges on top like the voices of crickets.

But just before I write it,
unexpectedly like twin feelings
falling like a leaf onto a line
marking an edge
the sound like before attention
of crickets creaking,
edge scrapers,
wing ridges,
the squared echo
of my abandoned and crumbling
empty courtyard.

Winter Holdings

Winter has come,
I'm sure of it, it's definite,
I mean,
the slow but steady cold wind from the North,
the white powder like insinuations
collecting in corners and in holes,
the dark which comes on early in the afternoon
after the day has had a late start. Winter
has come and it waits for me every day,
for the time when I wake, when you've
cracked the door leaving and the wisp
of cold wind gathers around the edges
of the bedspread and quilts. Your warm hands
have left. Winter has come, I'm sure of it,
the white flowers of the evergreens
have fallen off and blown away. Your coat,
I see it lifting up and dropping down
in your rhythm down by the boulevard, your heels
kicking up its hem, your hennaed
hair escaping from under your healthy hat,
the sounds of you escaping like the winter
wind. I'm sure of it, it's definite,
I mean.

Walking Through Ourselves

Signs of aged woods,
birches lit up in the moon
shine seen from a furrowed road,
dirt or sand tracks with a hump
of grass between like two walkers
with little to say. Signs of people's

lives, a fence made of rough
hewn maple or other
hardwoods hidden up
to its fencepost tops
like islands in a sea of night
fog painted a metallic white
by greyed light from the moon
filtered through the night air, We

each walk our furrows and who
would think the tufts of grass
between us could stop
so much.

Indispensable?

The bosses tell us
no one is indispensable—
including you, you bastards. I like it
when the bastards lose their jobs,
when they end up in jail or broke.
I like it when their bottom
lines are big negatives and their
string of luck has run out. I want to be
there when one of you bastards tells St Peter at the Pearly Gates
that no one is indispensable. And what about
Satan? What will he think of it?
Indispensable? No,
so let's start the dispensing
with you.

Miracle No

Clock ticking on the table,
ticking in the middle of the room,
darkness taking in the ticks,
the night near its middle
and something hot in me has me awake
in time to hear the ticks grow
further apart as everything
stretches out like tight fists
unlocking. I sense no miracles about
to happen, and I'm not about
to get up and wind the aged spring
in my old clock, and without a miracle
in this hollow room
where I lay alone
the night will continue
to stretch on.

Rock Sound

Stone colors—elemental—compounded
by air—nursing pebbles—under dirt
and browned—stones clicking like clocks—
time pressed into emotion-sized slugs—
time locked up as odor—the stone
that fell into my father's field
was planted around,
mowed around,
danced around,
stuck around
while all of this came,
while all of this went.

Three Stations Toward Total Winter

In day
the petals of drying flowers drop off
into the rising dust and low-flying
insects who make no noise but fill
the air like popping sounds.

At dusk
the air flowing around and past
the dried-out flowers grows
colder and colder and not
even moths will fly into it
or through it and the gift
of flying has turned liquid
like a river distilled and lifeless,
soundless.

In dark
the sounds the day made
such as the sounds of dried petals
falling in harmony with their old
colors or the sounds of insects
ripping little at leaves and dried grass
blades are replaced by a flow into me,
a gold turned black, a singularity
folding in, by a river of ice slowing,
whispers, wingbeats,
the sound of ice cracking on itself.

Hold It Right There

I'm in that city
of dead
again where
homes are boxes underground
and inhabitants are
just dust
where the ghosts are
not part
of their machines
where the sounds of conversations are
lost on us
drowned out by pine
needles sewing
shut the sky overhead blocking
our ways
heavenward should
our machines
stop.

No Bigger Farce Than Poets Without Work

no heavier fog than the dark
laced with fog and letting out only
voices and voices of peddlers
and streetmen holding onto
their sides splitting
from too much bread too much fatty
dips too much laughing the mis-
ery of poets skulking along alley walls
lifting up the hems
of dumpsters filled to the brims
speaking in voices and voices
to the otherworld the worthy world
of poems completed and poets
laid off

Can't Or Don't

our favorite spot
has fallen apart
the slats of our bench are weakened
or hang
the metal forms once our solid base
have rusted nearly through
nettles cover the hill where we laid
and rolled
the pond has drained so much
it's just a swamp with stilled and colored
water flies where birds flew once
the children who would bike by
and call out to dogs carry now
their hats like calling cards
or shields
as they walk home after a cold
day and
you're standing in your window
and I'm
standing by the street looking up
this is the only place you can't
or don't
see

Drained Rainbow

a rainbow hangs in the air
like the neck of a swan hanging
from a hook in the barn
with enough life in it
to bend in a graceful curve
that looks to untrained eyes
like the circle of an optical
phenomenon like the bending
of light through drops in a shower
but few recognize the draining colors
bending away from the health
of a blue sky at mid-day
a pooling of the fading blue
on the bottoms and the whole life
of it draining slowly
into the distant hills
like the discharge of spark
after a long goodbye

Dreadful Poetry

from my window curtained
by drops falling from the dormer
onto a steel roof crimped with fastening folds
facing East in heavy showers
or the mooing of an all-girl family
of cows upslope in the Austrian Alps
I'm watching the sky and clouds
prepare for dawn by clearing
out a patch of blue above the couloir
that drains the cold air down onto my cooling
opened bedclothes and what I want
has been packed away
forgotten on the bottom of my bag
and I'm ready to leave this centerfold
this glamor strip the sound of you
being fucked twice three times
by the DNA man who thinks that filling
you marks you
ha ha it just wakes me up
and fills me up
—dreadful poetry

Is She Right?

Here's the scene—little beauty:
a lake half-drained with a low rim
of rounded rocks about it, oval shaped;
hazed of smoked sky hanging high
covering the scene in an urban
or industrial light;
across the lake lawns like
walls sloping rapidly up to
a berm of housing units,
apartments starting many stories to the left
and sloping down to the right,
the color of unwashed rocks
pulled from mud;
a tree,
or is it two?
they huddle close the way we used
to;
smoke from a small fire just put out
with a bucket of muddy water
drifting from right to left just
obscuring a stone walkway around the lake
but below high water;
to the left a Japanese girl
in a Japanese schoolgirl skirt
talking on a handy
to me
telling me,
“we don't need poets
around here.”

The poetic question:
Am I right?

All Bottom

I was the worst of times
hollowing a doorway
closed over. Hung over.
The quips slipped up
like an Edith Piaf song
skipping the meaning
increasingly.

Eyes that lower mine
a laugh that loses itself on his mouth
Voila, the portrait without touch up:
Man, Auguel, I belong

When it takes me in its arms,
it speaks to me: all bottom.
I've seen the life in rose—
it says to me words: Love,
those everyday words.
And it does something for me
it is: enter into my heart,
a part of happiness
of which I know the cause,
this is him for
me, me for him (in life).
It has it for me, says,
the swear for life,
and of that I, the L' Apercois,
then I feel in me my heart that beats.

Nights, love has more to finish;
a big happiness that takes his place—
boredoms, sorrows obliterate themselves:
happy, happy has some to die.

Edith,
so mouth,
so full,
so increasingly.

Think Along

O let's make things
break things
think like new
hide the facts in a cabbage bag
sick onto the ground and weep
O let's make things
sneak things
do with all what we do alone
do above what we do below
let the world that acts like dreams act like us
follow the con trail to the burning fire
fling the facts into the fact of faces
O let's make things
forsake things
hide the facts
they belong to mr think along
they belong in crates
here hold this

So Girl

Shrinking shadow
of a woman's circle of love
when her husband dies
& children drift
to one coast or another
& everything about her becomes
more and more
female, feminine, womanly, girlish,
her connections to her
surroundings dry up
& she becomes less like them.
She'll distill herself
to purity—so much the female,
so little the cold situation
of a man in a car
driving at dusk to a night
of two TVs and a wide
shared bed, no-man's
land between, She
will circle her circle
like Rilke's dark panther,
like a cyst of heat
in ice, like an absolute
against compromise.

Goodbye

We write the goodbye books—
one for you, one for me—
and thus we write it—
what we cannot say—
or write with decency—
goodbye.

Attacking Merchandise—Sky

cornfields skyscrapers
holly poinsettias
store so over a lifesize stuffed bear
softens windows
as large as
load bearers
light dropped out
daylight of headlights & storelights
cars glassed in shoppers
attacking merchandise
and all us thinking
of the effects of highheels
& gray skirts
& fur caps
so much like a diesel engine
no one looks
for sparks just pressure
of critical mass
two bumping shoulders
a spry honk
pink on ice blue
pewter

Pull Out & Under

So it's night and there's a pattern
of houses lit on the hills and down
by the rivers and bays and streetlights
are wide spots of orange reflecting
off the Greyhound's inside windows
refracting in the spray of drops
spewed up by passing cars from an earlier
rainfall—who rides the bus this late.

Or early.

The busdriver doesn't have needs
for heat or stops or drinks or girls—
he drives on past exits, past towns,
past casinos in the distance, neon
like a sunrise, sunrise that never comes,
it's always night. Pattern of all night.
Pattern of lights lit like a sign.

Pattern of neon towns in the distances.
We are always riding. The woman in all
different clothes is coughing forever.

The child cries in his always wet diapers.

The hopefuls hope. The bus drives on.

Just when the sun should be rising
we pull off the highway and pull under
a neon that says "enter." We pull out
with one more passenger and his wife
who each count out \$8.50
for what a lovely long ride
we expect to have tonight.

Unlinked

somewhere
a lawn so green it's not a shade
lies
across humps and hills among
trees
and in lines intersecting
stand
stones someone carved into
crosses
and stars and each
marks
important places where people have
dug
deep holes and placed in them precious but
unwanted
droppings from their memories and long
lives
and this is where home will be and here I'll
stay

Me & Winter

Standing on a corner
facing West—sunset dregs through buildings
built the color of the hope of green glass,
tough as internal steel crossbeams.
Women pass sometimes and look.

What do they see in my face,
my defeated stance leaning
against a low wall,
against each of them?

Winter is to the West,
wondering toward us,
thinking of the skirts
He'll paste to their asses,
puff into balloons.

You're wondering if I'm here
and what I'm thinking?

Me too.

Seducing Former Girls

I've got all your best women,
now they're singing in real voices,
perhaps I've seduced them.
They are no longer your children—
I've shown them real danger,
letting go. And how could I
do that unless I was already in
them?

One for S. R.

I alone am left to write
of all those eager, capable.

Of all who could, most
have died, their capabilities

a decay. Some are living
in unknowable places. What

they wrote is really not
appropriate to how we felt—

ineptness our greatest strength,
yet the girls loved us sullenly,

followed us from a distance
and angle we couldn't direct.

But Russ rode in Twig's long
Pontiac Catalina, island

of romance in '65 before
we knew girls. Not before

he did. He did.
Russ changed his name to Sean

and wrote like a butterfly,
with a talent deeper than the rocks

beneath Rock's Bridge—O!
that murky water of 1967.

After he died I sat on that bridge
with my legs over

its edge and read Russ again,
O! how he copied Hopkins

with his own twist but
what I saw most clearly

were the rocks beneath
the bridge just inches below

the clear clear swirl.

Ruminations Behind a Ballfield After a Double Header

a lightning
a thunder...both echo

need for examples
conversation to puzzle out
what

we mean never
thought...linear thinker

Homer drafting
a better poet...modern madmen

a hand...fingers drawn across
the lips...direction of eyes

directing the mirror flip...we pretend
to be phones back...so many

making disposables...plug them
into books...make talent

a slave to property...of the mind
imagination single

things out...keep them
apart before they make

more than they can be...
say it isn't so Joe

And he hit
a line drive,

maybe 2 or 3
games to
go,

and it was
caught. And he was

mumbling—he
always talked

to himself
a little bit.

And he said,
“How did

I look, how did
I look?”

And I'm thinking,
“Why is he asking

me how he
looks?”

So, I said,
“Joe, you look great.”

Unlikely Recurrences

We carry briefcases
in case we need help.
Our shoes are polished
to prevent us from being short
a mirror. We wear neckties
to remind us of death
as it is in places where death
is much closer.

The reason Winter
is grey and its days short
is to increase our depressions
so that the pure white
of its first storm is taken
as a sign of innocence
and not death.

Mirrors are full of it,
our minds are flat
and our hair silvered.
All the symbols line up
and are executed quietly
tonight somewhere down
this quiet street being pressed
for time by snowfall.

Not Yet

Beginning of Winter—
when the cold and snow are
fresh and the sodium lights
are visible 5 miles up—
we're fresh out of imagination
and everything we think of starts
with a bicycle and a girl in red.
I've thought of seduction—but rake
or dandy, I can't decide so fop
it is. All I've learned is that whatever
shine I show I need a cruelty—perhaps
tossing back into the field
the stones in an ancestor's wall.
It's not the end of Winter that's cruel
but its beginning when it arrives
at the close of summer. One change
and it all changes.
Do you remember when we imagined
ourselves? We didn't think of the boulevard
wall-to-wall in sodium lights
and ice skaters on just 7 layers
of water poured out onto a staked
arena on the mall. How Russian
we looked in St Louis near the Arch.
Gateways. Beginnings. Our cold shoulders
when we kissed them. Fog like the happiness
of memory rising from the River
and of the time:
It is not yet.

First Wave, Then Done

It was nearly dark but the sky
was blue still while the sun
flared behind the high hill
and I was driving up the winding
road to home. The sodium vapor
light was half against the sky the shade
of translucent blue porcelain
and half against aqua siding on a 1960's
house. Something about the orange yellow
stain in front of so many related
shades of blue through my windshield
highlighted halos on the glass shaped
like the football-shaped sodium vapor
light. I pulled over
and parked while half the shades
grew darker through purple
and on into black and the sodium vapor
light grew merrier, lost all hint of shadow
from its surroundings and became like
a sun or sign of high hope. The next
day it rained and all of us—
the sodium vapor light on and all
the shades of blue—
were washed into the Bay
and into this ocean of words
not worth
the effort of reading.

Ran Down Moonbeams

Here's a devilish hint:
long streets ending short
signal loves extending beyond
their natural lengths. Some have
the luxury of roads with few
houses and housewives
hanging like executioners
their lingerie on rope clotheslines
on their front porches at nearly noon
and then lounge out on an old sofa
with one leg and one arm up
on the backrest, and some
face urban brownstones and stoops
covered in whores waiting for sunset
to add the last layer of makeup
that makes them sirens like
the ones in White Room
where Clapton lets go for
the first time and we've all
been scrambling for the cry
of tears he let loose
that day on the advice of a devil
smiling like chicanery.

Observation and Prayer on Hearing of Distress

There's a plague going
around here whose only symptom
is the long parts of a horse
bending to bring
swiftness, or the thin
long branches of the birch
bending to bring
quick tips in touch with a wintered
ground—I mean snow—grinding
the earth to dust, ash, and sand
in the sawtime of Spring. But
remember:

Plagues kill,
horses trample,
twigs snap,
and water is as
the women.

Stalled

Prayers answered,
telephones ringing,
weddings planned,
wood smoothened,
hair removed—
coverings quickly tossed
aside. My phone's ringing,
someone telling me of a wedding
now and another later, after Spring,
someone asking for prayers,
men of little hair and matching
faith for faith. Me, I
just rub my faith board smooth,
as cows have done forever in stalls.
Prayers answered, faith installed.

Postromp

Driving through a campus
town a cameraman films with his Bolex
long before steadycams
using a film that drifts with time
to a uniform green. Those trees
who seemed so young and trim
like weeds under a yellow sun
are now fat trunked oaks,
rotten and fallen down.
I've read five books titled "Aruba"
by four different writers,
and what we would think
of as tropical is really a desert with cactus
and adobe ruins.
It is a milestone of postmodernism
that dry heat can mix with trade winds
to form a poem with a story
and a cheery melody
played on a banjo learned
by playing 33 rpm records at 16 rpm
and tuning down the banjo and
plucking along to each note
then spreading the hand
to make sense.
Let's bow to the thrill
of escape and enlightenment
that a film about to turn all
green gives. Let's be careful
our eyes don't bounce out
of our heads tonight. Let's
bask in Aruba tonight.

What's Left?

The way of your smell,
the sleek slim silhouette
of your body, the glitzing
in your eyes, the odd clean
way you phrase denials,
another sigh before you close
your throat for the last time—all

you have and are
like the heads of dandelions
will detach and some will
blow away in the wind
and the rest will pull
up a cover of clover
and what's left
will be something different
and changing above
and something familiar
and lingering below.

Snow Forlorn

In your snug life you huddle with warmth
and the cabin collects snow on its roofs for the same purpose;
heat is generated in distinct spots;
the rooms can be locked away from the snow piled up outside;
farm animals are locked away in their barns all Winter;
snow is the persistence of memory
and where we walked is covered until redemption;
you are here seeking fun but only the snow falls;
the ride here was shallow and the road home is slippery;
the encounter you have will pave the way for retreats;
you long for Summer but nothing happens to your clothes;
tonight the dining room is shut from all others
to save the heat from the last of the wood
before the only warmth left is the warmth
from the man clutching you like the last
token on his scared first journey home.

Clinical Locution

Outside the window,
 next door,
 a shovel scrapes along the surface
 of concrete and I'm guessing
 something sloppy is happening.
 Is this autobiography
 or the imagination filling
 in for nothing? Can you
 tell from these words and what
 you've found out about
 my life whether this happened
 or let's say something like it?
 How many people sit next
 to windows with concrete pavement
 nearby and how many times have the sounds
 of shovels scraped the air
 and what could be sloppy about it?
 Or asking the autobiography question,
 surely that happened because, look,
 it's right up there ^ see it? What's
 different about that question that
 it can't be questioned whether it happened?
 Look, there's nothing here but words.
 What you found out about my life
 is just more words. Is the word is
 autobiographical? You've got the hard job,
 I'm just typing. This about this:
 How many people sit nothing? Can you
 tell from just could be sloppy is this autobiography
 or let's say something sloppy is happened becauto wing
 somethat questiong the surface
 of shovel screte people sit's along the surface
 of concrete air
 and whation fillife
 it's right up the auto windows windows wither this happened
 or asking the autobiography
 or the imaginatiography questioned how many timethical? You've got the
 window,
 next door,
 a shovel scrapes right up there ^ see it? Can you
 tell from there this happened?
 Look, times here be sloppy about about my life,
 surely that happened because, look,
 it's right up there words about my life
 is just more words. Is happened because, look,
 it's right up there ^ see air
 next thing like it?

Between Ink and The Page

roads like lifelines
straight as bad news

seed signs fronting
corn milo alfalfa wheat

dry rivers lined
with cottonwoods

some sage in the high
plains wind like

the only lifesigns fronting
towns railroad silos

round bales of alfalfa
size of 2-ton trucks

near here the cemetery
where a story popped

up instead of a soul
instead of heaven

smudging lives
caught between ink and the page

Quick Up and Down

past midnight she awakes, walks
down the hall littered with pictures
of those who call themselves her family,
twists the stopper off a fifth of gin
and recants. outside some snow fails
to blanket the roses which just
last week bled like foil leaking
beneath the roast she made
for the one who holds her
like payment. she snapped.
the wind in coming in,
the signal, the scouring
over nettles and daisies
gone frozen. the gin kicks in.
her bed, those arms, await.

Cover in B&W

the roads come together - the slush -
the snow on them are rough and sliced
by tracks - of a truck turning onto the side
road - of a car going straight - and even
though it snows the temperature
turns it to white - to water just frozen -
the sky is just a wish for warmth -
you could walk here - add your black
steps to the black slicks - but you're
face down on the hardwood floor -
eyes covered by hiding hard - lips
closed - admitting nothing - emitting
nothing - the floor warms - outside
I follow the tracks past a tree -
a spike - the next thing to living

Heaven Hot Me

What bark on fresh love?
The eyehole through the brambles
wall into the dunes above the sea
is forcing a relaxation onto tension
defined by waves on sand.
Wave
goodbye.
Waver.

My choice is to step
out onto the promenade by the canal,
the fueling station hovering in its small
spill. You snap it, lens into light,
glass,
who cares?
Waiver.

Outside the air is dense with the Gulf.
An overtone from your laugh escapes
with the smoke through a just-opened
door. Your love lurks behind your convictions.
Once fresh, now barked.
Embark.
Embargo.

We seem destined for water,
rivers, risk, swamp.
Do you recall the bones we found by the Mississippi?
Yours?
Ours?

Cut off from the world,
not the river,
by a train passing uphill
for hours.

Sparkle. The only response water can make
when facing something
hot. Heavenly.

The Sadness of Japanese Women

Kintai Bridge leaps across
the Nishiki River and young

girls watch debris drift
like lost cherry blossoms
beneath the arches.

Research, try, build—
the drift of thinking like an arch
from nothing to memory

humped in the middle
based on stone islands
spaced apart for debris to pass.

Disheveled, drinking Coke,
her sense of sensuality drowning
beneath the arches. Grave
of coffin lid. He taught

her sensuality,
love, way of living,
washing past from the pen

of a woman. Green
leaves, young leaves,
disappearance into the mist
that clogs up from the river,
devours clouds

eats the world
from the roots up.

Park of Hindered Fashion

The fashion of parks
to hinder privacy. The likelihood
of discovery beneath willows.
The streamlined nature
of smooth skin on a standing
man. The rate of bicycling
on cobbles and gravel. The glacial
color of swift water. The rate
of napping approaching
constancy.

Welcome to the world
of dreams of love, insomnia
of grasslands, of sprinters
downhill. Welcome to the
Park of Hindered Fashion.

Z-Z-ing

Chicago's
no girl, sitting
astride an aliased river
z-z-ing toward her center.
Roads lead here. Trains
moving slowly, freight-laden,
toward her. Made-man
things square off. The rails
follow nature, streambeds,
riverbeds. Driving toward
her the green neon motel's
sign's *Air Conditioned* line
flutters on and off. She
lays centerfolded on the shore.
All of this,
and the green thin light above
the set-line, makes
me cold,
cold at heart.

Neon Flutter

The future of hope
is splayed on the curing table,
intravenous, on life support,
ravenous for slippery passages,
undulating with each artificial
pump. Hope is oblivious,
hope is eternally waiting,
hope is hung like a hat on a golden
rack. Eyes meet—hope, the future
of hope. Optimized optimism.

Rain Like Age

Stopped at a light,
light rain in mid-December,
song of deep regret playing on
the radio. Beside me to the right
a robin blue house robbed
of the freshness of its original
paint, white trim coming
off in thin long strips. In front
of the gauzy curtain backed by a pulled
down shade 5 electric candles
rising up 2 by 2 to the one, white:
blue and green,
red and yellow.
Behind the smell of hot-rubbed
brake pads, the rain like age
drizzling down.

Float, Aloft, Recast

One line like Chicago
played on the strings of a stiff frame
bridge riding on the rocks
of a fording place. We can go
to this place. The house
of my friend's father being bulldozed
while I drive swiftly past
on my way late
to the airport. For sale
and torn down, my thoughts
and me tangled in the melodies
stitched by mickey mouse left-hand work
together. Is this a death, a retirement,
a reward, an omen of the too-soon
flood of demons down the valley
English professors decry? We can go
to this place. A waste of gulls rise
up from a hollow-hidden dump
and swarm toward the river
or is it the ocean or is it the bridge
or piled-up lumber of the bulldozed
house? We can go to this place. She
turned her back on me by the riverside
down Chicago way and I took her
exposed skin which she womanated
for a second till the wind blew
and would not stop and never did
and still does blow holding the gulls
aloft persistently here where
we have not gone.

Unlikely, Unlikable

We'd wed
and no going on DNA
to know what will come
of it. Some things, unlike airports,
have no end or no end
on site. Suppose everything.
Everything happens and what we see
is what our minds' statistics tells us
to? Desolation is the hinder
place, the kinder
place. There is a stable
holding horses
trained to carry
us to the land of living poetry
where the laws of physics
are guesses made by
people passing through
on their way to a surprise
algebra quiz. O help
us breathe so song
might unfold like
jazz and jizz.

Riverworld

Two of course
floating down the river
from the past of fancy facing
the hoards of tomorrow. "We
were part of it all," they said
about to float past on a burnt-out log
smoldering still, still wiping
smoke and dirt from their eyes,
licking blood from cuts, "glorious," they
said. We cheered from the banks
and shouted "what battle?" The river
narrowed and they sped up and yelled
with pride, "no battle..." and the curve
of the river and a deepening downward
cutbed pulled them past us fast and we heard
them fading fast,
"...only..."

Hard to Doom

River's top sprung to life:
wind down its course like a second
river. Air, water—density
of conviction. Come
to think of it, the riverbed
is flowing too, mud down
to the sea, to bedrock. All
speeds, and with small shifts
and large, directions vary. Suppose
everything: How to decide
which to see? The laws
are just everyone's best
guess today. Ripple
on a wake, wake
on a flow, flow on
a tide: Pity the piers
and their hard stone
banished, doomed.

Poem of My Longing

I plumb her eyes for love light like
Clapton says in Wonderful Tonight,
and I ask her to say things in her German tongue
to hear or even to see her wrap it around
the strange sounds and meanings of the words
or scenes I feed her. Or feel it wrapping
like swimming eels around mine wrapping
around hers. Or just the scene played out—I
pretend it's real ... feel
the calamities of confrontation.
Like a poet hungry for another's tongue
to feed on, heal on, I am the younger
poet aged beyond recognition. My rivals
are dead and their ambitions holed up.
I've swallowed my tongue and seek
the love of words in theirs, the love of me
in their eyes. Foreign eyes. Strangers' eyes.
The vulture—there on the branch
my rivals burned—unfolds her wings,
prepares for her short flight.

Poets ... or Birds?

Do I wish to be as birds perched
on my feeder frantic with watching and eating,
aware exactly of eagles and cats,
so aware of now: no past, no future;
or as poets perched in their chairs
or standing at bustops glancing
at the present through the distraction
of memory and against the interference
of imagination hanging on one crutch
of language and another of nonsense,
aware exactly of childhood and death,
so aware of then, hereafter: no now.

The Perfection of Imperfection

The day Jesus was crucified—
it was tough on God who, unlike
portraits painted by believers, knew
as little of that outcome as the wind
knows of the other side of a cloud.
Only time knows, playing back with forth,
listening with perfect memory,
gulping with anger bottled
in its nutty scribble. We don't
and our wish is for our god's excesses
to supply certainty somewhere,
but God's perfection is shallow,
crucial, and antagonistic to beliefs:
His sight is human scale, yep,
and He knows it, but—and here it is—
but that don't bother Him any.

Lockstep Concentration

You walk away by walking upslope,
and the new has been jammed
into the old, sometimes one just
standing on the other. A model
on the Pont Neuf, nude, hungry,
and extravagant, while the old bridge
sticks to its ways. She dances,
describing her passions with her ass
and two innocent smiles. You walk
away from the old by walking upslope
of them, by climbing up out of the city
settled in a valley and onto a ridge.
Looking at the thoughts. Order
hanging back. You walk away.

Life in South Dakota Viewed as Several Contrasts

Out above the silking stalks
of corn rain from an sprinkle irrigator

arcs from a narrow opening,
disperses, a curved fan, the shape
of man's helping hands before the fall

of nature. Behind, storm clouds curtain
the scene—early July, and the corn

leaps inches a day. This place
might as well not exist—all
we need are the trucks and cans

or only the store clerks carrying
boxes and palettes into the aisles

and onto shelves and cases. No need
for soil and the sprinkler, no dirty
farmer, no corn green and yellow

John Deere belching down furrows,
no combines, no trucks, no macadam

roads, no fertilizer (no incorporation,
no broadcasting) no little secrets of life,

no silk. Only husking and savor.
Grandpa's truck broke through the ice

two weeks earlier and he and Dad and all
my uncles raised it from 70' of water. He broke
it down, rebuilt it, and died the week before

Dad turned it over, a month before harvesting,
a year before Dad set it on fire in the cornfield

and the smoke of it made our hair smell
of the city, of consumers.

God Debugging

She waits for the sun like the moon
below the horizon—what's inevitable
will come in its time. When it does
so will he and their mahogany still-life
will repeat. The logs in the fire
simmer each other as all great loves
do, and the snow beginning to cover
their balcony is not pure white
but carries an industrial stain,
a modern stain. An alarm
sounds before the sun rises,
and the day starts dark except
for what seems to be a wound
behind the city. Outside, from the balcony,
God looks in, sees them walk past
each other and Him, arrange
cups on a table, heat water, and cook themselves
breakfast, the sound only of making things
reverberating off the clueless walls.
God wonders: Should they have souls?

Dream Accomplice

Maybe the crossroads mean something,
the old macadam roads heading somewhere,
the hamburger joint and fountain
making at their best, and the Flying Horse
gas pumping fresh and jockeys cleaning windshields,
checking oil and all—sound of mufflers doing
little to muffle, tuned like pan pipes
to flowing melodies, sonic pheromones,
quick 4/4 ripping from small speakers
hung from the DQ overhangs—but
today they are collectors of dust and thistle,
rusted signs crying forlorn, hollow,
cars lost but proud and unwilling to stop
at the one shop still open.

Some
reading this will think of the Cross, believe
clues
undropped, recall their adolescent recollections
hovering
in their memories and bring their own connections
however
irrelevant they may be to my work. Think of the found
winds
and their directions aligned to each road, which way will your wind
blow?

Is Too Small a Word

Epic, complete, big,
invaluable, revelation,
kudos, classic, grief,
hatred, thank you, clever,
legend, trance, expanded,
America, fantastic, storefront,
nice, peace, songs, appreciate,
superstar, writer, incredible,
spectacular, vast, outrage,
me, determined, heterogeneous,
mindboggling, cuteness,
subplots, sticky, grateful,
selfishness, jazz, enthusiast,
friend, hyper, love,
arrangement, hectic, obsession,
tragedy, shortstop, gratitude,
incredible, cause, oil, honor,
potent, breathtaking, persistent,
anticlimax, camp, pride,
applet, fansite, glorious,
impressive, wow, boom, lucky,
organization, coming out, influence,
definition, atrocity, hectic, genius,
multimedia, significant, site,
marvel, troubling, miracle, book,
joy, simple, tree, car, moving,
problem, good, confidence,
appreciate, tub, fat, please,
vengeance, masochism, bleak,
guilt, hype, arrogance, loopholes,
user-friendly, profound, idealistic, ironic,
pedantic, outback, disappointment, word God.

Buried, outrageous, common—everything here
is everything.

Tonight, Alone

The opening between
day and night is narrow
and defined by light: gunmetal grey,
robin's egg blue, Tokyo girl pink
with dirt black tiger stripes. Tonight,
a window yellowed by a single
incandescent bulb lays a soaked
light on the sidewalk. A car highspeeds
by and its exotic tire tread pattern
flushes the rain away in an exotic
pattern. The woman walks past
with a clear plastic scarf keeping
the rain off, tied under her chin,
her left hand tightening it by constriction,
her right holding her purse close in case
someone should jump her. A shadow,
mine I guess, eclipses the bulb's
contribution to twilight. The opening
is a gap I must squeeze through
tonight, alone.

Not Away

Isn't it odd how a sad song makes life
alive, how the chance that the melody
and its plodding accompaniment will choose
to soar makes any day, any time feel
like the day it rained all twilight
while you headed up the street
with its broken, uneven sidewalks
lined with dryrotted fences
and over-reaching grass
on your way from another
afternoon of just sitting.

When it soars
the rain lets up,
the clouds form a shelf
whose underside is lit
by the sunken sun,
and you walk
toward me,
not away.

Love Poem on the Night Flight Out

Rain outside.
You open the door, disheveled,
in tangles clothes and hair.

I enter and you ask
me to caress your mound.
Where you lie
and where I recline
puts your hair in the light of a naked
lamp and I can see through
to your lips.

I tuck up in a ball
and you tell
me you fly tonight
to Calcutta and need me
gone forever.

Where is the hole?
I am stuck on you.
Am I sure enough to know where to enter?
Here where I met my mother
I go on like billy-o.

Limited

This years ends: Y2k1.
Space Odyssey. Our vision
won't admit us. Our limitations.
Our technologists weep
for change, because change
is things, because things
are toys, because toys
are cool.

We need new. We
remain old,
and sentimental,
we favor nature images,
we want our words
to stay the same
and what we say to change.
We limit what we would change
to what matters, but we
are upside down.

Y2k1 becomes Y2k2.
When I was able to realize
when I was born and relate to when
I'd die, this year, last year, next year—
they all seemed impossible. I was born
in black and white.

I am now limited
to death.

On Leaving the Marital Bed

I've stepped into her space and she
adorns me.

Two clapping arms
and I'm their sound. Luxuriously
she's asked for me

again. And she has oiled
herself for this. Within
her arms

is the light of streetlights
piercing snow. Outside

this circle
lies my home,
my bed.

Noisy, Smells Strongly, or Can't Be Aligned

A Collection of Poems

Richard P. Gabriel

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Two Depressions

The marriage bed
is worn into two depressions,
one hers, one mine. Were we to
turn the tables on

the mattress, a kind of even-
handedness would keep the playing
field level. She views as leaving

my decay. I am ashamed of it,
more so than any mistake.

Something broken,
something shriveled. I find one
every month. My bad temper
nothing more than like what
my body sends to fight it, a yellow
pus. How can the young know
of this?

I hug the wall
labeled *old*,
where people stand who
cannot play.

Lavender Berlin

New night, new year.
Before night the sky became inhuman,
color: lavender over grey.
But really it's just the residue
of Berlin over grandeur. Books
make that funny sound when suddenly
closed
or opened, of breath going in
or coming out. Books pretending
to be storytellers, confabulators,
isolators. Clam up,
that's what they do. Ah so.
Let's keep it hidden. Under a bush.
Every meaning of that word,
bush.

Three Scenes Demonstrating the Foolishness of Sentiment

Gulls chattering
over, hovering over
running crabs
making like vaudevillians
scrabbling for dropped bananas
and sausages rolling
in the froth and curls
of unimpressive swells
and rollers on a beach
where just last year
two died in a clench
and we've just hammered
in their headstones, standing
like sentries
a little beyond us.
Death up there,
life on a plane,
death down there.

Night Wakes

In the night I wake,
and among the many wonderings,
the least is who I am
and why and
the most is where
I am. The streetlights through the blinds
seem more yellow, the angle from the bathroom
window of the moon's setting
more acute, the heat
from the one next to me
less, her skin feels more translucent.
I'll take bids
on all the questions,
choose the one with the most to offer,
the most pleasing voice,
the least sense. There are many paths
to follow: The one tonight leads
from the cold stone floor of the bathroom
back to the bed baked to a high heat
by strangers to the most expected.

Moon Watch

From my bathroom window
standing after a pee looking
out at moon's decline behind
a hill of lights twinkling—
no, bending in the rocky night air disturbed
by heat from homes and the launchpads
of life. In the partiality

moon displays, its back turned
to us, its sideways grin or grimace,
its cold grey moon-like stare, pale,
sullen, clearly rocky and dusty
in a pure, airless manner,
it measures the distance from me
to my existing, it knows which of us—
me, him—
is the ghost.

Line by Line

let's finish the scapegoat
with applause and mourning,
let's wander in fields spoiled
by hoppers and light flyers,
insects intent on stealing
the show, on dying
without a shred of memory
left aside from a pretty picture
taken sunward by an artist
learning by repeating
line by line
instructions, precedents,
riffs. Let's blame the draft
for our mistakes,
let's wander into the unexpected
full of recklessness, let's grab
the first grasshopper into our hands
and make it immortal today.

Her to Hear Her

I've written her
lines and nothing,
hung my head like her panties
on the line to dry
the tears of Toms peeping
in on her creepy essence
dripping into absorbency,
postcards from the front
xeroxed and faxed,
facing forward and under;
lines, curves, they're the same to
her to hear her
silence always.

Noisy, Smells Strongly, or Can't Be Aligned

Bet your sweet ass: The news is good:
Heading for the rear, paper in Berlin
is still superior
in the posterior analyses
of positivists sure as shit
what rips is inferior
in the end. Note where
they belong: Middle fingers probe
the interior: No matter
how dark, regardless of cracks,
no matter how brown
the way ahead looks,
what's ahead is flush
with life's breath everlastingly
on hold.

Go For It

The grain elevator is silver
with a black longhorn silhouette.
Two whores are kind to everyone
but each other. Cats are fed by a sympathetic
but cranky old woman. It is on a map
but no roads to it are shown. No
snow. Lots of rain. Romance
and violence are on the scene.
Rails are rusted except one set
heading north-south. There is a lake
or ocean or river nearby. Girls giggle
when they pass. A traffic light
hangs from monkey bars.
There is no Walmart within driving
distance. Every year someone
has a hush-hush abortion. The cemetery
is always full of geraniums. The lone
steakhouse always burns the outsides
and the insides are cool. There are many
missing teeth. It's time to eat
a meal of baked potatoes
and wait for the TV to unsnow.

Questions Sealed Under Heat

I've asked the questions
laid like trout on the dock
to dry out and soon salted
to be put away in your cellar
privy to eating secrets.

Winter will find you
descending steps
to retrieve roots,
canned tomatoes in jars,
sweet pickles, dills, mushrooms
we picked and tested.

Behind a cloth curtain,
1 inch boards lined into shelves
hold all we need
to make Winter
hold its breath. Snow pasted
to the sides of candle pines
demonstrate the direction of flow.
I've asked the questions

that reveal what we've forgotten.
All I wish for is a warm hand on my head
when I die.

Road

Willing to look,
unable to walk far from weeds.
The road passes many barns
sweetened to grey by sun and wind,
rain has dried out the sapwood,
moss has grown on and fallen
from roof shingles. A gravel
ramp leads from the road to the sliding
front door locked but all
is visible through the missing
pieces of boards. We lay here once,
I was willing to look.

City of Stones, A Crowded Waste

Everything here is made of stones
or concrete—the city is grey,
bisected by a glacial river running milky.
Men stand on the lawn by a spur
naked, sunning themselves and proclaiming.

On a small hill a man walks up
and sprints down over
and over. Bicycles here have chain
guards and sit-up-straight seats
and handlebars. A woman
taking her lunch here—she
looks like a banker in a James
Bond movie—removes her skirt
and lays it on her blanket, takes
out her heavy hard sandwich
and lays it by her skirt,
removes her blouse and bra
and lays them on her blanket, takes
out a bottle of water with gas
and lays it by her handbag,
removes her panties and hose
and lays them by her other clothes.

My eyes cannot take
the long summer day and I lie
to sleep. She smiles at me like
a mother, the smell of the city arises,
the grass withers from all the sitting,
all the sun, and the woman banker
eating, with all her skin aimed
at me as I sleep.

Ten on Language

Like links
we follow each other. First

you turn the light on you
and second

I shadow you. You
in the dark excite

a little-used nerve
in the center of control. Then

frost forms five-lobed
patterns on the inside

of our window. Facing
the street we wish for less

yellow. We get a pointer
exploring arrow country. Look

butterflies is widely said until
the hog's foot gels. Links

I've set, you've set
nonanatomically, so I'm not

certain all nerves can
fire at once.

Strat...Wber...Ryfi...Elds

Lost it
under the rug
where sophistication swept
all the enthusiasm
and early onset pretension.
Maybe they play

better older
having heard Beck
and wondered—even

Alvin Lee
and Leslie West
succumbed to the smooth

influence of jazzers
and speed players, but me

I prefer the mistakes
and string burps,
the way a string
slid on

will scream under the influence
of overactive tubes and shredding
cones. Where would Hendrix

be today? Hard and
rough, reckless to grab
the unexpected.

Like Us and a Black Rock

There are many ways
to cross from the safe side
of the road to the one
with the cross leaning against a fence
with flowers dropped off around it
and balloons weighed down by rocks.
On the tip of the cross
a scarf's been tied and if
only the wind would blow
the scarf would rise
like a flag, like a wave,
like a hand waving
instead of lying in its own pool,
and the balloons would bow down
and maybe the cross would fall
and the cards still sealed
and the letters tacked open
would become honest
and we wouldn't wonder
about the movements of symbols,
only the symbols themselves.

Over You

we come in as if on wind

it is on wind but wind
of a stationary air
and moving mass

curve
the green harvest grows
the air is dimmed
by the implications of
green

each village
its church tower
its idiotic
brewery and hefty cuisine

hefty sounds
reddened cheeks

below as if off rails
a train winds
through the fields
and horses must seem
to look up

for this scene is welcomed
to the south you look
up but not forward
to me

I Flip

their glamour is lack of TV
they glower at me for watching
their glance lifts the remote to my lips
they glimpse my furious flipping from station to station from high to low

I pause and they have no understanding
fragments of stories are better than whole
I remember snow
my dad and I would watch
Godzilla like a cloud passing by
we rolled a blanket and put it in the middle of the bed

“we don’t even own a TV”
would you be proud to
not own a book?

they read Stephen King
I flip

Wrong Train

simple asphalt and concrete
spines and skin of building
where stones are fragile
or will to use them

we sit and we sit
goodbyes are crowding
their cage doors
locked inside our throats

I sit in the darkness
writing the end
of such a long
imagination

tv I'm ready for it
tv the empty hole that pours out our last days
tv stories like books but gaudy
tv made for simples

you'd like to laugh
but your mother sees it
your father sees it
pass time
forget

the hard and strong
grow fragile
and longing won't last
my proud exit
was marred when I took
the wrong train

Impossible Topic Advice

That day on which the bomb re-designed
American passenger-flying
much was not with flies.
I had the grind of the vacation swallowed—to
a very beautiful island, as production for easing.

My bedkeepers gave themselves much trouble,
in order to make the stay as pleasant as possible.

She opened to me
that I should feel as taken up.

Pictures of the fright appeared inclusive
in my conception, the common morning prayer,
but nothing such a thing adjusted.
I looked up equal the beach.

I got a first lesson in good faithness.

From fear of having next their foot
for couriers of chicken eyes on the desk
I said no.

I was allowed to observe two women.
They called it James and tore jokes
over it.

In particular the two women
could itself hardly in wars.
I could along-pursue
also the process of
the whole happening.

Against termination of the meal,
when the calculation was already situated
on the desk, the two women
said good-bye successively
to the toilet.

Its two companion
two splendor copies
of those women seemed to be,
of whom my nut/mother
never warned me.

Unfortunately the time is missing.

After Me

swampy mountains pushed
into piles and the roads waver
from valley to valley
along riverbeds scrubbed to stones
and up switchbacks to passes
and down

rollers
farm sections edged by
cottonwoods gardens in fields
and roads shuffling side
to side wind
blowing mapleleaves
flow up over my windshield
and hover before

corn rows wheat
inches of growth
a day longviews
headwinds
silos silage
old wagon tracks
I follow with a ditch between

I skirt
the mountains
head for the drainage
every turn I've looked and nothing
I watched for him
not here

not here
but then I made the turn
right off the sideroad
a dirt road
onto macadam that leads to the sea
and there he stands
indistinct in all distinct distance
he blocks my way
wavering in the heat ramps
his size unclear
he blocks my way
he is there
he is
death
he is now before me

Fountain of Grieving Water

no end to the water
falling from the green rust
of a copper pipe
into a moss-lined bowl of granite

fruitless motion
pushed by a pump up and out

round and round
the air taking its tax
the water whispering
how much might be

left in the heart
of this tiny motor
the supply of water

a hidden
watcher hides
behind
curtains like solid
mist gauze lace

the man has come
who will stop this

he will plug the pipe
and the pump will burst
the watcher will leave

the curtain
to its closing devices

in the walls
about this fountain
a solid statement

from the poets on benches
tangled truths
no ends in sight

Essence of Memory

when it came right down
to it
people left/walked out

horror
left in the dust

down stairs
past stares
what the mad makers

never imagined
was time
to walk away



I bought a furnace
to keep
warm this Winter

forgetting the fires
of people



there was a fountain
wrapped around the world

made of smoke
and up it
went



people made of smoke
walked out
walked away
left us in the dust

Older Man & A Honeybee

motion is limited
saffron colors stain
the whitened dress
she's shed before the older man
she poses with

she's uncupped her breasts
and light through his gauzy curtains
steeps light-tea colored

the older man is silent
unable to speak
or move beyond lifting two fingers
and cocking
his wrist his nurse will return
in two hours
we snap photos

last are her turquoise-lace hose

heat from her skin and the humid air
wring longing and despair
from the older man
blinking with a flutter to his eyelids
quite apart from his memory patterns

she is rounded and luxurious
her poses extravagant and sexual
her perfume natural but primitive

she neither
approaches nor touches

his view is obscured by a figure
in robes

we all smile as we leave
him alone and silent
a shell
a prop

we have our snaps

Was Was Beautiful

where the sky
where morning glory
a back yard
with the red barn
the beautiful red maple tree
a gateway to a beautiful day
this was was perfect
fisherman on a bamboo raft
pauses to gaze
sunset over South China Sea
double bladed paddle
paddles standing straight up
last day of hunting season

figured I could use
all the help I could get

Other Text Forms

meaningful statements about the world
and discourse clamoring
up rock faces seeking a more cautious
purely descriptive formula
it is obvious that we want to know
much more than we presently do
every art form knows puns

Up the Street from a Foreign Park

rain
slanting down left
river sluicing down
the concrete channel behind a fence
foreign smells
from cars and pubs
your window rolling up
your thumb on
a button
in the backseat of a car
about to drive
out of the world
for me

Rich Man, Don't Look

The rich are filing in,
thinking their luck makes them
powerful. The rich don't notice
some starve, and others
walk on their knuckles
or stumps. The rich
don't think
as we do. For them
a flat champagne
is a health risk. The rich
cannot see
luck. Nothing depends
on their shit
even though it moved
before the market went up.
The rich don't see us
watching and drawing,
painting and writing.
The rich don't notice
the language we've given them.
The rich don't notice the leaves
around them, the grass above them,
the way their skin tightens
around their necks like boas,
that the crowd that laughs
spares them today.

Web Presence

I run these pages
to provide you with information
about me. The cornfield,
sloped down to the river's edge,
green images and papery rustling
in a wind pulled down
then downstream sounding
of newspapers wet then dried,
holds its rippling color
as I will myself off
the pages I run. I am
like dew hunkered low
in the grass and you are
like lightning, meetings
of high and low
shocking the hell
out of me.

Will House

within this house
is a model of this house
and the way to walk west
is to cling like flies in love
to the backs of moving beasts

when the night of hot heats
seals shut the window
though the wax runs wet in the runners
the little house bottles up the heat
and steams its windows white

there are three or four or five
white hot houses thirsting
by the meadow denied
for the passion of cornfields
flailing before the skirt of rain

sweeps down the valley
and the cool support
of the reflective mind unsticks
the windows in the little house
and all are welcomed to this house

Take One After Another

regardless of what you think it
all moves the sound of it
making like marsh reeds and seabirds
and pine tops and rushes brittle dry
paper sounds of corn fields a curried
carpet in the rye grass an ageing creak
and sheer bark on wood in the deep woods
where we reminisce on light and finally
the air rushing through lava cracks
and granite spires and we come to it
the place of it where undulating
movements spill out and what was 3
2 becomes 1.

Poem for S. R.

The drive was through the misted dark
Up a coastline famous for grieving widows,
The hotel was along a boardwalk where in summer
Bikini'd girls roulette past seashell shops
Rubbing their intentions on low-slung boys
And gulls stand guard erect on picketed railings.
The poet stood—the ballroom boxing cigarette smoke
Like a second pack about to be opened,
The zip-tape strip, red, ready to tear off its top—
Alone: greyed: stubbled and tired in his eyes,
Seeking a lost leader or thread to follow,
Once the sharp shape of dangerous love
In a muscle car, once the strip that
Tore off heads with the work he mooned over,
That night he stood, no more than a guard,
Ready for his heart's roulette, happy to become
The part that's torn off.

choices and make them

find her? what have I
to go on? picture of me
cupping her my arm
under her head and our fingers
stenciled as if
the form of crossed branches
her sleep real mine
metaphorical. her breath
quiet moist welling up
in sensuous waves her side
warm growing warmer.
my joy welling up from memories
hers pumping in filling out memories.
she will awake cry perhaps I will be
carted away and long gone.

100 Art Lovers Watch

100 people watched
the horses' dust rise like mist
at sunrise at sunset as riders
pursued the villains run from a town
still green and pine tar scented

and fresh with hammer blows
and woodsaws heaving
and lingering perfume

of horses and whores and women
scented in lavender and pork fat
up here on this bluff windblown
but safe from small attacks
by the safe expanse around and below

the same high view that now enjoys
the rhythm and poetry of death
riding hard

So So

so it wouldn't be you
so long as space is filled
and time caught in a snapshot
skips along stuttering air captured
in boxes buried
carrying tears from last
so longs you wouldn't catch

the location is made
of parts and pieces of
stories and histories
many may have had
but no one
has seen let's stand
on our knees before our
prey

At Second Mesa, At First

on the roof we stand and watch
dancers and clowns dancers
doing their over&overs and clowns
today their Mexican make-fun-ofs
on Second Mesa not guests but known
as friends of people deserving of breakfast
soup beans and meat of heavy breads
and first sales of a son's silver
offer of bathroom rights
dance goes on the clowns
make fun below from First Mesa
the men sit shovels across
their legs and coolers of water
in the backs of pickups
along with a blanket
the hole is half dug
up on First Mesa the kivas
sit empty the dogs the sugar crullers
and below they dig the long deep
hole and only sand and that blanket
to keep him warm

women cook at home
the dancers move
and move

Pastoral Deflection Without Mention of Bees

birches and peaches
the symmetrical layout of apple trees
living matrix man-made and man-prepared
earth rows of sweet rotting McIntosh
and at the margins the singing
the sex play the lengthening
of shadows of things
and the first bites of desire

no satan no snake
no metaphorical garden
no topoi to confuse the mind
just direct action
and plenty of it

these apples all
have forgotten
and the sounds of jays and gulls
in our coastal confidences
we cannot count
apples fallen into rows
we cannot count
what will we lose
we cannot count

Obligation to Sip

mention
death and the tree frogs
chirp and warble
sibilant shy shafted
let's evolve the game
by choosing rules and discarding principles
all sit by choosing space
pushing our forms into structure-preserves
the extra coating that keeps us up
the concept of gaps or breaks
informs nature of her obligations
to chatter when all is well
consider wind
consider the breathing
consider the game
choosing changing chattering

Find-A-Grave

we find our ways to death
without fail—there is great promise
in this skill hope to be
found the unerring path
from metaphor to concrete
we measure the steps from the edge
of womb to edge of space
listen to the wilder birds
flushed to flight titter
and glance quick
as the place of our ends
close over and heal

Strange Ode to a Powerful Invitation

snow's heaped
odd shapes have directed
it into tall waves
heavy power lines hang
into it foxes and jays step
over it heavy power
zips through it waves
of power and strength
the power line towers
resist being pushed deeper
into the frozen earth
bears and vole mice step
over this power and the snow
remains white in the face
of long lost leaves tossed
across the snow and up and over
the snow piled under the power lines
till it's over the low-slung
power lines zipping up
a hill within miles of these lines
thousands huddle in small warmth
though the power of a million
fires flexes through the lines
any passing life can dance
over

are you ready to dance?

The Insecurity of Technology

The light turning from the point
of a lighthouse glimpses
the bored waves, the elk pulling grass
by the sea, cars parked and steamed,
a fountain made from rocks and sea force,
a stand of small pines on a small island,
a clutch of boats moored behind a breakwater,
a trawler buttoned down, its crew watching
Japanese porn and laughing, the stretch of sand
you all were waiting for and the reference
to a sad goodbye said there.

The lighthouse has no master
of loneliness—has no master at all,
just a Web connection and a 1000-watt
halogen hailing with white light 27 miles
of radius circling every 15 seconds. The only thread
is light, love, loneliness, the lighthouse,
and the insecurity of technology.

Football Filmer

So in the night leaves turned
and cold settled on the field,
these eyes not yet formed
to the fullness of skepticism
conquered the crowd
and I walked across that field
and on up into the cameraman's box,
movies of important sports to make.
In those days words weren't mine,
nor space nor wit to throw against the mighty,
and those who were arranged
in high rows laughed at the cold
I felt while working above them.
I decided to wait and now my desire
is elsewhere as time became my friend
when no one would. With a lesson
as simple as clicks of regular pacing
I learned to face pure nothing.

Listen: Lost

So the wind keeps the woods alive
and the swaying fields of corn and
the ripples and waves on rivers and seas
turning to crash at the last second
on a steep beach, the pipers trotting
away and black strands of seaweed
wrapped around the beached keg once
filled with wine no doubt made from grapes
made sweet by the sun spilling on their leaves
and the wind that kept them cool, alive.

Berdache

We don't live
here anymore
but our sounds
do and the sounds
of what we owned
and wished for.
Start with birds
who start and stop
with every fear
and hunger, then
the cows ripping grass,
crushing it down
and boiling it in acid,
moving it up and down
like indecision rising
with bile. Chimes
fading exponentially
teach us the vastness
of distance closes up,
that as we rush toward
nothing the goal
is vastly far away.
But the remembered voices
sing instead of yell
or explain pudding
or the long shanks on
the beeves, and the voices
take on the two-spirit
granting a new gender
to our fear. We don't
live here any more
but have been granted
the status of those lives
once more.

Like a Thief I Followed Her

She walked slowly
but disappeared around a corner
marked by a yellow house
pocked with grey bullet holes.
What I saw really
was her tender dark red
hair, the dissent
in her skirt, and the tangle
of her legs and their shadows.
I had to steal
something of hers
and of the village. Did I notice
the stones of the street
making her walk lush
and the length of the stone streets
making of every sound
a music of worship
and light airs? Beneath each window
was a box of geraniums, and in the right
light each window showed its cross.
She stopped when the first crow
passing overhead cracked its voice.
She rested her body on one hip
and everything about her skirt
resembled the cognitive sky
filling with clouds from the swift
onrush of a dark storm.
I reached her,
turned to look,
and stopped.

Lesson

Now a puzzling example!
Let's examine the dog barks.

The contextual analysis of bark
to detect the nuclear
does not add more information
due to the previous example

with head, but its context refers to a cry
that reveals the existence
of two contextual subject classes
that may match with bark.

—the human being class (“the dog barks”)
and the animal class (“let's examine”)—

Two contexts emerge
depending either on the animal
or the human being
such as animal cry
or human cry
as in the boy barks
to the moon!

Puzzle and 'Possum

behind whose trees
behind which stonewalls
across which rivers
across whose fields
does the real one hide?
inside the head what rattles
around and is the sentimental
light lit there? or some contrivance
made to puzzle and 'possum me
light out while I approach
and laugh its mechanical laugh
to the countertap of my shoes'
leather on concrete
manmade miracle made?
would I rather be
mistaken or alone?

The Saddest Place in the History of the World

There is no scene to match
the couple separated
in life by war and in death by dirt
and concrete, their sculpted projections
in thin air a woman craving
with outstretched arms and a man
in uniform dead for a dead cause
at attention, unfeeling,
white as his last vision,
stiff in the stifling air
and stiff in the fetid air
of World War II captured
with his heart and hopes
at the cemetery of San Miniato
above Florence of the sweet night air
where she reaches and hopes
like the girl throwing salt on the fire
in hopes of seeing her husband
appear in the flashes, his identity released
from the bitter crystals, and tonight
the hope is that God is not crazy
and love is for something.

Afraid Wake

dawn is endless
scurrying voices in the wires are endless
same always the same
thing said resaid
wind whipping
once then once
more through the same grasses
which filter nothing falter
flatter my name which grows
at the edge of this plain
this prairie this prayer
this payment down
the hill swift to the brink
of a dambreak
and the water whizzing
like moonlight dodging
the trunks in the woods
and branches to hit the scarecrow
and all this in the space
of time of sun up
moon down.

Women = Civilization

Places of cheap food
by the highway and girls
drilling the balls
of their feet into the industrial
linoleum beside your booth
while you pray
for coffee to beat
the sun up and comforting
grease globs on bacon on eggs
on toast congealing
the way you want your life
to slip like Wyoming
through the cracks
of civilization.

Lies For Money = Morality Stick

What it says on the cover
is a truth designed
to sell more, truth
being relative to the efficiency
of the market which in this
regard is perfect.
No one's being irrational
when it comes to money,
particularly the rich
who spend it to spend it
on things like whores except
they really are only things
which will do whatever
the rich want, progress making
the rich rich
proceeds without a hitch,
and as I said,
it serves the rich.

The Righteous Brothers Sung by Some Kids from Haverhill

Drops gather on the insides
of windows, floor to ceiling in a high room—
the cafeteria decked late for the dance
in any high school in any cold town before it snows.
A band plays, they wear casual suits, come from
the big town next door, and somehow
they've gathered the money for real gear—
Fenders, Fender guitars, and a Ludwig single bass
setup.

1966

Words to their songs
mean more than anyone can think
and only on our dying beds will the music-syrup
rinse away and the meaning of the beads
dripping down the windowpanes
come clear, all the years later,
all the memories dragged away,
when everyone in the story is dead,
and the remaining sounds are spring
reverbs, Fender guitars, the robotic beat,
and tires crying while the car she's in
peels out.

The Cure of Imperfect Eyesight

My father practiced
it until the day he died or perhaps
the day before that. The Bates Method.
He took his glasses off and swung
left and right, allowing his eyes to come
to rest where they may but using a full
range of motion. He did this before bed.
After dark. While he listened to the Red Sox
on the radio and believed they would win it all.
Ten minutes each night since 1940. Quackery.
It only relaxes.

At night when I was 15 he would cry
out in his sleep, his voice muffled
not human. An animal sound
from a far-off place. The sound of belief
in search of imagination.

Dr. Bates gave him relaxation,
and his cries said he needed it. Dr. Bates
became a quack through no fault of his own.
Just that he believed
more than he thought.

Respectacle Receptable

Black sights, red restaurants
green shops, and blue hotels—
clever references or explanations
of references? Is the text color
coded? Instructions with arrows
pointing indicatively, Saint Sebastian
of the Apaches? Pass the tab
was the premier horse who helped
himself to the downs, shot like an arrow
to the Finnish line. Belief searches
for the most imagination in a bottle
and taps from the inside like a hard fly
hooked on Pepsi from the inside out.
Like girls at swap meets, like jerks
making malts. Like blue hotels
they all are. Are all.

Simplex Complex

The simple the simple
like an inside look at the girl
from underneath

fashioning her clothes
with a steal cold chilled
bored with the results.

It's a front loader—
all my will toward seduction
is turned on its upside down—

she once was a bottom loader.
Clay pots are sacred
even before they're formed.

Taken from the earth clay
is alive at once and more so
when fired. My thinking

turns to Abiquiú
and soul home to artists
working by side delivery

who think logic makes sense
when paired with the trapeze
traipsing from till to till

till dawn do us
depart the simple
the simple clay equalling alive.

Wishing Tree

Tree I once knew
as a car has grown up now
and is itself wise in ways
unforgiven by the external
lives grown up around it.
Someone in my family built
a shelf of rock around a pump
and two steps up to it, and between
two rocks this forked tree grew
—two trunks thick and tall,
a third short, between them.
Shape of the trunks
made the shape of a small seat on one,
footrest on the other,
the small trunk the height
of a gearshift. The shelf was tall
and car-like. I drove each day.
The trunks stand tall and straight
and the shelf has split apart
and been made unremarkable,
the pump gone and the trough
for cows filled in. I never knew trees—
can't say what it is—as a tree.

Who can say what this tree thinks
of me? It plumps its leaves proudly.
It hovers in light winds. It never
says a single word. When I approach,
it looks down.

March 8, 2002

Coral Bark Maple Rage

Fluorescent red bark
against fresh blued snow
at sunrise—

afterlife?
or fore?

The Ribbon Crying

She
open
wood digging
you
her; I.

How I
replied not
she started
carried on;
dribbling
spunk
red faced as
him, he got
torture; he
running her
taunting him
shaking his
sat on the
as he left.

Into bed
she was
to happen
experience
time.

à la Descartes

Scientists are stuck
bouncing from true to false
like an elephant stuck in a drying-out
watering hole, and then belief
lands like a tick on their latest theory
which smacks its head against the cutbank
and awaits the eating-alive
which with the daily dose of angry puzzles
fill the mind with the fat of logic.

Derivative Boat

Surely there's a way
to brand the nightlights
before the stabbed sun sets
in a spreading pool
of blood-pink cotton
and night falls like a denim shirt
and, through speckholes,
stars perturb the long walk
down to the pier where waiting
tucks its legs under, brand
them with my motto gloss
on boat facts and timetables
for the boat docked for winter
whose next departure
will be early.

On a Site that Pushes and Pushes

Your name came into view
on my screen, in a list of classmates
from our school dozens of years ago,
email addresses volunteered to a company
who lures you to buy their services
in exchange for a way to contact your past.
It makes me think the present is the shadow
of the past cast by the light of despair
through a mesh of hope.

Shall I pay to find you?

And find out what?—that your marriages
failed one by one and now you await
me with a candle made from a champagne
glass poised on your window, all my faults
forgiven or forgotten or for laughing?
—that your marriages failed
for lack of tigh pants and I'm still last
on a list that grows each year by the number
of men who turn 21?

You've made me make questions
from statements. —walk behind
your pronouncements by a cautious
4 or 5 feet. You have your dignity
though you've lost all the elasticity
mind and body need.

Shall I lay it to rest?

The prints of recent visitors
covers the site, the messages
that reveal little but sadnesses
unembellished and inartfully stated,
and hope and fading tracks and a foot
poised above a stair leading down,
before a trail into a woods
made dim by meditation.

I've made up my mind
to turn...

Cushion of Secrets Under the Tongue

you sit I stare
long back under the ride
and along the river running upstream
drunk with the sun and the moon
feeling along the insides
passing behind white lightning
hall loud with the sounds of symbols
being brushed you are
what you can never be
eloquent pains often local
a man comes to my door
and fishes out the penny I dropped
out in the oiled sand by the side
of his rural home 40 years ago
and smiled with the last tooth he had
and whispered his secret to the wind
passing by I sit
you stare

Writtenness

the nature of the book
is not in the writing nor
the conceiving the dreaming
neither in the blood strewn in calligraphic
curves or in the stops and restarts
do-overs and re-wonders, nowhere
to be found in the leads that break
and puncture the skin not
the pen and its dried out ink
paling like the world at dawn

but in the turning
one page slow after another
front to back
until the hard back
cover closes over
the reader's slit
loose eyes

Boss Among Us

God on Broadway
smoking a butt
leaning against a closed
department store building
in the old part of a town
inhabited by Mexicans
along 99 in the Central Valley
north of Fresno. His boots
don't fit right and his hat's
too big but he's just
checking it out—
the cars riding by slow
the trucks heavy on the air horns
the girls wearing skirts too tight
the two dogs hugging a strip of shade
beside the cantinas and mercados
across the street
the crows feeding on road kill
up where the road turns to mirage
the ants piling up a hill around the crack
in the sidewalk.
He wonders what life feels like
and what the black mirror hair
of the latinas feels like
when the sun flares the gauze curtains
around back at sunset.
An old man who hasn't shaved for a week
walks by and he smells like a feedlot
and God lifts onto the balls
of his feet and heads for a shady spot
where he can rest his foot on a rail
and his elbows on a bar—
throw one back before the padre
happens by and shuts him down.

Sidelong Furrow

Along
the shape of the street
the passion of haplessness loses
its balance and scrapes
to a halt

one leg
up one down

filaments or rather
long shots trail up
to jimi's sky

these streets
are my kind
a stale heaven
used used overused

bigroom
blue ceiling
green brown blue floor
waves of grain

two primes fought it out
one was the winner

I'm lost in the forest
of a girl's poem
that spelled itself out

like grass
becoming dawn

Stance Using Time

why birds flinch
from stance to stance
by the stream
that stops and starts
on the whim
of its owner
who sits drinking a black
tea at a sun transition time

quick
without using time
figure which

Avoid Dance

some writing
cannot be done using
heads foreign rooms
frightening curtains
away from windows
dead sleep before the phone call

the night was filled with the smells
of apples and Chinese spices
and urine behind low walls

the wind settled into a breeze
so slight
dandelion fluff
just floats
toward you

dancing a foreign
dance on an evening
drugged by being awakened
at the bottom of sleep

my head is eroding
its valleys filling with old thoughts
washing away

the way
is a void

Repair Bay

car nose-in
hood up
thick blanket hanging over the fender
toolbox tall open
troublelight hanging
by a hook from the latch
gas and burnt oil
the lavender of men
too silent
for better luck

Limits of the Perch

on the business of the day
windows hoard
lines of sight

perched on their sills
the crowing crowd craving
hovers over the acetylene
sidewalk single file beneath

the feet and hearts and soles
of the walking healed
and despite the cost

the healing the hearing
the hoarding the first line
lurches by
sings single file

in the heads of
the high-minded

Speech on the Wastebasket

Some will say I deserved it,
that you were courageous throughout,
that the blunt towns we lived in
served our needs
better than the important cities
we circled. One by one
the towns moved on,
the food changed as did the games
we played, but we
remained constant
and fearful remembering
the pieces and the anger,
the streets choked by dust
in the part of the world
famous for incoherence.

Some speak at night,
make their speeches
standing on overturned
wastebaskets close by beds
where women wait stroking
their hair while dogs
circle center posts that anchor
their chains.

I heard you laugh
while I fell asleep,
the green storm started up,
and the face of truth
was the rainsoaked window
beaming sparks made by the streetlight
fragmented outside.

Atrophy on a String Harp

Lunch in a funny setting
odd dishes and their contents
atrocities wheeled on carts
like desert trays
and you pick by pointing.

At the virgin café
the barrista's matted lavender hair
was knotted and flecked
every piece of her
face given over to thought
had been pierced
her lips were the color
of an atrocious death
she was color coordinated
down to her down
she lamented the departure
of the lira when we fingered
a euro by mistake
being from Milan
I tried to kiss her
but she took it for
lip synching.

In the distance
a plume of smoke
click my heels
something burns.

Circular Illumination

There are no houses that turn
as lighthouses do their attention
round to everything and round
to ships in distress losing their ways
since the last sweep of clarity—
what seconds can do. Alone

on hell one boat takes on
water and its pumps have nodded off
and the 3 times a minute strobe
will mark first our feet then our knees
then our privates then our hearts
and finally our heads below the crooked
sheet of surface poked by spikes
and heaving like lovemaking.

Happy endings? Noise of wealth
groped and grappled downstairs.
One light lights the world above
in sweeps that thin the light
that clips the tops of poked up
waves. Safe harbor? For those
who love only.

Death of My Nana

We have no photos,
never have, so it all resides
uncannily in my head
which is pieced less
together than fenceposts
I recall were here
once but no more.

We had a swing bench hung
from a swing frame I once had and nana
sat there hour on hour after
her stroke and wished. She lay
in bed with all of us
gathered near with Dr Davis,
all her family, and we watched
her die. So quiet. No fanfare.

Just another hour, another day.
So little. He came to fetch her in,
and though we watched, no
one saw.

One Junk Pile at a Time

Behind our house
out the back door and down a short
path into the woods
we put our junk pile. Cans,
boxes, old tissues, broken
toys, milk bottles, bedsprings,
tvs, old medicine, old food,
old romance novels and other thrillers,
bones, beer bottles, bikes,
and even an old car. Everyone
in the country had a private dump.
Small, each one rotted
fine and fast. When we pooled
our junk we made big problems,
toxic quantities overwhelming
good earth. Fresh Kills.
This is why we fear
mass graves. O, fear them.

Art on Vacation

I'm sick of art
hanging around museums
taking on looks
and requiring specific humidities.
What someone does with a flair
after decades of practice doesn't
interest me more than that I
discover things new to me and old
to other people all the time
about art. Like dischords
in jazz—minor ninths for
example. I just learned of them
last night after viewing
scrolling art strolling
halls hanging pieces
sliced from practice.
Art's not new?
Who knew?

Art's Little Secret

in short the goal
is to speak nonsense
not gibberish to reveal
pathways of sense
abstracted as paths
without benefit of sensemaking
metaphors or enough
references to hang much on
to step as close to sense
as the edge of a cliff
but not fall into the lava
below which otherwise
we would call rationality
minus humanity it's called
the fall right?

Adage

I'm not part
of your summer
and winter's

on its way.

Guesswork Out of Imagination

By making a change
we can explore

the opposite of be
sure

By placing rocks
in nongeometric positions

(can you imagine?)

we can predict
new rocks

By taking the guesswork out
of imagination

we can be at peace
no more

Daddy

My hope is to see him again,
not alive but something like
it, when he felt confident
and not alone. when he was strong
and not on his knees wondering
who to pray to, when he didn't have to stare
into the woods to swallow
his pride, when he didn't need
to hide what he loved, when he could understand
what it meant to live and didn't need
to be told.

Hairwashing Day in the Square

The square is a funny place
to wash your hair but she does
at dawn where the water drizzles
down from the iron pipe
and roosters rest having done
half their daily job and only
the oldest men are there to
watch her strip off her cutoff
pants and blouse her hair
failing like the water from the iron
pipe and the sun blinking in the drops
on her hair and on the surface of the water
and soon her whole naked body
glows from the sun's stare
and the men's stares as she washes
her hair as if for her lover
whoever he may be.

Almost Asleep in Oxford

Sleep is too hard
the spires too brightly lit
in this Northern sunset
I've joined reluctantly.

From below my window
facing East the fans over
cookstoves force fat and smoke
into my window opened
to keep me cool and awake.

Long enough to pry
out of sleep's jaws a few lines
maybe three stanzas just short
enough to complete but long
enough to light up spirelike.

Brambles

This road
seems diversion detour
distraction on the track
from home to home
from one to other
like a branch needing
but neglected from
pruning. My feet tread
it but the way out brings
the way back and could
the straight road lengthen
were the short ones cut
away? Would the heart be
willing to bear it
to hear it all straight?

Must Duck

The fence holds in a mossy ground
cover, mints, and daffodils,
some elms and an oak,
keeps out brambles
undergrown with ferns
and ivy. Birds sing pretty
songs warbling
long lines and centerfolds
of sonic leg spread. A black kite
hovers and pigeons huddle
but hold their stance on their high
wires. A pheasant blows,
ducks creak, the Earl's gardener
who hardly writes bangs
a big box end on a smaller
trying to loosen the mower's
blade to sharpen it.

This house spreads for me
as Oxfordshire darkens
and I feel when I enter
I must duck.

Backhoes Wait When Life Calls

Sweat is expressed
as it should be
that the living
remaining must
work to send her on
as did the
living preceding
to bring her forth—
sweat, back bending
labor covered in dust
caking dirt in the cuffs,
building layers of skin
by growing one over
another, one layer
of dust piling over
another. And then
the work is done;
it's dark.

Walk on the Verge

The river's run through
this meadow for centuries
and people've laid beneath
these elms and oaks
every night the wind
blew from the West. Upriver
lovers made for others stroll
like leaves blowing downwind,
downriver, crosstown. Nearby
buildings hoard shelter
and snobbery. By the verge
a duck minds my close
swing forced by the wide
swing of the lovers' arms,
and among the outcomes
destined for me is the carefully
contrived slow walk away.

Persistent Performance

What comes to us we come to know
for its attraction to us signals
intention to interfere,
and its will will be stronger
than ours to select. What comes
to us persists and keeps on,
like a water seeping,
flowing, then rushing.
What we cannot know
is what is the source,
who fills the pool
that fills the stream
which wears and wears,
like persistence, like a pestilence,
like presumption, on and on
to become what we know.

Christ Church

It is simply driving on through
greenery and explosive leafing.
The wind insists on its origins
as it flees and underneath
the heavy lace is a fine skirt.
The bells cadence down tripping
on each note, all twelve like
disciples waiting for rot.
Even 8 centuries later the raked
grooves still hold some bite
though shuffling strangers
hugged the walls while the wily
moved up the center. Among the treats
is leaving. Let's do it.

I Joke

Let's unearth a secret
of life
which among the most obvious
has remained
hidden for centuries
and requires
the constant availability of video tape
and other
technological devices to give it shape.

Among the tens of thousands of sex acts
performed on
film or tape from the beginning of time
until now
there are only 17 clearly discernible
and unambiguous
examples of female orgasm
and all
of those women have been stripped
of their
right to engage in sex
by all
the rest of the women on the planet.

You think
I joke.

Naturally At Home

All he wanted was to move
from day to day, to
hear the loon before dawn
head from safe haven to feeding
waters, to feel the afternoon winds
pause for sundown when all
is an equilibrium, to listen to rain
bleed to crowd noise during a Red
Sox game on the radio mixed
with static and the percussion
of a thunderstorm just North
of Boston, to bike down the road
to fetch her a paper and stop
along the way to jaw with friends
and mix it up with humor,
to wash each blueberry
before pouring on the milk
mixed with vanilla extract and watching
Doctor Who, to relax his eyes
before bed by swaying the way
a false book taught him, but
he believed everything he heard
were it told with humor
and now look where he is
and what happened to him.

Torchlights

All so tiring
that the strings have broken
and the white-haired trees carrying
the torch of bright lights behind them
launch an attack
on the constancy
of persistence.

Arroyo Annoyances

stone in isolation
expressing emerging stoicism
refusing it thinks
weardown by wind
by rain by god
distances alert to distortion
and diminution expresses
a hazy foundation
and rocks fall

sporadic greenery
hangs about and cloisters
clinging to moisture
and enough fissures
opening

my worry is this note
will fly before it's done
whirl unceasingly
until a rain pins it down
and it enacts in minutes
what takes the stone
forever

Comeback Cold

the cold wind comes
this way
reverses at the junction
of hot and wet
comes and comes
back

In Santa Fe

lines uphill
light flushing shadow
back to shadow
little lives hang back
hang in the balance
fools and light invade
the places of dare
what things strive

up the street
a beauty walks toward
the café where I wait
for her stately power
and upright display
and the light
through her dreaming
skirt slows her skirt
as it flows around her legs
as I wished to

where the light falls
short my will falls

Burnished Radiant Black

life commingles with the making
of life the raven stepping
into the shallow stream at dawn
to catch his breath and drink
as birds do without the loose savoring
lips provide twists from side to side
walking in a swagger and pausing
his motion to watch fish watch
him in his burnished radiant
blackness all feathers beak and brains

later he flew by in a perfect
curve up to the top of a wide-spreading
oak where he wobbled and watched
the world be made in the image
of ambiguous black

After Carlos

don't ask
my eyes say and mean their view
is narrow and forlorn
ask ask
my heart says and means the world
is constantly swelling to fit
its shrinking ambition

Martini Sunset

sound of gin being poured
along the sides of a blue
glass filled with hard ice followed
by vermouth over the top

then the ice is stirred until
it seems it might melt
from such erotic contact

sound of a martini poured
from a glass filled with hard ice
into a hand-blown stemmed glass

the stem twisted
like a madrone

we sip them
sitting on the porch overlooking
a southwest town

if we could vote with our throats
dried from the air and dried from the martinis
the sun would dance along the horizon
all day

Orange Camo

Small lakes surprise
easy, freeze
at the least drop below 32°

Or still when wolves
turn upon them.
With logs it's the sound
of floating floating
by.

Bottoms decay
and make life from the mush
of life parts. Maybe
fish.

It's easy to watch streams enter
but the slow slogging
exits tear. The dam accidentally
resonates, attracts musicians
who inadvertently hum.
They have pasts but no
theories or deep
beliefs.

I believe in the sounds
of hunting but not hunting.
Snaps and brushes,
explosions and cheers.
Smell made of blood
and gasoline.

I did it once
with a boy my age—
his mouth was wide
as he smiled when he talked
of frying snakes
alive. He blew
himself up
by accident.

A trio walks in line
down the road in
orange camo. Where
is this hidden place
they represent?

Bad Photo Day

They took photos
of me today,

about 50 or 60
out by the waterfall
under the decorative plum.

They fidgeted with clever
light meters and an umbrella
reflector with a built-in flash;

the Hasselblad radioed
the flash and they had 30

years of experience between
them. But I was hopeless
as a subject for them—didn't care how he
looked, wore stupid clothes

covered in dandruff and even
a clever hat didn't help and soon

the most important thing
was to move aside the pot filled
with dying marsh grass

so at least
in their little salon
not all would be lost.

Waterskiing Satan

Florida awaits
like a line
of termites stretched underground
from the fallen oak
to the post holding up the porch.
Or a festoon of palm beetles
hunched beneath the door ready
to spring on you when you open
it. Or those flies as big compared
to horse flies as horse flies
to mites—they can aim
and aren't ashamed of the love
bite.

Florida is Satan's vacation spot
filled with all the comforts of home
and a few places to waterski.

Blurt Number 1

Today I promise to not be distracted
by the photo of the woman
posing hairless and nude by the glass
pyramid that forms the entrance to the Louvre
no matter how many times you tell me
I'll never see you undressed again.

Blurt Number 2

Your face and body
hold their beauty
even now in this photograph of you
taken 150 years ago,
angles of your face
cutting through the boredom
most must have felt
then and though
the blotches and stained
background hide the moment
it feels sudden like
reality.

The beauty that clings
to your image has fallen
from your face and arms,
your legs and what's left
of you withers in a box
in the ground no one can ever
find.

When I think of you,
what do I think of? Art
says live, life says die.

Blurt Number 3

Too much music
is made through rational thought:
setting up a framework
and filling in the parts,
gathering requirements
from this or that aesthetic,
choosing whom to mimic,
listing the complex chords
and changes, writing it all down
so almost no humans aside
from the players
need to get involved . . .

or maybe hire a soulful singer
and some backup girls
who could wail behind
Pink Floyd . . .

and a light show
pops, classic, or whatever.

Too much music
is rational.

Blurt Number 4

The hill ahead
is there to kill. It starts
slow and dips even
and then climbs and climbs
levels and dips,
climbs and climbs,
the maples turning to firs and pines,
climbs and climbs,
the sandy dirt turning to granite
rocks then slabs
that turn from steep to sudden,
climbs and climbs,
and birches laying on their sides
looking like bushes or scrub but
they are full grown trees laid down,
climbs and climbs.

The hill uses up all the breaths I have left,
all the heartbeats, all
the miles of bloodflow
and passion for height,
all the need for singing.

Cold rock,
high tower,
final day.

Jimi Says Jam?

The delay is real
from the part of my brain
between my head and my hands
in liquidating worthless
rationalities in favor
of cold hard passion
that can be exchanged
for anything from Mozart
to Hendrix.

Wouldn't you want
to see them together:
each burning down the fire,
each folding what he hears
until the sound is a pastry
shell and Wolfgang says
powdered sugar
and Jimi says jam?

God's Canon

The frame's around
linking the it to
the surround. Border
bordering on diplomat.
Boundary bounding
from inside to out.
Nothing is bound
to be. The clockwork
of the colorscheme
spreads like Santa Fe sunset
and the black frame
is coyote watching the wind
for death. If you watch
eyes you can see the border
like a scribbled sketch
like a bedframe. Colors,
what holds them in
holds God's canon.

Large Smoke

What watches becomes smoke
and the hierarchies of light
plunge into shadows. I'm under
the impression the close cut
grass hugs bottomland. Instead
of coding I've decided to burn some brush
up the side of the hill,
fill the valley and the eyes
with washing tears. Horses
nicker and tread heavy.
Many things are too
large.

Chihuli 32/50

Signed prints in black crayon
hung on capitalist walls
w/ three tasteful borders:
two white, one brushed copper.

The flight seemed late
but quick catching up
informed time of a different
outcome. Downstairs

the woman in the dull red satin
skirt wrapped all around
except up one leg
has reminded me by turning
away what beauty does
to the old.

Clueless Clawing

Which tipping point
appeals to you, passes
as withcraft, wobbles

like a top tumbling
but finding a center
to stand on, scares
your sensible undercurrents
with an underbreath
of gas and oil buried
like a cave beneath the hotel
where your sleeping
and mine
disintersect?

Lust List

Pink jammed on grey,
congenial assassins of lead metal
poking above the ghastly streets
aligned religiously East-West,
North-South making caverns
where the sides of hills
rising from the sound
once shucked downpours,

and you walk in an attractive
manner toward the single
source of titular domination,
a point-smear of neon judged
pink by censors and covetous
righteousmen, and declared
nothing more than the XXX
peep show. Within as without
the installed temptresses conceal
their stubborn allies and reveal
only the perfectly public
with perfect timing and *dé rigueur*
clamminess. I touched and the sky
dropped its pink and resumed
its regularly scheduled blue.

Take the Cake

I suppose the past's drag
is worth mentioning in passing
or in reference to lethargy
coupled with extremes of heat
and moisture. I'd like to be a fly
on the wall
when you discover the half of your body
you thought totemized your irresistible
self had been on loan from a walleyed
god who looked the other way
without your notice and voila
the piece de resistance's dragging
behind. Or take the lovely couple
strolling like English icons
along the berm separating
the Earl's manor from common
farmland even though pheasants
flap from one field to the next: Would
it surprise you to learn
the way they whisper
in the night is like electric
wires snapping in a storm
and his wife has met her
at least twice in the last month?

In the land of metaphors,
the shadow just before dusk
takes the cake.

Ars Living

crust is easy
to find

trick is
to penetrate to
the cream

Apopka

The land of the rich
looks rich with fully green grass
and dressage pens. Their worries
center around value. Too many,
too much. The color of the third coat
of paint in 2 years, the age of the whiskeys,
the whiskies.

Their distinctions are both fine
and gross. Their wives groan
like any others, but the cloth
of their panties and how many times they
are washed before being discarded
are differences men grow
to notice.

A Hot Day Working on an Old House Near Big Scrub

unbearable heat,
unmovable intentions

flags hanging
unrejuvenated

imagine bugs
that die as they rest
we pause to touch
their hind legs

and stutter when
there is no sudden response

nothing no movement
except heat heading
upward and bugs
turning to motes

that will sting
like bees
the eyes and throats

of passers-by on their ways
to the swamp to watch for
blacks bears and gators

to listen for coonhounds
and foxhounds sugaring
the night air with their bays

and no one who walks
by the river is a candidate
for marriage

On a Curve Aligned to Kick Dirt into a Half-Abandoned House

by the side of 301
in southern Virginia

a small house built in '52
wrestles with the force
of people moving out

and work left for the next
tenants the next switch
in main roads the way
large rivers respond

to small movements
by making crescent lakes

this house relies
too heavily on paint
and memories of main roads

hovers half up half
caved in though cars
are parked out front

their hoods hopefully
up the oil fresh

Horses And Truth

Would horses sweep
the fields in fans
like black teeth
combing wet hair
in search of order and longing?
These are the values of incumbents
and those who rationalize
to retain the familiar
even when sweat
says it isn't so.

Rain That's

the rain slams the house
turns occasionally to sleet and snow
fills the ruts to rivers and low
spots to ponds that run
into each other and down the roads
to drains where only statistics matter
and sounds like sucking looks
like snakes rushes downward
outward in tangles voluptuous
venomous revealing within
the trance the crust
of skin on inappropriate surfaces
and the delight of knowing
all and of the rain

Organ Player

the equipment awaits
the players

short stage but
wide and deep
small spots but

otherwise dark
a short Marshall
leaning against it a black
beauty

a tall bass Mesa
Fender Jazz Bass
by it

double bass drum kit
tucked in its innards spare
sticks cowbell other specialties

rackmount effects
for guitars and voice
saying what's real ain't real

Shure mics and Audio-Technica
cords and cables in veins
on the floor

a Vox amp
Cry Babies a vintage Tone
Bender

at both ends stand oak boxes
with fine finishes turned away
their backs to the audience
only enough light to see glints
at head level slow rhythmic turnings
and a methodical undulation at each's
base like predators searching
these boxes backs turned watch and wait
the sinister scene of machines lying in wait
for their animators to arrive vanishes
as these two boxes stand and watch
moving moving waiting to move
in and kill kill kill

After Winter by the Merrimack

Even after an easy Winter
the disturbed surface of the Merrimack
shines muddy black: Summer is teething.
Lilacs the color of Burgundy bloom
near here—anyone can tell
from their grape-sweet fragrance.

Everyone's sex yields
odor at the peak of excitement.

Really from
the right angles
the curved caps of wind-blown
wavelets sprinkle the air
with sunbursts. The forgotten
mind rejoices
at the folly of renewal
for death eternally waits.

Even the river that saws
upriver and down
cuts through time
and takes his place by her side.

Blankets

The water seems tinged with the red
of rust and minerals, pouring over rocks
it heads away and froths. Walk
along this river either upstream
or down, listen for voices
that hunker by day,
fill your waterbag and drink
on the hour, when the mountain
passes fill with snow and the air
fills with snow, remain quiet
and huddled in blankets.

If the woman should come—
and why shouldn't she, the music
leans this way?—embrace her
in your blankets.

Learning from Rails

We spend our lives
seeking what loves
us and convincing ourselves
that's what we love.

Unless
what loves us is killed
once we find it.

Think years later
of what loved you falling from the bone;
you live with mirages;
houses crumble, stoves rusting
on their sides outside.

Black is foolproof.
No man can be recognized
wearing black stockings
over his face.

We spend our lives
hiding bad eyes,
hurt ears. Along
a long straight rail line
something bad
has happened
and we've heard enough about it
to made good.

By the Merrimack on a Day Inexplicably Hardened by Snow

Snow coats fresh sprouted
grass—I sit by the river
writing yet another bridge poem.
Today warm spring water
rises into fog which swallows
the snow, heavy and wet but
solemnly melting. The bridge
reveals itself carefully in a pointillist
haze or overture of visual noise,
and it's hard to see the edge
of the green girders against
the new-leaf background
through the snowfall.

Today a repair barge is anchored
beneath one of the spans. The bridge
is feeling its spans and wondering,
perhaps, does this late snow
signal a final change?

Weary from travel
and hoping for home
I cannot pull myself from here
today—it's as if the weight
of the bloated snowflakes
weighs me down. Something here
does. Perhaps a final change
catches the air's breath
and chills it to death.

Fragmented Insomnia

Too many blankets.

The air's too cold,
too wet.

I cannot warm up.

I grow hot instead
beneath too many blankets.

This always happens.

Whose fault is it?

I have no place to go,
so I sleep here instead.

I am dumb.

Extending Situations as if in Friendship

The messenger has paired off
messages and recipients
who flamboyantly await
each other.

The embrace is known as meaning.

Olivia walks along the quay
spying flotsam in the oiled cargo.

People seem to have built bridges here,
placing them in spots few would think to cross.
Nothing here,
nothing here.

Related approaches provide only
low-level solutions.

The assignment statement evaluates
its expression. And scientists workshop
the sounds they make
and the fingerprints they place
on walls.

I stress this is complete,
sound, and consistent.

Baz is Not Bad

except goodbye
we pick the words floating by
like poetry magnets
and form them into
lifelong promises

if only they made the poetry magnets
pull toward each other
in as complicated way as people mill
then this

might minimize this God-damn
thing called writing poetry

When a Family is Too Small

one day

after a week of no answers
puzzled looks into it by neighbors
nervous hesitations by officials

I will drive down the dirt road
I once took to spend my first night with a woman
turn into the driveway where we all once posed
force open the door she insisted stay shut at all times

find what every son must find
do what no one has ever taught
find strangers
ask them the unthinkable

after two weeks
fall down
cry

Off Route 66 Where Lew Wallace Once Rested Out of the Sun

there might be ways to pull
things together
now that
sessions are held on the roofs of cars
girls twirl
dig with spoons in hard clay
roasted to near ceramic
by a sun perpetually behind them

music plays from the abandoned hangar
gift of producers of music
videos who have so-often chosen
the abandoned
they bust with reverb and plethoras
of musical cakes and treats
laid out on tables like Christ

spending the afternoon with Romans
just hanging out with them

until a sudden shower
ends life as we know it
on the planet Earth

Among Thunderheads

under a pile of smoldering pines
by virtue of unerring luck
overlooking two springs merging
without a thought of which came first
following a storm leaving many things
broken in its aftermath
as its scarecrow logic
chased away fattened reality
substituting pinched words
a sauce of commas and stutters
behind all this
the human remains

Another Go

when the door is forced open
& air allowed to expel its incumbent odor
as wind whispers by
heaves a week-long sigh
we will get to work cleaning
up remains & artwork absorbing the final tally
making piles for eventual pyres
we'll burn in our minds to celebrate
in the way people break shells to cure
incurable fables
the uncanny surprise of passing
although on the walls
hanging on the walls
human remains

Contingent Conditionals

On the floor, a pile of contingent post-its—
what if . . . what if . . . if—
and worthless glue clinging
like first-loves to the dust- and brine-
cured floor on which a great lady
in all her disarray
once lay and spoke
of the difficulty and great
verity of poetry as if
the shaking and hesitation
of the writing hand held sway—
and she rubbed
her legs together like a cricket
and soothed herself to sleep
while I sat & with hardly a hiccup
wrote this.

More

She never goes back
so time doesn't happen,
and her memory's peeling
so new ones never form—
the past slips closer.
I found an old map
showing her haunts,

names of places;
landmarks—swamps and hills—
resume.

Black boxes are houses,
and white ones barns.

Neat Pond.
Birch Meadow.
Brandy Brow.

What is the reason to resume
over and over? Like a bird
in a tree, a mockingbird in a tree,
marking, mocking.

Maybe we are young
once more—

just once.

Blood Music (What Else?)

My fingertips are pulled apart,
bleeding from popped blisters—
I thought I guarded against
this during the weeks before
while we practiced little
by little. But while dissecting
a Hendrix bend the string
broke through my callus
and now it's shredding.
Tomorrow the gig will unfold
and it's either pain or music,
blood or comfort. As listeners
do you care? As a player,
I have no choice.

Ars Musica

something takes over
I am aware only of small details

like which notes are hit
sometimes

I choose a note to pick
as I see my fingers about to pass it

terse interruptions
provided by the mental rationality of choice

I am aware these choices
are made of mistakes

as art hates any thought
run away and salute

tonight no beauty writhes
before us

outside in the cold distance
lights are abundant and some
weep

my guitar it's said
has become porous and what it holds

has no choice

Half-life Wandering Akin

What's the attraction?—
to walk through graveyards
on hot days, or when they're overgrown
so the looker is nearly cheek-to-cheek
with the looked upon?

Inevitability? Insensitivity?
Acclimation? Acclaim? Alarm?

Post-mortem branding—is this
the reason for tombstones?

We walked till we nearly dropped
of dehydration in a 'yard dirt barren,
surface cracked like Morocco. Later
we drank milkshakes so thick
they wouldn't fall out when held upside
down. She was 90, I was 50.

Half a life of strange curiosity.
We favored the ones overgrown
with grass and ivy to the ones
where the ambiance was consistent
above to below. Lord 'a' mercy.

Fall Flail

we'd burn
leaves blown off
trees in piles

smoke filled rooms and
empty spaces

in another
cartoon fall trees
click like
unfleshed skeletons

wind like passion passing
through empty
piles blowing more wind

beneath the piles
black now ground
will abound in green
come spring and reharassment

purses
enclosures
the simulacrum
we'd burn

Hot Day Off The Interstate

let's just imagine
it big shoes on
little feet
slop walking up a downtown street
dogs on bones like dogs on bones
porches abandoned homes
streetlights with wires but switches switched off
car cranking backfire caught
flies dead and dried between
screens
and windows cracked

ever go back?
aesthetic qualities of decay
never joints fountains the one screen say
I did approaching an image of culture

yeah sure

Verifiable or Very

each morning
its funny sounds find
endings one day
closer no matter how fine
the work between
detailed the tasks how human
the details the smells
moving from man to thing
then like oil deeper
in like mist disappearing

some say the sun dipping
through clouds and mist
must hiss in its quenching
if we might believe myths
and what sounds true over
what is tell me which you prefer
verifiable or very?

In Your Country

We've walked to the top of this ridge
and settled into our stuttering conversation
half fluid and half pulled like teeth
from your different tongue. Below
some lovers—who could be ours—
waltz through wildflowers
and use all their hands to hold
what's dear looking to carry it
years ahead. A truck crosses into our valley
hauling waste and the uncherished,
moves slowly at a funereal pace,
stops by our cabin, but finds our containers
empty. The chords in my head move like a machine
closer to the end of the song. Does it make
you wonder that what guides me
makes no sound you can hear?
A cold wind forces us downslope.

Photo-Anomaly

The photos are real
proving how famished I feel
for your tender touch, testing
clarity with slight movement.
Behind you the café is hollowed
into a vault of colors, some of them
eating eggs and others kissing
softly, out of focus to each other.

The day you walked here, your heels
kicked one side of your longcoat
then the other, and the air
parted and departed. The river
noticed nothing, but the camera
perched on the museum's rampart
cast you in big jerks
across the Internet where a man
who recently lost his wife to a swimming
accident watched your smile
one frame and your blank stare
the next.

Pure and Simple Minded

Do only the pure
discover new lands? The weaned,
the wondered about, the clandestine
studies? Many worry that the simple-minded
might be given credit or even
be right. Many worry that the poor
will step ahead of the rich, that art
will make mock of science. We
say pure and we say what that means
to ensure the favored are favored.

Many have found new lands
and died in their handhewn cabins.

Mother Remembers the Day the Principal Scorned Her

She sleeps in a cocoon
in a cold room though the night outside
is warm on the verge of hot. The insulation
works too well, pays no attention to life.
To preserve heat in Winter, the windows
are small, and there being little light
in Winter, small windows fit. Afternoon
darkness and cold forces her to bed
through the day outside is hot on the verge
of dangerous. She grows more tired each
day from hard sleep. She grows thin
for who can eat while sleeping?

The flight, the drive, the walk,
the breaking in,
the cleaning up,
the warming up,
the lighting up
the locking up,
the walk, the drive, the flight.

Today is cool on the verge
of warm. Butterflies lock their wings
into neutral and form their lenses
in the pines. Loons float in shadows
peeking at the sun, motionless on the verge
of flight. The wind and sun in the pines
and I watch over these signs and wait,
wait, wait,
wait,

wait,

wait.

From a Description Deleted from an Essay on Romance

Pride of life and townscape
that the gift of wide streets
and ample storage in the main storefronts
say nothing about the town
in the late 20th century after a century
of ridicule by time who sees little
to praise in abdication. Or take
the Coors can that rolls down the street
past empty parking spaces faintly marked
by white paint: Who dropped it here?
These roads are in the midst of a region
befitting a thick description
like Least Heat Moon's invention
of overabundance and incursion.

Seen from above it's not
even a wide place in the road
for the roofs are dulled to the brown-grey
of the beaten down fields around it,
and all the white in the lines has evaporated
their obligations to mark order,
and the coming storm's multitude
of motions will enhance
only decay and fortitude.

Shall we pray for an opening sale?
A newborn's howling segue
to the wind spirit?
Shall we pray for wind
winding up for another?

Love Girders

My job is to love
until it turns sour from lovelessness
from longing to touch naked
breasts whose tips are filled with nerves
protruding from intimacy,
and in finding the mean truth

the milk that could have turned to cream
turns harsh, ready for countertaste
and cleansing. Bitterness shrivels the grace
of intention and longing, and teaches
the lonely heart to never look down
from the highrising girders
made of the desire for love.

Dream Like Layered Paint

Night,
I've awoken,
the sentinel sodium light up the street lights her silhouette
which rises, falls, rises like her homeland's mountains.

Her breathing is heavy and close,
which means she's far away, perhaps on a city street in her home
strolling in the cold, her heels kicking the hem of her long coat
and her shadow interrupting the low steady sun,
and I may trace her shape if I'm quiet and slow,
feel her tensions and releases.

Wind makes the branches rattle our windows,
and the simplicities of cause and effect
make the simple actions men do possible.

I recall the first time I saw her
standing before an impressionist's impression
of a steep slope down to the sea yellowed by dried grass
and wind-whipped water made of pastes of oil paint.
She stood still while my need to rest my palm under her hair and on her neck
became a fact in the world, her breathing heavy and close,
which meant she was far away, unaware, releasing and tensing
like the form of her hips when she walks in the low Northern sun
deep in Winter.

And did I mention
I've awoken? Is that what I said?

How I Apply Makeup

I find websites for places I want to visit
and Photoshop myself into quaint or bizarre
photos and make an album of me there. In paragraphs
written one or two a day like a disconnected collage
I write the novel of my sudden trip there
and the long life I led once I met a strange woman
with a foreign tongue who had to speak slow
to speak to me. I find might-be photos of her
and I paste myself in right next to her.
I buy plots in famous cemeteries nearby
and commission headstones of the local sort
with brief historical notes about me. Sometimes
I add her. I buy old trunks and put my novels in them
and put the trunks in abandoned buildings.

Someday they'll investigate these me's, and their
favorite will become who I am.

Foreign Piles

A machine drives piles
all morning and halfway through the afternoon.

The endeavor is foundation.

Machines take on the colors of their countries
and cities. Partly through paint.

The sound of sexual intercourse
is the sound of women.

What I say reveals you. This
is how statements work.

The hardest rest is made
of weariness. Like a song

many things grow pale
from overcautious riding.

Instead of asking her
I watch the pile driving machines

gracefully pounding into the earth,
then awkwardly trundling

like me toward home
on to the next one.

Bedroom Poem

Her bed is isolated:
surrounded by the L
of the room's corner and the L
of the floor. On her bed
only she may lie, but we may propose
beyond the limits of reason.
Her bed is surrounded by her recent
clothes and few who enter her room
notice the green sunset or the odor
linking now with yesterday.
Her eyes are naked, and we can guess
what pounds in her head tonight,
but don't act on it. If we were to walk
from her room to the shore and rest
on one of its imported granite boulders
watching sandy seawater rubbing
against rocks and relics
we'd buy the poetry of statement
a limited consensus gawks at.

The pier is shaped like an L,
the short end whiskered with fishermen
who have a taste for bedrock and flatfish.
We wait for her to wake and regather
her flung wardrobe. We know she
will walk down here and make poems
twisting the new,
forcing the new. What is not necessary
is for us to hear.

Genesis

gangs
and the group mind
no mind from any one
approach the center
avoid collisions
extend the sense of the last thing said
or cheer volunteer a whim
but provide nothing
more

act purely
never plan never think
never reason
find a victim
choose prey
observe the bodies

this is where God
began

Over Your Head

The charming inn set high on a shoulder,
its little restaurant serving only heavy
food—meat, sausages, potatoes, cabbage—
is our home for a week. Like the village,
it is made of heavy wood to steady
it in the high winds Alpine passes
like this endure. The cows are heavy,
the goats and chickens too. On our roof
logs lay across the downward slope
to keep heavy snow on all Winter
to help heat the inn. We drink heavy
beer made from a Bavarian recipe.

But the sun this Summer fills the village
and forest with light,
and breezes smelling slightly
of the Mediterranean and Italy
scoot up the slopes and makes leaves glisten
when they turn over and blush.

When we leave next week
the contrasts will lessen,
the light will fold within the heaviness,
the beautiful will tail off,
and the ugly will brighten.

Water coursing down the river
will coagulate with glacier spoor.

Romance is contrast.

My Dreams Are Piles and Piles

in my dreams it's always a house
or a conference site, maybe a hotel

and there are common features
to all of them—a rambling nature

a wide place that overlooks a narrow one
weeds bushes trees debris refuse

blocking the way in I'm always
moving from one part to another

hiding or searching or finding
places to relieve myself some

places have curved walls and windows
others have beams that have fallen down

sometimes it's a school or a conference
and I'm late to everything just by

a little bit it's about failure I
think and cycles that go

down and down revisiting
common patterns several

times a night my bathroom
window overlooks a close valley

and a steep hill covered in homes
and when I stare out while addressing

the toilet three streetlights tremble
out of unison it won't be long now

Heisenberg's Roads

Two roads diverged in a yellow desert
one heading north, the other west
and unlike quantum particles I can't go both
ways, see? The northbound one—I could
see it until it dipped into an arroyo
and the other into a mirage at noon.
One seemed rutted from heavy truck wear
but the other was pitted and worn
I think anyway dust and sand were blowing
across and who could tell which was which

I went my way—less traveled or no:
what's the difference?

Poetry and Science Discursively Defined

Poetry? Imagine this:
a boundless description
of every detail of the truth
of the world, of creation,
of destiny, of laws, of God,
enough to satisfy the strictest
thinker, the loveliest dreamer,
everyone who ever lived or will.

Imagine: The thinnest line drawn patiently
and with precision even without ever
crossing itself can fill the largest sheet
of paper, the infinite plane.

Or it can wander loosely,
be straight as an arrow,
short as a tick mark,
fancy or ugly, cover as much,
or as little, as anyone wants.

Now think of this line on the description
of Everything, and if we could see only
those words it touches.

Science seeks to touch
them all.

Poetry seeks them
in their best order.

An Old-Fashioned

snow like sad upended
clouds and accumulation bound the flakes
in burrows the small prepare
wind works against the dark

desert all around everywhere
stubble that is its greatest growth
pokes through like rocks in a filling pond
and beneath sleep begins

look in the eyes of the storm
that approaches
tell yourself
scare yourself
sit under the outcropping
never lift an eye

it is easy to be clever
for men hate to die

Short Disturbance Amid Regular Poetry

The moon seems a sunny place—
gray and dry, rounded shapes like drops in milk—
it seems to favor us with its manlike face
and varying smiles. It lights our way
some nights and makes like a murder freak
popping in and out of clouds other times.

It covers our sun and we cover it.

It disappears periodically and is fun
to write about: No end of poets
waste their time on it as if
there were something special
about this freak of nature.

If you really want to know who
the freak is, look homeward, angel!

When the Sky is Orange

The is no movement of air
in this narrow urban gorge
in which this frantic river finds itself
dropping 100 feet in a half mile
with fresh snowmelt refreshing
it torrents 100 miles upstream.

There are, of course, locks.

This island is surrounded
by turmoil and spiralling white.
We sit on a park bench feeding
finches from a bag of black thistle.
The woman with me's brushed hair
remains motionless even though it is thin
and light as down. In the river
many dead must be flowing down
to the Gulf and the roar
is as a squadron taking off.

I've kissed her before, but each
time is as the first, and I'm barely
ready to touch the invisible
hairs on the back of her hand.

I'll wait until she's tossed
the next batch of thistle.

Car horns must be honking.

Unpleasantly Too After You

The river slows down
once its feeder streams dry up
a bit up river and we are unpleasantly
surprised when the finches up
and leave—our bag of thistle is down
to the last handfuls and then it's dried up
too.

After,
we stand up and face the glowing
city separated from us by a formerly
unrepentant river gorge.
Seen from the back we are clear
and precise colors and the city
is a brown fog through the mist thrown up
by the leavings of winter's snowmelt
blasting down and
you

can almost hear the melancholy pop song
welling above and all around.

Hordes

Gossiping while the waitress fusses
over conflicting orders selected
from menus in tongues, writers
are unkind and ineloquent over
their distaste for writers who don't show
for readings and weddings, write
beneath the needs of the art, divorce
at the wrong times from the wrong
people, and I am able barely
to put one word after another while
sampling with the tip of my tongue
the overspiced cilantro chutney.

classroom framework and arguments

dancehall girls in long skirts posing with men
who hold them formally each rests his weight
on one leg and twists into his girl

once the hips move it's all over
the historian of dance remarks
about step dancing

the room prowls through the wind
high and whistling like a framework
of stoppage in a storm en route

chipmunks rest in her lost shoe
beneath the oak whose placement
suggests a poet's prop or proper etiquette

I notice

a
s
t
r
o
n
g

f
o
r
c
e

o
n

t
h
e

l
e
f
t

Music Muscle

take music
passion or white hot
varied not perfect nor perfectly played

technically flawed in current idioms and modes
pushed not polished

poets line up in the plush seats
applaud in white gloves

by a river vultures split booty
with hunters lives pulled apart

homes left smouldering
when their lovers can't run with the pack

and the nervous hunker by boulders
and hum songs written this year

at the crossroads of wondering composition
and propositional passion

Alleys

we watch fireworks work
their ways upward

behind old blonde brick
buildings above the river
holding forth back behind

behind walls women drive men
to the wall through the pull

of desire, degrees of curvature,
and of the hard and the sharp

we walk without touching
without talking down streets

and behind them the alleys

—
the air is a stew of departures,
hot heat gathered by rivers,
roots pulling up strengths—

your strength is towering,
hangs over me like willows and other weeping
trees, the padding of your footsteps
clings to the air like a breeze just below
our perception—

I knelt so you could reach
down to me, I hung on your hips
for support, you chose
to kiss me motherlike,
with some approval—

my work and yours diverge,
I wonder about voices, seriousness,
we discuss obliquely revisions—

we decide I must wait,
keep on, visit on a colder day,
many others walk by—

Dance Agenda

trick is fleeting gestures,
pieced-together filaments attaching
levels to each other, entirely new ways
to create reality for virtuality,

such as he has lifted her skirt
so that we see their feet begin
their complex dance beginning
with the way they face us with their bed behind
and ending with a vault of gold leaves
arched over them at one end of the lane
and over us at the other,

the other being
the warmth we rise toward
when the music stops
and we've all cooled off

In Memoriam

Someone died secretly
and was quickly laid to rest;

he spoke quietly making real sense
out of nonsense but liked to drive way
too fast. No one released the details

of his death though the cremation
is known and so the disposal, but

the force of his ideas or should I say
the soft pockets of still clarity

are drifting like the smoke of an ornamental
fire made of cedar sticks and aromatics

and soon the sky will change shades
just this little.

Can of Something

A can of something
has been cooking for 2 months
under the sun near Abilene
on a stretch of pavement
not even the bikers care about.

A pop-top all whose color
has been bleached out. Maybe it was blue
or could 'a' been green. It bulges
as if about to pop but when I listen
I hear only cicadas real far away
and some other buzzing.

What was put in there was made
for people to drink—such an honor
to become part of the top of the food chain.
Now it is just some chemicals changing
and waiting. This Winter a rain storm
will wash it down into the arroyo,
and another to the river, and then
to the Gulf where it may wash up
on a beach, be buried in sand
and one day become the trophy
in a very strange stranger's collection
of impossibles.

Is It Too Late To Weep?

Nearby the Holocaust is raging
like a kettle boiled over and blown
apart, its warning whistle long dead
and its sound wrapped like a scarf
around the neck of illumination,

and I'm afraid I've lost my place
in the long book I was reading,
and I have this feeling
I'll never find it any more.

Unkempt

Behind two motels just off
the exits on Interstate 95 in North Carolina
a graveyard sits among birch saplings
and raspberry bushes. Signs
I can't read point to sections,
and many markers carved of wood
are cracked and broken. It is part
of a larger cemetery that is well-kept
except for this. I wonder why while
licking my Dairy Queen softserve
cone and sweating up an odor.

Big Boats and Fast Turns

Big ships and barges speed under
the Bay Bridge, cargo shaped like boxcars
is piled up high and on the stern
of one they are piled on a framework
making a kind of heavy-pieced awning
shading Philipinos drinking heavily beneath it.
For some boats, shares are given for a fixed
profit, and increase comes from reducing
hands en route. How happy homecomings
are is as unknown as what goes on
belowdecks to passengers caught
off guard or when swells shift
contents and the sound of shifting
moans through the nights and breathing
is shallow while everyone hopes
for normal to wake up.

Harborside Exchanges

hem white skin faint sunburn
a young woman on a bench Bay waters slapping
a cargo ship forces past upper deck filled with slow traffic

her hair blown forward her ears covered her eyes tinged
a ferry pulls back like a thunderstorm pelicans cruise
sun and salt air baste the East Bay hills moon reveals

I lean toward her years of thought unload
between us an arm's length bench slats caked
I talk and talk her pelicans plunge

she watches cars slow
down

Spondeeful

Do we need at
the end the terrible truth
to pop out like a softened cock
after a wet fuck? Truth laid bare
like a freshly shaved cunt
capturing each flow of excitement
in the lips and not the hair?
I could make all this as pretty
as anyone and then nail you
with that precious click like
all good poets do, but what this is is
just a glimpse like you want to take
of that bare cunt right now.

Almost Right: Look's Off

The form of a modern poem is !:
quick start, dim-
inishing build-up, a
little gap where
readers hold their breaths....ahhhhhhhp!

Then a popping sound as the poet
uncorks his brain and real
meaning burps
out.

Lament One Day Early

Soon the way back
will dim away and there will be a limit.

The storyteller
is losing

her mind or is it that in her
forgetting it is getting

better?
She practices

starving and not moving,
her answers are

no answers,
and I fear it.

There is one last loon
hiding in the scrub

waiting to
hoo hoo

away once the light/dark blend
is right enough. Mark the end

mark the end
mark the end.

Lament One Day Late

Imagine darkness falling
 head over heels for one
more has been added
 like drops of water and salt
to sea waves or a loon to a pond
 filling with loons.

Then it's time to wonder
 like a puzzle filled out
not knowing what comes next
 what the cost will be
to open the door no matter
 how broken it may have become.

We'll scan the lines written
 not labored over
to find the ones that can never be forgotten
 and make them that way
then lose our way once more
 then mark the end.

Lament of Encirclement and Approach

we approach it like
watching out for

circling 10' outside
range uncertain

we sniff
the air is laden

one mystery
footprints buried

grass staining grass
only one good news

A robin pouts and pines
on the branch nearby, her
nest filled with chicks whose mouths
open and open. Their nest is on a sill
where looking out happened

once
in an older time
when nests were bigger

Lament After In

Beneath the coned mountain,
behind a veil of powder light clouds
leaking an orange otherworldly
like a gaping door to a world
of glittering uncommonality,
we've parked and take turns
holding it in the light behind
and the sight beneath in hopes

that the way we've admitted
to sentimentalism will be taken
as a blessing when she needs
it most, maybe wants it least,
but at last it's just our way
to say goodnight to her
on the first of her last 2 or 3 nights
at home before we send her
closer to where she'll want to be
one day when she finds herself
not here.

Lament Representing Ongoing Work

At the edge of a field filled
with round balls of lavender clover
a crew is dismantling an oak,
starting at the top with the long branches
that trace the bottom of wind, and after each branch
falls more trunk is taken down. The men
stop every 30 minutes to sit under the diminishing shade
and sip from jars of lemonade filled from one
of 5 big buckets, and when the shade is gone
they move their drinks and tools to the rim
of shade around the field. They climb like arboreals
or use ladders on the flat beds of a pair of trucks
to reach the limbs that go next. Later
the field is filled with limbs and leaves
losing their lives while the wind finds
the way less obstructed and the lemonade
buckets grow emptier, less able to comfort
the sweating work of the wearying men,
more able to accept the next refreshing drink.

Lament Upon Forgetting

Cleaning up is everyone's last duty,
and now, memories begin their work
of forgetting—first details then the outline,
finally everything. Soaking in is a good
metaphor, for what soaks also stains
as it marks and memorizes. Maybe
a carpet can be cut apart keeping
what's right, burning what's forgettable,
but the edges become frayed and soon
it all unravels. Everything unravels, every
single fact is forgotten. The world follows
what's remembered, so the world always changes.

Yesterday we drove past a pretty place
and remembered something sweet.

Lament Of Closing

Even the air, so soft, can jolt—
what once was wished for
is now mourned—clouds, once
so soft, fill the air with rain,
with lightning, with pounding
and thunder—and the ground, once
so firm, has become liquid and settles
and flows down to the sea
like a procession. Everything is
recently closed up, locked, left
behind, and crippled to keep
further change at bay, to limit
the expansion of the unknown.

Let's bottom out
the meanings of events
in the shards of memories and emotions
rampant when it was raining—
because some day it will stop,
the sun will be revealed,
and the way home will be the way
we once were.

Lament on Work

There is working hard in death—
by the one who dies by
heavy breathing and labored movements,

or the beating heart pushing too hard;
by the ones who clean up by
brushing hot caustic liquids through carpet plush,

or scraping from linoleum the last of it away;
by the ones who prepare by
digging holes, carving granite, marking unimportant things

on paper. Our job is to get
by, and by doing so, to pass close by
places of singularity in a frame unlike

our normal minds, wrapped in rigor;
by doing this we earn our lives; by
doing this, we do live.

Lament Draining Away

Just like that
what's been saved has been spilled

and like a liquid more quick than hot acid
it slithers down past the grains of sand

memory rakes into the mind of a woman
when it's nearing time to let it all pass

by. Just like that everything I wanted
to know has passed into the hands

of music where truth can be made
and pasted into the world in the image

of probability. What I mean
is the force of value is weak

when the wind slows, when
the skies lower, when it all runs

out into the welcoming sand
that fills up with nothing

but everything.

Lament Getting Too Close

The lesson starts with sunset visiting its last rays
through windows permanently shut for night;
the morning sounds of loon overhead remain muffled
for weeks as things change slowly but decidedly;

deliberately the locked doors keep out and keep
out forgotten objects of fear; many nights
are like the one night; lightning has visited
and the memory of a trapped cat seems less

tonight. There is a lesson here also
about obligations, what happens when they are for-
given; little doubt remains about what was deliberate;
outside births took place while inside the cement floor

became a sponge and pulled her away, pulled
her down, pulled the truth into peril.
pulled like a child asking and asking a parent,
now inattentive, for a story made to sound true.

Lament on Circling

we opened the garage and sat there
we found white lawn chairs and sat on them just inside the garage door
outside it seemed like many things were alive
maybe all of them

the house sealed up filled us with dread flowing somehow into us
the air became filled with grasshoppers and mites and birds flew by carrying grubs and worms
we could hear a storm far away growing near
its flashing lights made an unsteady strobe
later that night we lay in bed without blinking while it rained
someone important was not listening

someone important was not watching
we opened the door
all our senses were on hold
we held on for dear life

the darkness would not move
the darkness would not move out
the darkness would not move out of the way

out
of the way

we saw a pattern that we would not repeat
we circled the house until the moon rose and kept it up until the loons flew by

have you ever driven a car over powdery dry dirt and it feels like floating?
think of that feeling and call it the looming compass
there is little else to go on

Lament on Passing Days

I guess the sun came up
and went down many days

some warm or hot, others more moderate
and birds sang as they sat nearby

perhaps it was cloudy some days
and rain fell or even thunder flashed and lightning yelled

some nights maybe were muggy, others cold as usual
and stars passed by overnight and the moon came and went

could be people called letting the phone ring and ring and...
and people knocked at the door while the grass grew

oh and wondering took place in several houses nearby who had seen but no more
and the place endured and the floors endured and the carpets dried out

the situation didn't change much
and only the shape of the future did

Lament on the Realities Picking Up

She's vanished and her secrets
remain evident, buried but
with stems and stalks poking out
and buds about to bloom, and
she's won't say how to nurture and trim them.
Again, I'm left with no information,
no truth, only music to go by.

She said the pile was this
high but I see only half of it,
and that half is thinned out
as if rain had washed some away.

She isn't what she used to be—
could she really have left so little of her behind?
She said her daddy told her people would try
to take advantage of her. They never did.
His warning squashed them all. She did
what he asked and was strong until the end,
but what did it gain her, to be so strong
and to yield so little.

Lament on Knowing and Not

it's a real clearing now
with storms on the way
trees leaning over
ants digging and aerating

leaves turned over and pulling in the water
dust picked up by light winds and laced onto flat surfaces
a cloud hanging around all day
and now, there,
another

what did they see here
how did the days wring out joy

I see the grass growing
and small saplings poking up
stumps are filling with greenery pushing up

the locked gate is feeling a little rusty
at keeping things out
storms on the way
leaning digging rusting growing back

keep in touch
you said
explaining how the mesh of discovery
can be kept fine

Lament on Futility and Beauty

Clouds, rain, the finery of ferns—
none of this is made for us. Take
the sunset made of a burst jug filled with urgent colors
splashed on pewter drapes—
what we think of it is nothing.
What we feel when seeing it
was never any of God's business.
Beauty is the rareness.
Forward lies the rim
and deep within its pit lies what beauty means
to those who tinker with it.
Alone is how it ends,
and the word that is kept till the end
falters and makes the biggest joke.
O end it.

Lament on Smoking and the Ways Out

Someone said the way out appears at the end of each line,
that the beginnings are new terms of incarceration with variable outs.

Sing me a song
in a voice sweet with love
with a dog barking in the woods
and chickadees rapping their laments,
with a comb in your hand combing my hair,
and wind blowing down our valley and out to sea.

I am forced to sit here, write in the middle of battle,
no respite, no release, no responses as if the listeners
were dead to me or their ears or eyes were dead
to me.

It's all
rolled up
into a little
ball and the ball
has fallen down some
hole where only those in
the hole can find it and play
with it and I can't have it anymore.

We stole her cigarettes
and like lovers struck them alive
under a pine down the street,
sitting in the warmth only a Spring day
can make of pine needles in the woods
when the leaves aren't out but the sun is.

I snuffed it out,
he kept on.

The past is killing me.
It killed her.

Lament on Aftermaths

There is no way to say it
other than murmur and murmur,
no other place
than the bed of pine needles
laid on the ground outside her bedroom window,
no time other
than every moment from now on.

Style under duress,
we fathom it like songs sung off key
only to return at night under duress
replaying like fashions from sister to sister.

I've found the old well hole buried
under sand, dug over the course of months
under threat of death from cave-in,
under duress to provide water to an aging wife.
I will bury it deeper, cover

it in needles, make my bed by both these places.
I am not like them, my head is heavy with pain,
my heart heavy with thoughts it never could have had
until the songs started up and played and played.

The world needs superman
to set it straight,
to say what needs said,
to sing the songs right,
to fill in the gaps.
It's not me: All I can do
is just sleep

Lament on the Worthiness of Time

Is it worth the time?
—to make a line of sight between
the grave on the hill and the one below?
—mother looking down on mother?
If I could tell her, if she could see me
signaling for the clearest line, if she could
see the preparations being made, the care
I'm taking to do what she might appreciate
in the name of falling sentimentality,
would she laugh, would it seem to her
respect, love, something intangible?
I took her ashes to her favorite places.
Was it worth the time? Who will see
the line of sight? How many visits
will it be worth?

Lament Over 40 Years

I remember when we first saw the land,
sunny day in '63 before Kennedy
was killed and after my grandmother died
in her bed with us around and nearby, and we had
bought the last place on the hill—enough
for 8 of us with a line of sight to Nana
and my granpa whom I never knew,
and my mother knew one thing then
that I never could until now: One day
I would carry my father and her up
that hill, and the linden tree at the corner
would be 30 feet tall not 10, and all the graves
around would be filled, and the little shrubs
would be grown and trimmed into life-binding bushes,
and my job would be to write their importance
for a world that didn't know them, and
read it to a crowd made mostly of rain and wind, choose
a stone and design its decoration, line up her view to her father,
walk up the hill slowly three times,
and spend my nights pounding this beat,
and making them up—those little facts
I didn't know in 1963 that my mother did.

Lament On Enlivened Links

The sky is perfect,
nothing between it and its colors
but two thin
(so thin)
lines of clouds pointing away
in scrapey colors,
and there is nothing
between me and whatever I see.
Even the greens are bursting
out of ponds with their egrets looking
down at an angle for signs of the living
daring them. Behind a screen of trees
and beyond the fields beyond that a river
seesaws with the tides past a hill it will
(it must)
consume or abandon. On that hill I left
something valuable whose value can be gained
neither by taking it nor by leaving it.
The clear air is something to love,
something to look through when the eyes tear up,
when the walk up the hill begins to shorten.

I remember she patted the tops of their heads
and showed me the grief of her flat smile,
looking with her darkened eyes, never
saying a word, hoping I could made new ones
(for her).

Lament on Desire and Satisfaction

There's a food she loved,
she savored it when she was young
then forsook it for 20 years, though the stands
that sold it stood by the road she took every week.

I bought some for her. The cooking is easy,
done by novices in the crudest way possible
almost. This food was special to her. No more.
It comes from the sea and she never wandered more
than 100 miles from the sea. Lived in its salten
air, lived in its moderating shade.

These things special to her now just are,
like the words in this poem they are uncharged,
like the plain facts written here, it is just information
to know how she felt. She sat there and smacked
her lips and my imagination filled her head
with desire and satisfaction.

Lament for Him

His voice trailed off into the sputtering facts
voiced over a loudspeaker while the boat cut through
the over-yielding lake water the only time he spoke
to me representing. Listening I count "bless"ings and "pray"ers,
and though he wrote little poetry he can recite
it all.

She prayed for him and for herself,
she held his hand and let it go when she felt him warm,
he watched her walk out of his hospital room, just her red hair,
he said he would pray for himself and for her,
the world looked misty to him and it always would and still does

Facts went by, facts were available, he felt no
need to record them. He said he had pictures
of his father but my mother got mad one day
and threw them out. Should I lament
their loss or celebrate her spirit?

When he was in love they kept
him in isolation, packed in with the redhead.
His life was saved and all the doctors and surgeons rejoiced.
He lost his mind to her and he lived his years
in disquiet, wishing for the facts to become
once more available.

Lament on One Moment

On my side in bed
on a hot night, humid filled with
the green smell of fresh mown grass
and my hair sticky from a bike ride
to a ballgame, the fan is on pushing
air out its window so air's pulled in all
the others, and like a lightest breeze
the cool air coming off the swamps
is cooling me down little by little,
and the rushing sound of the fan can't quite
hide the sound of thunder coming down the valley.

These moments have been compressed
as if into a story because time is compressed
now that the moments have stopped. With
art they can be filled out and turned from
boredom, turned from the past, turned to
living.

Simple Lament

The sea birds sings,
sings and flies on placid wings
while we stutter and jerk
come and go, the eternal
versus the temporary.

Lament for Goodbyes

Here is what we see tonight
as the cool settles down from the dark
dreaded night and stars do nothing
but hang; the small meanings
turned away from and the untasted foods
left to waste, the bags taken to the garage
in haste and untidiness, the TV glowing blue
and a diet of tea and candies.

Night on earth is singing
with a voice that tenses
and relinquishes. In this sand
the trace remains of their recent passing
and the warmth from their feet hangs on.

Lament on the Beauty of Passing

From my window I hear footsteps
approaching the fountain and its water
falling on stone and splitting in shards

and forming drops under the sun, some
of it evaporating away like the throngs

of birds who leave the swarm and spot
away into the hidden caves of tree canopy.

Their eyes follow mine as I watch the water
flow away from sight and regard
the woman walking past whose walk

has straightened and steadied
as she casts off her other self
and becomes at last real.

Lament After Lorca

The robin who laid her eggs
while you were still here
has forgotten you, the fear
you felt over thunderstorms
from the time lightning shot
past your eyes has forgotten
you, the carpets you swept
when you could not walk
have forgotten you, the water
bubbling from the well
we dug when all else failed
doesn't know you, the heat
and wet from the South wind
will not look into your eyes,
the cool wet fog that surrounds still
your house has no idea of you
any more—all of them are condensed
in me who heard your last laments
and prayers for everything to cease,
and like all the dead of the earth
you are just a story I and one
or two others will tell for a short
time, less than the time it took
you to die.

Lament on Stories

I never saw her again
for the end was up in the trees

when I left, and she breathed shallowly
rather than confess. I looked for a kiss

and the gate was swung closed
even though the chain had been moved

forever. Did she wait for my call
to confess instead? I called.

How small was she? Light,
they said, was kept off

her face. On my birthday
birds will land and snails

will bellow as the sun rises;
a hoard of memories awaits

in the pit of dreams
devoid of stories.

Lament Over Dreams

She had every big dream
and saw the lives of many launched.
The grass in front of her window
bowed in the rain and withered
in the sun and heat. Insects
popped up, hopped up
and flew past blinding her sight
from what might have been visible
had the dreams been less thick.

Lament On Gazing

in the distance we see
an uncertain spot

which fills the expanse of sky
with caution

a thunderous echo rebounds
toward us answering a silence

at peace with roosting birds
what little we recall to say

we refuse in the distance
the moon gazes upon an

uncertain spot

Lament on the Permanence Enshrined Beneath Stone

I've been searching for the right words,
not many of them and neither clever
nor hard nor sentimental—length is important
and how they fall in lines and how hard
would they be to read when carved: You see
the way the light falls on the lines makes all
the difference, and what's in shadow can reveal
what's in direct sun. And what sense can they make
when there is little contrast or rain has soaked
into them or snow hangs from their little loops.

Lessons can be learned when our solitary little
minds are forced to confront the language of stone.

Lament Upon Art's Inability to Mute

The celebration unfolds,
emotions bursting like a paste of butterflies

alarmed suddenly and together

from a patch of buddelia
planted for decoration
by an artificial pond.

Their colors individually assertive
combine in their flush and our inattentiveness
to churn a gold butter that fans
before the staged pond water
and the leaking liner of the pond

in a way that links the celebration,
the laughter, the downward stares,
and the dead with the grasp of comprehension
through the mechanism
called artistic falsehood.

Lament on the End of Laments

Sunset stimulates indecision
as we move away from the celebration
and through alleys bounded by houses
decaying and lowering themselves
nail by nail into the cobblestones—
they've been buried and careful words
were spoken over them today.

Sunset bars our way by holding
out hope that within the end
something beautiful awaits
after the darkness is shushed away
and the rainclouds break for the coast.

Sunset hooks us by the lapels
and we're reduced to pacing
and by pacing counting and
by counting replacing
our memories with stories
whose passion imprisons the
hopeful gathered indecisively.

After the Funeral

The time for simple-sounding metaphors
is over: When you've put your parents
in the ground, cremated or not, your feelings
diminish or flee or you are overwhelmed
to distraction and there is their matte urns
for example or the river running gibbous—
it seems to the poetic mind—
nearly full and still filling
or the conversation of the acquaintance
with his arm on your elbow
or is it your best friend from high school
until you married his sweetheart?

Anyway, you are caught between
looking down and looking casual
or away or out for conversations
that would pull you into thought
when you want to pull the square
of sod over you and them and have
a reunion of three and not a wake.

Later you sleep
and the clicking of the air conditioner
and later the heat lightning flaking
off clouds in from New York
fashions your dreams into alternate
lives and the happy years of your mother
closing the door as you run to the bus
and your father explaining in Greek
the workings of algebra.

Above & Overhead

I'm here—I've left them
in a clearing of no shade and little fortune,
only two caps to shelter them, and me,
I'm 2500 miles away in a different climate
and I've left what they value in jeopardy
by ignorance and turning my back. By

chance I flew over them this morning
through fate dallying with a flight director
and followed [childlike] the river down to the closest
bridge and then the roads and I know
my retina caught their clearing
and my head heard the heavy calls
to come back for they are alone
in the clearing among strangers,
which is their worst condition.

On our last day we heard
the loons flying on a track
adjacent to our whereabouts
and who can say with certainty
it's not them in a guise
fleeing their clearing
until I fill it more
fill it better,
fill it up.

Blame

Let memories begin
their decay and among
them the realization
that her last
years were about survival
alone. Moving too hard,
taste gone, no
one to deliver the paper,
no one to arrange
it. No one
to help
no one.

The loon glides
then wings away
even harder.

Witness to Weariness

Her lines her looks
are dulled by a day
out she pulls
into the gas station to pump
her own.

Her eyes
hazed over slide
to mine at the next
pump she stares
through weariness back
until the car in front
makes way and she can
pump.

Her skirt still sleek her sweater
still tight surround her
she bends to twist her cap
off then promises to pay
pumps the hose
inserted.

Her home is sparse
lit only in places only
she will move from lit spot
to lit spot.

There is no one
though many would wish
it to hold her in her
wearinesses.

We both pump
looking down
weary for night.

Evenings She Feels

The waxed floors shine red
in the false light of night,
the haze of music playing
is clear until muffling
chairs and rugs absorb
her footsteps, she sweeps
through the room from one pool
of light to another like
a plan forced. She does
nothing different nights,
only her body can feel
itself in the warmth
of occasional illumination.

Evenings, Hers

The cold rain makes a warm light
from sodium lamps lining the street
making jewels of blocks
shining up into her apartment
gilding the ceilings when
added to the bluish lights
she favors. She steps slowly
from room to room, tea cup
in her hand and the evening paper,
her form is hugged lightly
by silk made for men
but to be felt in the evening
when her need to smile
has been shut off,
and the cloak of night
covers a shaft for escape.

He Fell From the Sky in Misty Fjords

His attraction to living
exceeded his greed

but just barely
since he needed

greed to succeed.
His attraction to danger

excelled but in the end
it spelled the end.

His desire for immortality
was frozen but his head

wasn't—too much
time upside down?

underwater? When he fell
for danger, did he know

it was the sky?

O The Paradoxes!

His passion swam for hours
or days under pontoons keeping
his place up but not upright.

He wished to live forever
by a trick technology
was perfecting or so
he thought.

He wished to live forever
because he wished to live
near death. What was

his last expression
hanging upside down
when it like matches
could strike anywhere?

Can't Be

meditating
a path of resistance to thought

aligning the heart to
the feet on a path topologically a circle

freedom of a long walk
later carefully noted on maps with GPS

he noticed the very
thing he saw every day

was never the same
as itself

he wanted to live
forever but asked us not

to mourn (start over)
is to not listen

to the humming flow
of blood through

us and through us
to each other

Easy Road Is Not Fragile

. . . he of course would
shout hurrah dance

sillysideways burp
sleep eat vitamins

turn orange rejoice
step on it

hang it on turn a twist
of fate sleep on a cold hard

launch to meditation
forget to launch the safety

net net worth
net died & dead . . .

Liquid Lament

Time for the perfect
dream the linkage
of sweetness the I will
come back little clobber
the dream frozen
literally in a tank
and two skinny dogs
humping for shade
across a plaza in time
frozen in place.

In Philo Near Fall

In the soup of the midwest
trees and cicadas dripping with anticipation
of better when only more twisted
is on tap, I find the horizon
less level than fears and trophies
of last night's storm actions.

Her old house is still there
and lived in—

she does still
I think but walnuts and their
leaves litter the drive
and the wind continues
from when it started 30 years ago—

I turn in her driveway
pace myself past the rows of corn
and their seed signs.

If only the wind
would think
to do something different
with those leaves
those nuts.

Of The Road

this morning turkeys
crossed in front of me

the hazed sky shone toxic orange
reflecting on the crumbled road

their red heads shook
from side to side trying to see me

their heads mocked
the sky my car ripped

to a stop I was changing
stations in the air

music orange air
cedar scent and the shaking

heads of turkeys revealing
a taste for life on the other side

105 Hugging Midnight

Monticello's sprayed on the sky
the horizon runs to a clipped edge and one
quick flash links
a line of bugs and deer away from my
car ticking back to quiet. The "welcome"
light in red stops my entry and the Milky Ways
wait more.

A row of signs stands ready
for mowing, colored as brightly
as the fashion sun. I raise my arms,
I sing sour tones and log
my lament, I get ready
to back my car out.

Only Different

She is just a girl and her
stature is just
short of my type—

her flipping hair and Swiss
glasses, her slip glances,
her her, as the sex-men

would say. He hair frozen
in spray makes the moment
lengthen. I do.

This is what I would
say just to try it, try
her. Oliver—the name

on her shirt, traveling
informally to the same
place as me, only different.

Without Meaning, Without Feeling: A Foreign Song

high-beat music
the small room foreign
human but human

behind the French doors' reflections
a hail of German lights making up

the lingo of not here
not now but the colors

pine white paint white pile
piano black black & white keys
and the skin-colored skin

of my host frowning
as his wife passes between
us on her way to her bed

her own concept of together
in which her mother's foreign touch
is transmitted with an accent

to the light hair and tender
skin of her lovers
her tormentors
me

Bad Museum Filled Without Us

in sight
beyond range
over our bodies
under flags flying in remembrance
near a sketch as real as an Impressionist painting
at a time when depression hugged the trunks
by a pond falling off its rocker and not
into itself
within my desires the desire of no other desires filled me
up and we left
without a trace of affection satisfied
with what was
until we were safely back to square one and moving
on

Legacy of Goodbyes

One more goodbye can't hurt
when all the others were simple
passers by. The canal seems to flow
both ways with the inside coming toward me
and the outside pushing leaves farther back.

Did you seem, really, to be sad this time,
when we had nothing in common again
as we didn't for all our lives till then
and all our lives from now on.

Absolute Girl

she's the panther haunting her stage
throwing her hair front to back
side and over her rhythm meandering
through her hips and past the stage
monitors to the dancers on her
she rolls her eyes and her foreign tongue
swallows her appeals the lights behind
her glare through her her shadow
hides my lumbering stare her stage
her bed her ferocious teeth cutting off
her smile her hips draining she prowls
predator killer soul singer

Two Maps Made from One Thought

The map of her is exhausted
since every stash of her has been taken down
to bare minimum and her long stride
has been reduced to a little skip
and unlucky backward glance.

The harbor nearby feels like shedding
its cargo carriers and fishing fleet. Standing by
the bells in the city-hall tower the harbor
is a skin of calm water funneling in from the North Sea
and bells ringing mean the fleet is in and time
is making us over.

Since she is the map I am
the wanderer forced to nap
until a road resumes.

Face the water and bless you forgiven boats
tonight.

How Women Make It

They stand like sponges
soaking up cobblestones and dreaming
of home and statues and buttered food,
the walk home in which women lead
and speak of how they rule. The speed
of coming to the same conclusions
and the politics of positives.

I'm here and she's
watching the line of waves colliding
as they roll from opposite seas.

Our train is leaving
and my hosts are crying
to think of the weight rails
bear and the sounds they heard

when the lives of artists
whisk away and shelter
the mighty thoughts
that aren't said.

She Attracts Too Much

Across the straight
Sweden grows impatient, ferries
toil across cross currents and heavy seas.
Nearby

a train hauls fish down to markets
where it roils in its own essence
and artists armed with hope
hope the unsaid will hold its own. Like
life, the lights of Sweden are unsure

how to light the beacon to herself,
and we stand beneath beeches
holding on to canvases representing
our toils today in which the sparse

lights we see nearby are our only bastion
in a sea of twinklers that can't help signifying
so much.

Abstract Sitting Room

The conversation turns
on essence and we can speak
only of similarities since the realities

are fearsome. That is, the lights in our room
are heavy with reflections and light from the sparkling

incandescents lavishly slaving away to make
plain what can't be made clear, and outside
the dark is lingering, making what it can cold.

Her mantra is about worry and concern—
she sits demurely, the essence of sexual
indifference. Her life undercuts like the window

that blows open and rejects the implication of reflection
her eyes demand of the night.

Citation in an Airport Lounge Waiting

And so
cars mingling with trucks on the interstate,
flying past the airport, on their ways

to cloudy day destinations
and so

women,
who always expect more,
expect satisfaction from their

tours of duty beneath blankets. Who
hit the blur command? —The skies could
have been striped with long clouds

on blue but is uniform blue
and a dark streak across the middle.

I'll pass over many small towns
today while women there blur their hopes

into their lives. Like dogs sniffing
for a key clue
they will go on
and so
on.

Insulin Over Sunrising

...for no other girl

I wander the cliff edge

the sky is pea-souped at dawn
cold and intangible

colors of another country
across the strait...

cold crabs down the roof
heavy with stones and studs
to keep on shelter

few don't fear death...

they are destined to follow
....along

I amble

a flitty funny bird hops onto a branch which
bends...

summer has ended once more

clouds have piled up somewhere
ready to tumble out as from a closet

shut quick to avoid the care
packing requires

she is ravaged...

You Know It's Love When...

it was last friday night
my husbands friend came over to see him i will call him johnny
i have the hotts for johnny i saw him pissing

one day out our window he has a big dick
and i told ' i saw his dick one day
then he ask me if i wanted to see his dick upclose i said yes

he unzipped his pants and pulled it out
it was not hard yet but it was bigger than my husbands i got hold of it it was thick
my husbands is small about 5" but it is the only ' i ever had

johnny was close to 10" twice the size of my husban
i stared to suck it it was hard now i licked up and down and suck' on it
i pulled my close off he started eating my pussy i cum right then

i layed back he got on top of me i told him go slow it was big dam it felt good
johnny pushed in i had to stop him and relax

johnny told me to get on top i sat on his big dick and worked it in we fucked
for 30 min he told me he was going to cum i pushed down hard
it felt like a water hose cumming out

i got up cum was running down my leg
we kissed he went back home

How Many Tears Drop?

The bartender pulls slowly on the tap
and holds it still

while he tilts the glass the right way
for foam to form
in the right proportion. Outside

deep in the city
the lights spangle off rain coming down
blue in the night. Taxis

slow down
wait for fares but there are none.

The waitress takes the glass
to a table where a man sits
who needs it more

and is willing to wait for time
to catch up.

They Say the Back of the Mind Really Knows

Sitting on a table in a bar
north near the Baltic
bubbles form in a glass
of yellow and brown beer
and rise to the top
forming a blanket
of foam. But the man

who needs it most has stepped
outside in the constant dark
to watch a ship roil and lumber
into the harbor where at least it
will find comfort tonight.

Ars Failure

While she cooks heavy potatoes
in a honey broth and pork roast
in the oven in her upstairs apartment
for her son and live-in lover
I'm on a bench in their garden
sketching a poem from memory

because she has turned it off,
the artist's link of mistress and poet
and the only hope for greatness
he will ever have.

God bless the home,
what it means.

Ars Failure II

She's finished preparing her special meal,
we've eaten and cleared the table,
she's said her goodbyes and has turned back
into her warm kitchen,
and I'm on my way to the train station
where there are no more goodbyes,
no more things to write.

End/Longing

when you walked ahead of me
it meant nothing

the paintings you stood
in front of were shapes of paint
artificial light absurd ideas

about the origins of reality
the waiters would not wait
we walked away

behind us a pool's sides
were inverted

were no sides at all
I didn't touch you
we felt nothing

the garden is passion
fetching the end
from eager autumn

?

the warmth that day was disarming a row of people
lined the front of a yellow building
sunning themselves facing West late

in the afternoon when we might have held forth
on love etc but the curiously staged
painting of Henri Toulouse-Lautrec

made your pants unattractive
and the heat of the sun on the museum's walls

was like a Japanese girl just out
of her kimono anyhow you were
glad I left right

on time in the car for the train to the airport
morning during which I did not grab
at you the rain outside was storm-

troopers boots on cobblestones
the resistance to history is weakened
by repetition and like a muse

who knows she's been fallen for
you wore bad pants do you wish
it were different

Painting Gazing

I long for before
when we stood before

paintings like wisps
like us

and radiant sun flooded the air with heat
making the day warm
shadows lingering

a need for cool drinks
or ice

you supplied the longing
giving it to me
your share and mine both

I burned out on it
I long for before

paintings made in innocence
given distracting names
we walk streets filled with a history of hatred

paraded as honor and patriotism
yet the sandy yellow walls
are lined with living

warming in the late sun of early autumn
as we walk briskly away from nothing
to a further nothing

defined by absence

Places of Meeting and Crossroads

the slope down to the strait
is slick with dew on the browning grass

she walks to me her eyes green
and around her eyes her makeup is green

magpies throng from beech to cedar
cargo boats and barges buck the current

how many are not afraid of death
how many wring their hands each night of guilt
there is no warming sun here

just the thrusts of full boats
the throng the green eyes
she carefully has put
on

Sold Two Souls

song in the key of master
unused as it is

to the soul of sold
fill mine with cups of habit
fling your legs over complaints

of insufficiency link
locks into a chain
hook them hook them

let's imagine what can be seen
and see the rest flame the smiley

facing East be as nil
we look into it as stars cross overhead
and the possibility of possibility compounds
our daily bread

God Don't See

the poet writes to me
in blank stares and waving hair and arms
and the feeble-minded among us waver

expecting the linear
formulae at least with predictability
but they've known it for years

that what's right is made up
making good time on its way

elsewhere where where
leaves fall is as sullen
as where we grow up

and the crumbling wall
is proof enough the even God
didn't see it coming

Stopping Everywhere, Making Plain

the sound, stopping,
of stopping—rich in organic
overtones on top of
the inevitable scream, ha!

and the echoes, repeating
like tumbling glass splinters
from street to street taking 5
or 6 directions to us

you rolled away from me,
your nails in the quilt and blankets
peevd at my little touches,
my tries to arouse

we settled in to follow
the sounds channeled through the hollows
in the city around us, with bleeds
upward into the city-made heat clouds
above lit a dainty pastel orange

I'll wait till approaching dawn
lightens the greyed sky to leave,
to find a train traveling slow
to the North, stopping everywhere

stopping: an idea
I got from you

Inner, Far Outer

the windows which
in daylight prism the garden
into the room at night form
an encircling mirror
showing us and us and us and us

talking while foreign birds choose their night
spots as carefully as we choose words
where

you are limited by your known
vocabulary and I by fear
of being not understood or mis-. . .

we fear our intricate lips
how what savors touch
is ugly in its convolution

outside the strange hot wind
blows all fall erasing Winter for now
I see you you see me
and the mirroring window glass
sees all inside and out our foreign

words our fear how we convolve
like foreign birds seeking shelter
by becoming the leaves
by standing like branches
all night

Rational Street

the streets
dark, covered with the remainders
of a light rainstorm

wind coming 'round a corner
and splitting up three streets
you walk

by my side thinking
rationally about the evening
or the meal we just had

how the darkness
is nothing but an absence
—

the first world had no shade
no dark; like a hand
the dark reached out and held onto the light

—
leaves blown off two streets
up whisk by

our hands are less savvy

Your Door & Me

behind that door
you sleep

lover and son in and by your bed
far off lights barely light your room

you are freezing as usual
no one warms you so you
shiver instead of

dream

I'm outside your door
when the rain starts
and suddenly I'm unsure

of who is inside who outside
when a noise knows
I move back to my bed

a child's not a man's

Paid To Have Bad Dreams

we would be driving
now down South
along 95 in a forbidding heat

haze and humidity rising
I'd be eating quickly at lunch

walking to dinners and writing slowly
each night from one place like a hell
to another

she would tell the same stories—
Chauncy Pugh, Ethel Moon

and names I wish I had tried to remember

the South is decay
even the new seems on the verge

pumping gas and it's hot
washing the windows and it's hot
helping her in and out of the motel and it's hot
getting ice for her room and it's hot
driving even when I'm about to sleep and it's hot

what would we find and it's hot

had I not called
she'd still be up North in her home

on the floor I would be afraid to go in
I guess we would call some expert

someone whose job is to not care
much someone who is paid
to have bad dreams

Give Chance a Chance

I pray for chance
to intervene

encrypt logic beyond my ken
put salt on the wound of reason

like a leaf falling slowly
 twistingly
 convolutingly
 lovingly
to ground gold with dead grass

make mine numb
 my mind
the chance here is chance

the logic of careless illumination through the depths of a tree of leaves
 we don't know where to look
 and that is how we find
 divergence
 delirium
 drainage

the cold is seeping up mixing with chance
the chores are no longer here to be done
they never got to see me in my home

if only I could mow the lawn for her
once more before the snow comes and comes
and stays

Would Be . . .

. . . blown by looming winds
fall to the ground scraping into the tangle
of peonies

. . . early,
sealed all . . . drained
. . . and . . .
remaining . . . to evaporate
my mistakes

. . . with her once more
. . . questions I need . . .
. . . down and ask her . . .
. . . death and what she thought, . . .
. . . hurt, how afraid

if only I . . . once more
and ask her how well she thought . . .
and clean . . . to make it easier
and sharpen . . . a better . . .
and tell her how I plan

a road I know would
be easier

Long Enough

She lived down dirt roads
most of her life, on a place
that needed mowing every week or two,
no closer than 10 miles to a grocery store
and where mail carriers wouldn't deliver.
She put up fences and gates that anyone
could defeat, and lived in cabins whose maintenance
stopped years earlier. She hoped
that everything would hold up long enough,
that the food would last long enough,
that nothing would break before the right time.
She feared lightning every day of her life,
and something like it struck her.

She told me every day I saw her
how much suffering she endured
and what ailments she had.
She liked to laugh, but I wonder,
what did she want me to remember?

Little One

each of us partakes partially
our gifts are small like the corner
of a swarm of sardines

we hug the wall
pick up small branches

moving here and there
we spell out a great message
we don't know

who loads it?
who hastens away with a still-wet pen?
is it scraped or is the ink liquid?

how does the pixel
knowing it's wrong
change the big picture?

how does the word
alone
make truth?

Fickle Findings

the way paint sticks and forms wrinkles
changing the painting over time from fresh
relief to carbon copies of aging

the way when you look out over a Bay view
after a long bike climb and realize only
the rich can sit in their living rooms
sipping martinis watching it

the way a woman twirls a brush
over a window looking for fingerprints
while bending in her tight pants

the way a horse will blow its nostrils out
when you bike by
and a fat woman wearing jodhpurs
and a British riding helmet
turns her head toward you
rocking her hips

the way the rich can afford
buckets of cream while
we fortify on creamer

the way they fall
on their heads
helmets
or no

Do Not Quote or Cite

not knowing where to sit
I take a stand
pilings pile up pile on

wooden bridgings rot
footsteps carefully alight

these are the sorts
(of)
fish fishermen sort

basking briskly
the coed sheds her thong

enumerated as follows
assumptions are out of date
[might be]

the ecology of computing resources
is running out of legacy
built on a bespoke basis

sand squashed by
cars cars cars and more cars
sure is fine

Adventures in Art

sitting on the side of a hill next to writing
the girl nothing more than a muse
the ants really only a little love nip
the hands clammy fearing any touches
the day's air hot and fetid with river air
the road curving then as it does now
the ruined house where Roy Starr died
 one night drunk and out of love
the underlying lover nothing but a pot
the clouds growing angry then draining to tears
the little things left out like a feeling or two

[I'm struck she was nothing but a muse,
and to this day—but not beyond—I thought
the possible included her. Her personality
was nothing.]

Together for mere hours
we talked sparingly
but she seemed amused
in the end.

You Figure

Her belief was that money motivated me,
that to come across country to help her
I needed \$10,000, and I would help her
find a new car. Hers had stopped starting
and she was waiting by the phone for me to call.

She had never called me about it.

She hadn't been shopping for food
—not much was left.
She never told the neighbors, who watched
her shrink down. 87, still stubborn.

Did her mother ever wonder
whether she'd reach such an age?
The last 5 years of her life were hell.

She had never called me about it.
Hers had stopped running.

Imagine a son who needed
\$10,000 to come. Come
to save her.

Along the River, Watching a Hole Heal

The hole is beleaguered, aching to heal;
the charge from the sun is dwindling,
the beech is losing its wits while shade
predominates. All they had done was cut

a square of sod to find the dirt
where they'd put the hole whose healing
is all I would ever be able to watch,
or really just those photos we took
when the next day seemed too small a reason
to capture today. But 30 years, ah,

there's a reason. Now a fog is settling in,
the valley doing its river thing. Last week I stepped
out onto a floating pier on the river
and though children were secure

the old man who I am become
who is still afraid to mourn.

Would They Approve?

Cold air and leaves turning up the heat,
the sky smudged with clouds heaping in
from the West looks deathlike, and I wonder
how they're taking it. I get the cold air pouring in
through my car window watching the beech
hold its frog-green colors while the birches and maples
go hog wild across the little valley.

Today all the run downs were lined up,
checked out, and cried over. Cold, raw.
The day's long tear has dried up,
leaving a sky of stains.

Urban Vision

Piles of bricks
becoming covered in light snow
in late October—a woman
in a long red coat walking away,
her light hair dusting her collar.

Airport Art Lesson

leaving again—planes silver and the colors of patriotism—
the low sun dully, softly
yellow on the tower columns—
on Haymarket there's still straw
and onions being unloaded
paints a scene with bagged
yellow and orange onions
and somewhere in back meat—beef
—being hung in freezers for an early
market tomorrow—when I was young—
40 years ago—my mother bought
20 pounds of prime steaks
here—half-price or less off choice
and they read in the morning
of the hotel theft of hotel beef—
for farm people the idea—no, the taste—
of hotel beef was a treat—a gift
—a jewel—a lucky break—
good for us—bad for the hotel
guests—staying nearby near Beacon
Hill—the sun there red on the bricks
—the sun yellow here
on the concrete columns—and
the strange excursion
of holding up

Sadness Explained Instead

picnic tables piled
one face down on another
lined in rows beside the burger stand

everyone who's come before
me has left before now
beyond the kind of cold

days like today
bring whether the covering
is soil or soiled clouds

pushing downriver to the heartless
sea tonight I write this
in the face of needs

I hope you'll fill
one day before I need
to go you'll caress my head

as I lay in the darkness
barely holding on and above
us the clouds will skirt by

critical restlessness
less tenderness
someday—not today—someday

Under Celebration Her Birthday

passed on passed
by passing fancy past

did she hang on or
was she surprised

what thought at last
gripped her

the grass that grew and grew
whose was it and how'd it get here

they cut down that tree
how do I tell her

her father's proud day
dusted off and reclaimed

they could be together
they are nowhere to be found

when I go to sit by her
where O where do I go?

Complicating Around

small nicks
all around the trunk

axe swung down
 in
a flat one to cut out a wedge

all around
no place for whole bark

in a year or two it will die
thick one makes fire wood

thin one a good pole
he made a plan

I did not see
till I saw the gate pole bend

with that weight on its end
to make the lift light

and I saw he thought
two steps in front

straight not round
not like me not complicated

Fragrance

Hang Ah Alley's north end
filled with pigeons roosting and preening
on sills next to hanging shirts and panties,
birds that made their nests on the sills
of closed off windows, lime-stained bricks,
clothes drying while wind stirs down
up past the eaves into the heavenly sky
that once held on to the perfumed air
that rose up once long before this alley
was the backside of places where people
just live.

Dreaming of Aspen

her voice circles like leaves
blowing across the long black road
her car on its side raging beneath
the darkened sky in the rain

alone as if in a golden pavilion
reserved for white
her voice deep and melodic
moving without thought between
melody and harmony

whether its the death of love
or a real death that intertwines
with the song for today

slick road on a winter's day
in the rain

Tears So In My Eyes

the use of poetry
for poets

is to mask sentiment

like the septic
treatment tank

shallowly underground
doming over
gassy

heated unrelentingly
by a constant overhead

sun in the rain
we revert to prose
like a bad reaction to milk

a woman I didn't know
died
on a road

on a winter's day
in the rain

and now her voice
like leaves on that long black road

makes its case
and now I need
my poetry

injected
reflected
gassy

Much Rain in Foreign Cities

rain all day
forces your constant sadness

we contemplate diagnosis
I go to your walls your

ceiling concrete
heavy/rain makes

no differences my home
is wood/rain turns it to a sound

of music
of loneliness

smells from old books
my bed beckons

I look
out longingly without restlessness

you look full
from a day at home

let's walk drenched
enrained

rage for
tenderness

Too Far Away From Living To Turn It Down

slo-mo
smoothing out the rages of jerkiness

death of the singer a decade ago
I just met her singing today and now I must mourn

I won't confuse the process with the product
she lived full and not just this song
I can't untangle

the sound of it bounds out from my young days
and like a long-dead photo that you fall for

you remember
how long did this song wait for me
did she despair when the headlights grew deathfully bright

her voice so relaxed like the times she sang
will I go to her or simply

find the next most mournful girl
standing in the rain

Parrot Bite & Other Mistakes

scars still alive on my skin
lesson: copy flaws carefully
life found within

Significant Slum Sights

above a sidewalk where homeless hold themselves
erect and hang their heads to ask and beg
the row of offices shines out yellow
onto the rain reflecting sidewalk where lights
from passing buses sweep along past empty
trash cans holding sheets discarded
and more important even in their thrown-awayness
than the homeless hoping for the least
bit of sun

In (Ter) Vention

invented years ago sex
is still not worked out
unlike normal science of successful descriptions
our experimentalists don't move on
suffering of assumption
details are unbelieved
so new theories are invented
but they are just
the same old ones with better pictures
let's lean
let's learn
let's let our little ones persuade us to move aside
on along
God is rubbing His legs
like a pain
like an invitation

Clustered Leftovers

every street has its load of beauty
selective distortion provides art
to the beauty of a city in the distance
every town has its woman of beauty
who really is simply a girl with great power
let's forget the folly and follow on
and know she'll one day be like a death
with no sampled power

porcelain sky and black underside
wind providing cleansing and movement
cars stretch out up the least steep path to the ridge
and pour down the other side appearing
going up once more

there is something about darkness
the beauty who leans against a streetlight
the fun she has
the heat it all makes

Conditions

I sit in the cold
windows down
listening to the radio lilting soft versions of hard rock
while spotlights triggered by motion
or office doors spring off then drift off

it has started to snow
I wait for her to return
her therapist is a professional

I think of snow falling into the ocean
the sand on the beach is collecting it
tomorrow we will shovel half the morning

the songs are cold
they speak of going away
of growing old
but the snow returns even after
the hottest summer
it is love I speak of
in a voice absorbed by the layer of snow

A Fine Fetish

she stands exotically
on point in stiletto boots
that cover to her knees

she wears a black body stocking
mostly transparent but most of her back
is covered by her black hair

she picks a cactus needle
from her left palm
standing on a trail in
Cochise Stronghold
I'm sure she's hot
but in black and white

she seems cold bent
at the waist as if ready
for someone to come
along at any moment

For She Is Beautiful and I Am Dead

like The Boss
a girl from my past
unattainable unapproachable
in fact so perfect no one talks to her
any beautiful woman set off in a skirt
her hips tipped forward
her tummy and rump rounded and pushing forward and back
her breasts cradled in a furry sweater
informs me through her existence
that my time is long past
and the cold cold ground
is closer than I want
to think and she is further, farther
than I can stand

It's False (in LA)—Just a Scene

a third floor apartment
with a balcony
behind the tropical fish store
on a sun-blasted thoroughfare
in LA—cars like the one I'm in
pass by or stop for traffic and drivers or passengers
look up at the window where someone might be sitting

—if I ran and hid in that apartment,
would they find me?

I imagine sitting there
at the window
writing a poem like this one
while thinking about the tropical fish
in their warmed salt water
their colors like the bright sun in my eyes
rolling down Sunset at sunset

except for the fear some woman I finally had
the nerve to leave would spot me writing
while stopped behind a minivan on her way
to a modeling session

I can't find a lesson in this scene
worth my telling nor your knowing

Watching Ahead

is it fair
when we drink sodas and fuck
while the dead lie below?

when we hide behind the memorials erected
by their kin to show in death
they love them?

when we laugh at what we make up
as their stories though we know nothing?

when their names scare us
by being anagrams of ours?

Sleet Storm/Woods/River

snow is becoming sleet
instead of heavy snow weighing down boughs
ice is cutting them off and they drop heavily

the house sits alone among the pines
dawn is hours away

in it memories dissipate
and mature as time stands ready
to take over

miles away by the river
the ground freezes down to a foot or two

what we hid there for safekeeping
is growing anxious as the sleet falls
and ices over the damaged sod
cut square and replaced last Summer

nearby
cars drive by unaware
of my thin thoughts
and the meanings that hover above

Hover Therefore

the ones who never leave
hover like snowflakes above common ground
and because they never leave
they have seen have seen
see see will see will see

snowflakes
they say
float upward near ground
early in a snowfall

retained heat
energy released

entanglement
they say
is two flakes
curling and twisting
together far apart
into the valley
into the river
passing far away

the ones who never leave
see it all
and thereby see nothing
their logic caught
on the briars of therefore

Sandy Spot

in it they are laughing
and presumably I took it

it's one of only a few I have of them
they're standing in front of the Florida camp

I need to dispose of

filled with things of their's I need to decide about
for years she lived holding her breath
hoping she'd live less long than the things she depended on
but a long time anyway

now it's my problem
and how not to pass it on

the answer:
this picture & not the urns



they walked into line
fighting to find the worst
the man on the phone had forgotten to listen
so he sat silently instead his hand fisted propping up
his head soon they were all pumped out
and even the blindfolded told us they felt
they could see the hearing

did you hear?
∞ is a perfect copy
machine

Confusion #1

hall of umbrellas
sprouted off the tops of leaf trees
something uncommon about rain
liquefying celebrations

our delight is simplified
by shouting and throat-clearing

I suppose the rain
and snow and wind and sun and clouds and many temperatures
still happen

but being far away
is the same as being
dead

Lie of Master Planning

important are the reflections in puddles
right after rain in the streets of a city
that photographs blue at night after rain

photographs of nudes emphasizing
the exaggerated differences

a heavy meal laced with diary fats
and fat from pigs eaten while sitting
on a stool facing a mirror facing the wet street

I see a photo that looks like it could look like
her nude but it's only a guess made up of hope
and the lingering quake of disappointments

the parts of me I care about most have ended
their slow failing and writing about it
is all that's left

I've planned a scarecrow
and this is its plan how do
you like it?

Write It

by the beach of college men
and women the contest spits
onward and the final three contestants
have stripped and run and slide
on their backs on a Wham-O
Slip'n Slide with their legs spread
and their shaved cunts open 'n' showin'
lips the winner will be the one who
squats over the hunking judge
laid out on his back and lets him lick
and stare at her cunt and asshole
while the crowd witnesses the expansion
of her nipples

old I can only
write it

Plenty To Do

picking up
nothing much to see
weeds when the body might react
it watches waits turns in to silence

sand turned to dust
not death I mean from cars and trucks
dogs running the road

weeds go on
life is infestation
one meaning as meaning
as another

I've heard the hint
I heard it

Cleaning Out

we've waited rewarded with burrs
ants yellow jackets wasps palmetto bugs
crickets sounding smaller more metallic

we've left the door open
while we searched
we commented

in the end
she anticipated Fraser
Will & Grace political news
she said she would not be back
we found her notes her candy wrappers

we wondered what her father saw
since he declared it special

ordinarily
I would agree

Ann Manns at 85 on the Road

“oh, she died—really?—when did she die?”
85 but walking fast down the sand-dusty road
“will you sell the place?”

dust & pulverized grass & weeds flavor the sun
setting behind the cedars
I've just photographed without care for the lens

“oh, she died—really?—when did she die?”
my mother said listening to her convinced
you you were nuts too
repeating saying over you
can see the familiar pathways

after 4 of the same conversation
—most relaxing—
the sun was ready to set once more
and like weeds being cut down

progress was made
“will you sell the place?”

the bear

paces the fence from left to right
he places his right front paw and lifts his left as if to move
and stops he steps his rear paws out of the rut
right rear first then left rear halfway between his rears
and right front his left front goes down back in the rut
then his right then a rest the bear

paces to the right and stops and reverses the same way
left and right reversed
a dance 500 lbs in rhythm
deep enough to cut a trench he walks in
and foot rests where his turn takes hold

the bear
steps into those prints as precisely as machinery
which only the sound of his keepers
and mate can interrupt
the precision of psychosis as deep and human
as ours

Stave Church News

somewhere a church lies quietly on the shoulder
of a ridge and its staves creak sweetly in the wind
light enough to disturb only the thistles growing silent
by the church

someone always sits on a plank seat
talking in rhymes to a porcelain platter
and cup filled with bless'd water
from the glacial torrent in the valley

somehow I've found this place
bring disgrace by writing its daily secret
though my page lifts time after time from a breeze through its cracks
where the master sneaks in

something has been born which must come here
slowly by a diverse path with urgent news for wary
parishioners and preachers
alike in their doubt

Three Colors and Different Technologies

click on me to see more
take a checksum
so that I might know when I change
don't worry about the lost time
because we've backed up our state and status
everything about us is kept offsite
on a variety of media powered by different
power sources and technologies

I've chosen three colors
which are kept as separate as possible:
black for our feet on the ground
green for artificial assemblages
marble pink for us baby
for us

Phenomillogical

throw yourself off yourself
step back from common sense

and the need for explanation
bracket the bracket to sense it

in the state of mind of unfreedom
mud and mouth converge anagrammatically

what seems the cloud is really the smoke
what was beauty is death's marker

our breath freezes
our words freeze

one is whiteness in squirrelly strands
the other is blackness blanketing virgin colors

all thought this predicament predicts
is frozen and life the heat hurts back

With a Courtyard Left Unused

kerosene smoke
waving out of a glass bottle
curved warm as the nighttime of women

her intent spinning
her skirt shimmering where it's been worn to sheer

I find the collapse of tonight's weather
further removed each time I reach
to her shoulder her ears

her back the door hanging on its way to closing
there is something dark in her
on her I'm frightened of the weather

which closes in just
as I wish to clear out

Airport Surround

I'm surrounded by airport
in this high-priced hotel
terminals curving . . .

planes taxi along dark lanes
and wait . . . move forward . . . wait again

structures supporting airport activities
form a machine matrix
light tunnels
spinning lights where something special
or surreptitious is happening

up they go
their tails are lit
people walking through halls out to their planes

it's cold out there
cold as hell
and when I turn to walk away

her plane is banking toward the horizon
and I go downtown

Failure of Love Where It's Crowded, Antiseptic

in the lit halls
women stroll past
quick & deliberate annoying their men
with the effects of their passage
on the structure of their carriage

the lights fail
for a second & then again
the police dog drops his head as if to sleep
in these two scraps of dark

in the hall by my gate
actually in the waiting lounge by the door
a woman with legs too smooth
draws a seam down the backs of her legs
with a discarded Sharpie left by an earlier passenger

with the small lights of mid-Western towns below us
our jet makes a sound that would wake the recently buried
if only that sound could penetrate what we call
the cold distance

What of Their's

something has fallen
the sea closes over
like darkness is love
ignorance is the decor of longing
there are ways to play and they are opening up now

I was startled to remember my parents were just buried
and because they were burned to ash and powder
the grave is shallow
and if being dead won't hinder them feeling the cold as the sleet and snow rain down
why should their being dust?

though my love for them is strong
what of their's?

Dog Alone

along the lineup of telephone poles
each less crisp than the one before it

a dog with his tongue hanging to one side of his mouth
lopes along the desert road
no one's near

no owner no master
a dry river bed two miles back was the last wet
and the dog doesn't know it but the next is 20 miles ahead

but he suspects it
it's the sounds of the wind in the creosote bushes
the lightness of that wind and the depth of its dryness
the way nothing is truly green nor red

but the shade of gray that means yellow and blue
his goal is to find
but there are no details for it
he feels the eyes around him watching

from under cover
just behind rocks
peeking from burrows
from the tops of prickly trees
from a great distance
that dogs cannot sense

Walk Watching

despite a scratching wind
a man walks his dog by the light thrown up from the snow
responding to the moon responding to the sun

the dog's leash is long and he's a pulling dog
leading the man by pulling him ahead
snow scratched off the top of banks closes his eyes

the man pulls back on the leash to turn them left
down the road out to the river

the dog resists but suddenly fires
past the man and pulls him forward

lead
says the man

Peep

slo-mo sensuous slouch
dipping walk lowered hip
the walk of women invites peeps

look quickly and furtively
through an opening

be just visible
appear slowly or partly or through

a small opening

a quick or furtive or momentary or partial look
or view of black curls
of gold earring

neon lights seedy macs
tiptoeing feet spied through doorways

and gaps in curtains
very essence
of peep

Wing Commander Dead at 99

his skills as a pilot
came to public attention
when his first pupil pilot
—Lady Blanche—
asked him to co-pilot
an adventurous flight to visit her friend
the Maharajah of Cooch Behar

along the coast by way of Bushire
half way to Bandar Abbas
they made a forced landing

Lady Blanche if not herself accident-prone
had already lost two husbands

now she was marooned
in the wastes of Persia

they were rescued by tribesmen
and took off for Karachi

at Bandar Abbas on landing
the aircraft ran into a hole and tipped onto its nose

at considerable risk they flew on to Jask
where a new propeller was brought in from Karachi
aboard a KLM airliner

the remainder of their journey to India
was uneventful

High Atop Art

manifest your physicality
through sports and plastic surgery
exemplify and parody
concepts of fragmentation
nude imagery
obscene energy and inhuman
circumstances of everyday life
produced a document of city emotions
of desire and revulsion
fear and fascination
beds cots kitchen utensils are made
to appear threatening and strange
using materials that are both
emblematic and pertinent

Dwindling Numbers

the great tit is in decline
changing fortunes of many
monster trout
in cities like Mumbai and Pune
Siberian tigers shad
Christians in Israel
exhibitors and visitors
the dilemma of a fading people
members playing bowls
Shamrock Rovers fans
bookmakers
people on both sides
zoo frogs Cape vultures
mountain caribou Zoroastrians
harp seals Minnesota Moose
sage grouse Sci-Fi club adherents
canvasbacks parishioners in New Bedford
underrepresented minorities
giant pandas Sisters of Carmel

this all reminded me of the Cloud Dome
a studio-in-a-bag

diffusion fading out decreased passion
and rumors of folding

Anharmonics Are Key

the g string has plenty of depth
power and quality

saturated solutions of various salts
maintain constant humidity in enclosed spaces

clarity and how well it spoke
even at high speeds

a desirable evenness
a special quality high

wood is a rheological substance
the enhanced creep effect was linear

something very rounded and mature
power clarity and warmth

hugely more resonant
evenness immediacy and speaks clearly

peaks not at regular intervals
the wetting part of the cycle

a creamy tone
especially on the g string

Perfection Tax

it goes through my mind
her perfection those days

September when she left

she was lips and tongue
her wet was slick and sincere

now her smell in the closet and armoire
and what I know
another lonely day

her childish smile
her slut grin

her tongue
her thighs
her hands
her pussy

they were placed perfectly that day
her hand on my cock
her mind on him

red cars going down long roads
fade out slowly

of sentimentality

I know it's a bore having to get hold
of Chinese black vinegar and chilli bean sauce but it's
these ingredients that see off the cloying
glottally clotting gooeyness

A Room I Made

it started as a porch
screened in in Summer
covered by plywood otherwise
we slept in what would become
the kitchen and bathroom

it was walled in permanently
a living room
and bedroom a river stone fireplace
backing a gas furnace

in 1970 a woman called me to her bed
beside the fireplace
kissed me because I couldn't
her lips and mouth opened wide
I fell into that cavity
at first

take the first
double it
again
again again
again

that much longer

new rooms added
second story added
garage added
shed added
second well added
gate added

mother died there
one night she feared
I was far
the woman was far
when can I clean that room
sleep there again
beside the fireplace

Who Waits Tonight?

bright moon
behind a clamp of cloud
hot white powder
powder blue night sky

branch topknot
flinging up its peculiar brand
of passion

Lessons on Perspective

her laundry on lines stretched
from eaves to a cross
droop and parts of her
no doubt
evaporate up to a heavily clouded blue above
in the sleek silence the shock of air past feathers and wings
reveal the pillowed sound of the lives of birds

the wind picks up and her clothes billow
enveloping the shape she has taught them
and I can see her standing there in pieces
scolding me for my romantic laziness
and the sky for blooming in the unaccustomed
early summer

everywhere I choose
to look
a vanishing point forms

Small

in the old man standing
by the catwalk where a nude girl
kneels her perky tits plump for sucking
her vulva shaved
I see the despair of inability

Hip Lessons

I am part of the forgotten world
women who walk past dip lower

their hips accentuate the years I've lived
their silhouettes beneath their gauzy skirts
highlight separation

where their bodies curve outward
I retract

the remnant of my pleasure
is to watch as they walk away
never noticing

Poor Visuals and a Fade Out

hazed enfogged clouded
salt flats power towers telephone poles
pier posts ducks cormorants
floating debris
sky the color of the water the color of the haze
smoked hidden closed
we travel through the mist
or so it seems to us
seeking its edge which has smeared away

away is where someone heads
fading step by step
leaving her sharp shade
becoming a dessert of living

Prolegomena to Truth

unlike what it means what
it is is
unfaithful desert unlike
the crescent of beach
can survive drought and draft

the best is quixotic chivied
by keas on the mountainside
surely snowboarding
until tiled sky with faint cracks

a true word means little
the truest nothing
if s_1 is more true than s_2
and s_1 is false what of truth
what if I'm not sure about the 1

how does s_1 differ from the state it represents
how does the state respond to spilt gin

the desert is exactly like a beach
except for the slope and the unsalted water

you carry it with you

Harsh Like Spilt Milk

too many times
the easy thing
is better off scraped and split

what I mean is

the nice words are better off
cussed
or the sweet voice
cracked

suppose you roll your rrrrrrrs
cough each roll

you expect a warm bed
but there's a kid there
instead

the flat is cold
now
that the roller rolled on out down
the road

I think the road
once smooth as pulverized sand
is a rock
not rocky
a rock

Friendly Food Gone Awry

individual human product clientele
must rank swoosh rears
trouble is
seeking to reassess anambiguous message
Coca's mighty soon
greater highway speed bum
similarly Mac boughway spain's 30,000 burger a while

Americand posh
Ity That?
might make owners of the frademark among
the might make more sense

to tinker with it is nostalgia
for to a for
a more

Modern Art Lovers

we walked like confidantes down the boulevard
noticing dogs spinning before they poop
noticing each man and woman walking the other way
or leaning against the yellow museum sunning

later we toured a so-so museum
with a dozen good pictures
it seemed formal
or staged without our consent

we grabbed a table outside
when we were tired from talking
and we watched the fountain which was really just
a pool designed to overflow evenly
but no waiter came by

it occurred to me we should kiss
or at least touch but the mind
is a poor heart imitator
I liked the painting unfinished

of a woman in a chair watching
the uneven edge of paint right in front of her
next morning I left for another place
but we didn't seem to care

though the weather was warm
and the sun watched it all

The Score

maybe once

we would wake at 10 to prepare
after up till midnight
maybe the snow or high wind
had misaligned our antenna
we'd get up
on the roof to adjust our mast

we'd have a heavy breakfast
and at 11
the floats would come on
in black and white
maybe for snow we'd flip
from station to station to see the best ones
scramble to the bathroom for bands
or horses
we'd note the ones we wanted to see
order color film

that'd arrive in 4 months
now

we can go there
 watch HD color
 tape it
 digitize it
 put it on DVD
 download it off the net

I have a piece of the Berlin Wall
I have two rosettes from Rocks Village Bridge

I could have kissed her

maybe twice

Drive On

soon the door'll be
knocked on
it'll be time to see what wind blows by
the fragments
the high rain
art upon our foreheads
the taxi waits
and a driver with few teeth
or a hangover
his picture will look like a museum piece
his banter like psalms
or weeds pushing up
his smile will be yours
and I'll tell him
drive on
anyways
drive on

For Stone Is Stubborn

A Collection of Poems

Richard P. Gabriel

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Like a Long Story Piece

age of changes
words in rows plainer here
unsettled at the ends where nettles
grow where thought might time-out reading
standing by a big river
by the biggest river
and watching so many things when what I'd want
really
is to see the most common thing many times
you've walked away from me
but really
you've made me do the work
of it the walking

I made your house worth living in
stocked it
watched you
close the gate
the later keep
in touch
returned to the overrun nature
of it the walking
up like the same poles
your deepwell lingers
for stone is stubborn
and the friendliness of flying is foreign

I hugged a girl in my dreams
touched her the only
place I can

Gauze & Lace

fallen down the well
like an unsteady rabbit
splashed where dust should be
and launched upward rocketlike in spite
before the ice-creaming cold took hold
under cloudless skies

and dust from the lawnmower cutting no
pulverizing
through yellow grass
weeds & snakes
bugs & bugs
old newspapers

a quarter acre here
2 quarters there

cast down like leftovers

the electricity is off
between us
I mean someone officially
turned it off

A Walk

as if the canyon were lit
we wandered like its captive stream
down toward a settlement
once thriving but under the impression
it's a historical site its
low adobe walls forming floorplans
from one side to the other
and up the north canyon wall
by ladders and steps cut into the sandstone
where once lovers like us sat in the sun
watching lovers like us walk down the canyon
and away to where those who left this place
wandered without thinking
their goals were just wishes

Stop! What's That Sound?

imagine a guitar
an electric one

through an amp set up
for tremolo in which the voice
quivers and the guitar

player is bending the notes
in between Western ones

and imagine the throngs
of musicians who have died never

knowing what I just said means
though it's the best music Buffalo Springfield
ever did and the bending of strings

the finger pad on a string holding note
no one intended this is the impression

of music music leaves
once the wishes are over

Now Not

snow falling in pines
like a curtain
like gauze
like a partition ready for anything

woman in a leather coat
like a message
like judgment
like a crux of guesswork faceless and admirable

walking away
like a note of hopefulness
like rejection
like a retreat directly away toward a horizon whited out

her turn leftward
like a new way to look at it
like news
like a lover now ready for you

now not

Paralyzing Grace

the song told me that you were just
a wish you were just
a wish

rocking from painting to painting
the strands only the light sees
of your hair

I touch them we walk
the streets like they're perfect

we stood looking once
only fumes remain

in all the cities we mortgage
shamefulness for the chance to caress

the flamboyance of pudding
overwhelms the far corner endeavoring
a species of clarity in red late
afternoon lightning strikes

and the two revert to our previous
thinking the two of us revert

suppose you were just a wish
and I the wisher fume

the paralyzing grace of holding a live wire
under the electrifying sky tempts me
to linger under this song

My Dream

when the time comes
and I must go

will you try to save me
. . . or tell me you love me

which would mean more
ask yourself

there will be one else
and to whom would it mean

Not Your — Place

your apartment
you bought it for her
and it's big enough for two
for three were the need to have arisen

in the bedroom off your bedroom
the lights are restless thrashed by the shadows of branches
out of control tonight and the leavings of a rainstorm
in the winter of cold in her kitchen you both cooked

and made carbonated drinks from juice and a gas canister
behind the couch where her skin was your orienteering map
all one day magnets impossibly hug
the black metal fire-
place

just last week you stood
shirtless and drenching on the balcony
wind raiding the garden's peace
when you glimpsed someone

there! just there behind that leafless bush
headed from where she went
to another — not your — place

Hitch Hiker

as you walked past the dying bush
a sheet of wind lifted several leaves
flipping each a dozen times
in the time it took you to walk
out from behind one house
past the gap between
and behind the second
while on a balcony visible from there
he waited shirtless and rained upon
on the night you thought was cold
on a mission you thought represented progress

think of the leaves as a man getting in a car
that stopped to give him a ride
unexpectedly

Lunaria

behind the hedges
not much protection from the wind passing through it
none from the rain coming mostly down
you don't know who you are
know little more about where you're going
the hedge has few leaves left
you are pausing for no reason
and soon the moon will join you
and the hedge the garden the balcony but not you
will be lit

Bad Order

I went near big industry
found a giveaway street name
with me I carried

dark & warm clothes
lots of layers and maps
looking for a catch-out
do you know

the whole story?
where're they going
when's the power called for?
this is the way it is:

in open boxcars
on the rear platform of a grainer or hopper
between the wheels of piggybacked trailers
in the well behind cargo containers
on the second or third deck of empty auto carriers
in empty gondolas

bad order
stay off 'em
remember the wind
the sun the rail who warned you
of the bull coming by
you have your reasons
you carry them like freight

Some Fear

the beautiful and rich
are easily diagnosed
no need to linger over DSM-IV
not much need for pity
they wander on Gulf beaches at sunset
imagine the decor of their breakfast nooks
attendant to their needs to lie
on the beach and decipher a Southern bird's song
whose fear is specific
but no less irrational

for example the rich and the beautiful
all fear the approach of costumed characters
thinking perhaps
themselves in rags as poor
or toothless as ugly

in the end they realize
their fears are not irrational
by merely probable

Drinks and A Mathematical Thought

cafe afternoon
nothing-special dull late
afternoon light springing on me
outside at my usual table
cloudy enough outside to see inside
an older blonde her thin
legs up on her chair in denim
her hair a liquid sort of gold color
flowing like sandstone
polished as in a Botticelli
there's actually a glint

let's skip the complicated part
and focus on desire
confuse longing with temperature

the curve of expectations is a function
matching the luminosity I envision
later thinking of her hair through the glass
that time of day as she and I slide downslope
and since I go first I'm left behind

Rules of Conversation

golden birds flew up in the porcelain backdrop
of a hard winter day filled with sunshine
and the false warmth of direct sunlight
and a shaky hand held for a second too long
behind a blind of bushes an unintelligible whump
periodically untangles our lofty sentences
and a lower ethic grows rigid then relaxes
as the birds settle into brambles and branches
planned by simple rules and released into the world
to complicate our thinking by making it linear
we plan our stumbles so carefully
that real ones have the effect of lanolin on dry skin

I expected darkness not the honey of a warm wind
listening in as we closed in on a real meaning
near the end on our unsparkling conversation

Banshee—Wrong, Wrong, Wrong

I read the news around the world
connected like a banshee
to everything that's been typed in

it's not monkeys typing in Shakespeare
people do it

it's difficult to understand the need to explore
when the chances of something better are slim

these signals are not new and require no commitment
to philosophical underpinnings the constant being

flickering green lights and a frantic flip
flop from one thing to another

many have seen her as she goes wailing
and clapping her hands
the caoine is an imitation

I realize I've used the wrong word
banshee doesn't imply fast or quick

I learned this by being connected
like a banshee to everything

The Fate of the Dimwit

a window is a page
a page is a long long line
a line ends with a return
and maybe a line
 feed
when scientist venture into metaphor
they get lost like forests in woods
and trees next to trees

(don't get them started on trees)

Lament in Clarity

imagine night
sheet lightning venting across the tops of clouds
mountainsides cooling from warming days showing
a fresh green
after durations
a rumble going slowly deeper
like a footnote she has connected this to her childhood fear
of lightning coming through the window and spearing Jesus
over the mantle
she sits waits by the window
calmly for her death from weakness
alone as her father foretold her fate
would be while her heart fires from fear
of death by electrical burning
while the grass around her house grows on
while everything else seems normal

Artificial Implications Rust

cut the hay let it dry
rake it in windrows with a side delivery
airing the hay to dry it more
then a pickup baler to make bales
we used a rake like this

and before that sulkies that dragged the hay long distances
into crossways windrows that didn't dry out right
after a damp night

I learned the power trip mechanics slow
the connection between the foot pedal, dog clutch,
and teeth too complex to ignore
so I staggered the rows

life was a way to sweat
the tractor would slow down
and pop a little louder

there is simply no function
for a rake like this today
except as an ornament
in the weed patch
behind the barn

farming was sufficiently important
to support many an argument

By One

the barn
never painted and pure grey
hand-hewn framing and rough edge nails
the cellar is half dug and half raised
by the dirt from the digging
on three sides the back open
with hayrakes and mowers
and a couple wagons

this barn
is the center of my past
but has fallen away and everyone
who knows of it has died
it had two bigs doors
one at each end
and you could drive a wagon filled with bales
through it or a truck
sliding doors on rollers
with knot holes letting in the sun
letting out the deep sighs
I'd hoped to capture

Fireside-6

dirt roads hogging my thoughts
but all the dirt roads I know are sand
and sand rode over by trucks and cars is dust
the long deep spots full of rainfall water
fill me with fear for what lies hidden

dirt roads are old roads
and connect unwanted places
veer off of the already withdrawn
head off in the random direction
people living down them don't want
to be found be talked to be seen
they want to pass away in the dark
as if they never were
and that's where they think it ends

Potash and Pearlash

take one gallon of strong lye
add a half pound of shucks
cut up fine
let the shucks
boil in the lye

until they are reduced to shreds
then fish the shreds out
and put half a pound of crackling grease in
or six ounces of lard
and boil until it is sufficiently thick

to make soap
brandy and soap were mixed and applied
to the wounds on horses

soap was listed as an ingredient
to treat horses for urinary retention

my father told me importantly
to use soap to wash my eyes

I said
shucks you know what soap's made of?

Sense of Snow

Here's what I know of snow:

first the strange thing between cold and wet
when wind becomes hard

little pinches turning white from a backgrounded gray

next all is slantwise and whitening
sometimes it turns slow when the wind drops

the ground is softened then falls away
in some cases there is blue where the mind expects white
someone walking by packs their prints

later chimney ash and factory smoke dark flecks the snow
which is graying from sun melt and night freeze

snow again
the same cycle but now the footprints are gone
from sight

someone who cares is disturbed
and night and all the rest falls

January 23, 2003

In The Depths

it is beneath them
to lie under snow
it is beneath snow
that they lie

Alucky

the language exudes a protective toxin
to keep predators off
when pinned the stink's let loose
bricks too soft to insert into Dickey's wall
squirring along their length
eelly unforcepsable
pinning them down?????? no no

fear: meaning

Counter Flow

that river is still
doing its thing but now
two minds are no longer aware

totems—I need to plan more
of them and the places
to put them

my heart stopped
I think but my scream
woke it and now continuation

is mine
the only sorrow
when does burden end

she depended on him
to make the things others buy
he depended on himself to figure out how

they were like an act
that sometimes spun out
like the head of a cut-end wet mop head

twirling one way by its handle
and then the other way
that river is still

switching from ebb to flow
and that's when it freezes
like my heart does sometimes

Yelled Cut

in all those poems where
we stand part perhaps
in an underground garage
on a foreign street
in a park made oddly
of weeds and debris
and the possibility of possibility crosses separately
our minds
did the poet know that the ending he left out
your mind
on someone else and his favorite shot of you
from the back walking away was the one that happened
after the cameras stopped and mr director
the head filled with muses
yelled cut

She felt certain Hymen's prophecy would come to pass

famous names of mythology
ring from poetry we're forced to know
who cares

for their foibles
their exploits

can just a reference make us cry when someone merely turns around?

it's the classics man
they make me raise my stomach juice on high
is nothing better than that is new?

tall trees are pretty trees
old forests have many
saplings wither

geezers gyre
foppery embodies fibs

they and Eurydice
spied on Psyche

Eurydice?
I'm rid of her too

Misplaced Thoughts or Where They Belong

we languish like forgeries
hiding behind the real things
making the choice significant
the joy of torn colored paper
equals the honey scent of sap
from logs cut last year being trimmed to size
on a warm day in March
the amount of work we do after dark
make us the genius equivalents of DaVinci
who smeared paint in the name of realistic art
let's pity things like the consciousness
gone or wondering where thinking is
so much so that maybe there is nothing
like it at all

Leaf Sepia

the paradise I've made is lost
in the sepia of leaves frozen under thin ice
with the dark depth showing behind
below

if someone were down there
the folly of cool would unfurl and languish
like a woman unfolding her legs
and everything else

Computing Truth

the scene is open to interpretation
like whether 1 is yes or 0 is
like when truth hits does all turn true
or is false the final word?

Clicker of Writing

how he appears in writing
is unleavened by himself
he knows the fraud as well as the simple deceit word
three times he stood and twice he fell
before news of the pink stone interfered

yes something funny happened
when he looked for himself
like a channel surfer
he flipped before the plot
was laid bare in the extra second
the world needed

The Technical Community Got Together

is it possible my warm bed
is a cold stopping place
is home a place I'll never see

just go to
just long for
just return to

with long-range cameras
with a casual but hopeful interest
with unsteady hands hold high technology

you witness me passing away
you speculate my fate
you dismiss the notion of home

Thoughts Pending an Inquiry

simplicity of a hangdog
mercury begging to be
part of a measurement

finding is the hint of luck
followed by zeroing in
comprehension

we crave it

a clearing in the woods
is unsafe in the aftermath
all it takes now is a falling

she will never warm a bed again
won't wiggle
never fix a favorite meal
under pressure again

she has fallen out of a clearing sky
she has made a great sound

Oops Wrong Meat

they told her she won
and it felt soooo good
don't stop baby
yea baby ... that's it ... just like that

then they said they meant her tits
so sweet so perky

at least she could think about them

Something Like This

the poet flows down sidestreets and alleys
tipping trash cans a bit to see in
opening dumpsters
pushing garbage to the side but looking
at it too

drifting trash in the streets
attract his attention but he won't
look into their eyes
or speak directly to them

words aren't important when he's walking
when he's looking touching smelling

it's like lifting a weight up and hooking it into
its ready position and at night
he lets it loose to slowly fall to earth
pull a cord that spins a large flywheel
that converts the energy

into something like this

At All

what if there were no unknown
like no legs on a stool
like no earth beneath
like no rope to hold on to
like no air to refresh
like no party to flirt at
like no legs to wiggle
like no sex parts to unsettle
like no lightning lighting up the night

what if there were no unknown
is unknown is nothing
it'd be like
what if there were no nothing

at all

On Thoughts

nothing's as sweet as the fine light
the fine sweet fleeting light

I've found the key to marking
the time to walk finally
toward the dropping light
toward night

there seems to be land across the waters
and dark trees silhouetted to my eyes
and the sounds of furious surf
which roar for a time and fill the air with sound and wet
and then fall silent as if the sound will
never come back

At Tomales Bay

among sparse pines
tall with branches starting up high
with a direct sun coursing through the branches
and a reflected sun off the bay below us
her hair was brilliant black tinged
red and it flowed like the water of the Tomales River
into the bay sweetening it so the oysters
farmed there exposed their inner flavor
to the least ready palette

her back remained toward me
her hair changing with each movement
with each luscious breeze
I heard the soft padding of footsteps
and she turned to watch
but she never turned toward me
the thought of it like salt or bitter
or like the bile afterward

February 9, 2003

Properly Scared

—for Michele Wyrebek

we find it honestly
death has a savory halo

the fading-away kind
the take off your prosthetic leg to pass through security kind

tell me her story but end it with her address spelled right
give her the dignity of correctness when it's least needed

dust her seat before she sits the last time around
adjust her halo which has gone off cocked

I watched her once
take 10 minutes getting into a car

now the fleet horse awaits whose job is to whisk
away the weary and halt when our lesson

not hers
is over

February 10, 2003

Signing Off

—for Michele Wyrebek

she goes the long way
because the car makes it shorter
she arrives early to have more time to settle

because there is pain on top of pain
she removes the fake parts of herself
because fakery falls away so easily

she writes it down the bones
because language is like her narcotic
she injects it heavenly into her lines

Bell Hope

the bell's big
its sound is solid but brittle like bottle glass
I've stopped to ring it while the rest walk on
up a hill perhaps or down toward the river

the fog's heavy and they've all sunk into it
like cats into cotton

it's time to stop ringing the bell
the road is overgrown and the way less clear

my heart is slow
my breathing is occasional and shallow
it's cold here but I walk

toward the warmth skittering on ahead
and I feel closeness closing in
and hands reaching back

Coast to Coast

the cold has settled upon them
and snow has piled on top of that
what we worry about is uninformed
language has turned little
by little to ash and fragments

our great gods tell us of precision
but we doubt them because they speak of language
and we cannot tell whether to pray or laugh

the streetlight and palm
look the same and the sun behind the palm at noon
reminds me of the light at midnight
and what is the same is precisely different

the cold hangs on
things grow quiet
ice flows down the river and is lost at sea
the bridges hold up and our walks
across them resonate with the language
of precision applied to shades and shadows

Language Fire

let's learn the lingo
be outasight poets
hang the wet ones loose
coin new logisms of the realm
use idioms like idiots
suffer fool hardiness
wish ourselves a happy vacuuming spin
turn on a dime to dope

playing with language
playing with fire

The Me and You Thing

some areas are still closed
from over-dumping or saturation
the leaves are adjuncts
to rising winter

foster care from the dark side
beneath a sheath of ice leaves inhabit a mosaic

the people walking by
on their way to a wedding
hardly notice such patterns
for making those
of their own

Fitful

their masks

I mean their finery and made up -ness
or a special occasion above quotidian
or a totem a special vow a curiosity disguised as longing

when it's over and the band packs up
the masks are revealed as mere attitude
and something about the day is nothing

uncommon unfailing unintentional

Too Much Snow

the snow's piled high
but the extreme temperature
lightened it

it moves aside light beads of glass
it resists mounding
prefers to level out
seek depths

it spilled into my shoes
and melted away
the heat directed down onto my feet in the car
dried it before I felt cold or wet

I walked up to the snow covered house myself
and left an hour later someone else
the cost of the transformation
was my survival

Before Me

a floral setting in a vase
flowers with beautiful names to go
with their unnameable beauty
but wilting from inevitable death creeping
up their stems haggard drying out
and turning dark yellow brown
simple colors signaling the end of
or support for
life

except in the same vase
in the same setting
is a twig thought to be about
to bloom its buds are there
their brown is tinted by green and red
but its beauty remains
will endure such beauty is made of
something less flowery something
less disposed to show off
something less vital
more enduring

Winter Morning and Confession

the white is comfortably
covering a darker shade
snow piled sugarlike
confectioning trees hopeless but for this

my friend has confessed his secret
to me in words inept but heartfelt

not inept for a man
but for a poet
which he wishes to be as one of his arcs
his planned life a liability
as the list of things he has done
is ticked off one by one from the part
he thought was the future
but really is the now
which is all there is

Flame Tree

they plowed over my mother's grave
—my father's too, they share one—
to create a lane for people to reach a new one
and for the backhoe to dig through the frozen layer of earth
—they piled flowers on which froze within minutes—
looking from one angle my parents are resting comfortably
—despite their physicality which is ashes in urns in a vault underground—
looking from another a makeshift road has been plowed over them
and the cold—unbearable and cloistering—has converged here
the sound of ultracold snow particles on each other blown by a calm breeze
is unsettling to the warmth a heavy coat makes
—for the trees are in flames—
nearby other tombstones watch from times gone by
and share their cold welcomes like barley tea and oatmeal crackers
on winter day when someone decides to be buried under ice
—the road out is iced and the flames of love infect the trees

Happy Days

like now the ice in a flowing river breaks free of one bank
sends the snowy junk downstream that is
piled on the ice and not a few
lessons are learned by passersby on the riverwalk
concerned with the ears/eyes not their heads
—their heads but not the contents—

but they are afraid to speak
the ice breaking free is a message to the dead
who are buried in droves up the hill
recalling the day they bought their plots
which were sunny days warm days

Design Problem

we walked up the hill to the plot the caretaker pointed out
from her parents' which was in a low flat place and humble
this one was majestic and high with a linden tree just starting out nearby
the plot was a gap and the day was warm and luscious with a calm breeze
I was 13 and my mother seemed young standing over the "happy hunting grounds"
I asked about the headstone and she said that would be my problem
a problem I couldn't imagine then 40 years spurs the imagination
now I must design

Mythic Bards

sunlight lurking under a hem of clouds
lights the wheat waving on from edge to edge
of the wide expanse, the dark undersides
of the clouds forming a meaningful contrast

we drive to the drive-in hoping
the late day rain will dry up in the dirt field of the drive-in
we are early, ready to eat our chicken and potatoes
tonight under a cleared sky to the unsteady light
of Night of the Living Dead

Kansas has formed religiously around us,
lined our minds with dreams of wheat husks
and itching chaff in the smalls of our backs

the roads 'round here will one day be paved,
great writers will admire our honest ways
and the movies we watch while at home
our doors remain unlocked, and we trust

the wheat is too innocent to reflect us exactly
and the symmetry of wheat seeds belie the over-
simplicity of nature's solution to the problem
of curiosity and circumstance

parked as the rain begins to pop up puffs of wheat-charged dust
we sip lemonade and chew down to the bones

the bed of my truck awaits its eventual drying out
at the hands of post-shower winds, yes
the bed awaits our hungry lovemaking,
a night of horror, and the rhythmic words of mythic bards

Lives in the Distance

be ready
drop below the truck bed sides
lie on your back in hay chaff and bits
look up at the washed out sky cloudless after pumping its heart out

women are getting ready
we see them as strong because their beauty is powerful
they see themselves as weak because beauty is fragile

the roads are macadam or gravel
and always rocks're kicked up into the undercarriage
the truck whistling through the hot Kansas air
the clicking rocks on old metal

stay down while women watch the truck go by

they want to build a paradise of meaning and beauty
but all they do is sweep and cook
lie down with their knees up
shudder themselves into the ground

be ready

Illness of Beauty

I'm sick of the beauty of nature
made from uncaredful coincidences
colors averaging out to brown or green
predation and eating fucking and dying

the beauty of nature is false for not being regimented
not geometrical enough not hierarchical enough
give me a machine

something that can break down
and by breaking down reveals its parts
and by revealing its parts inform us of nature

if only nature weren't beautiful
I would believe it

more

Keys to Heaven

on my desk to the left of my computer
my mother's keys sit—she lived the last 3 years of her life
panicked about losing them while I was 3000 miles away

she could not tell them apart so she labeled them with tape
7 keys in all for her house, gates, and shed

there are other keys on the ring that unlock
I think nothing this and her purse if she
lost one of them she would wail what am I going to do

the pain of being old was almost more

she talked of killing herself
she prided herself always
on knowing what to do but she didn't when she lost her keys

I would find them
I have them now
she needs them no more
I need

Foreshadowing Under Pine Boughs

the darkness roots provide
dipping from the bank into the water
is akin to the light they provide
rising from the water up to the bank
we forget a pond is filled with liveliness
even with swathed in cold and bathed
in winterlight I've started a small twigfire
burning with leaves and dried pine branches
no bigger than little fingers and dried on the trunk
through a stoppage I've walked down a cold path
to get here my fire sits behind a rock and before
the pond not much bigger than a large tub
sourced by the water table intersecting the hollow

on that day I thought of all my days of love
the end that waits the emptiness before that
I dreamed of women washing my body before a fire
not much warmer than that little one
and their singing anticipation of the night
held warmly in arms beneath quilts and long covers
my fate is like this only forgetful

Stop

were there places to go
firm cold air to breath and the light to see by
did tails wag or eyes water when you came
or left was the firm ground frozen or pickled from ice
how many times did the crows caw and how sweet
was the cream and sugared bark

were there places you've been
worth telling of worth painting
worth burying alongside the painters

find the trees
cut them down
flog the horses
but gently
ride the wagons down the dirt road
find the right place
to stop

Her Singularity

she wants it her way she will say what she will
the facts well the facts they are not mentioned
a fact is what's true and what's true anyway
she hides herself her ecstasy grows less frequent
nothing is what she expected it would be
the wind—things always changing—is constant
and if it isn't its changes are smooth
or the changes of the changes are
we bless the mathematicians and urge them away quickly
like a steep acceleration curve taught but not learned
she's beneath the willow talking lurking
planning alone how to be alone

Forget Passion

her life has snowballed
into the round shape of sorrow
it rolls downhill against her desires

she denies them
she wraps her sorrow in mirror excuses
she weeps with inaction

she loves just one person
she forgets passion
she thinks only of science and its fragrant reductions

her desires have snowballed
into the round shape of downhill
it rolls sorrows against her life

Wish Alone

air filled with motes and fragrances of exotic plants and weeds
filled with a more southern light a more western light
filled with breezes blown through gold grass and hard brush
filled with reflections from the western sea pushing its wet up onto the coastline
filled with men and women dedicated to pushing on though there is no farther place
filled with canopies of dark green and gloomy trees penetrated to the bottom with shafts of light
filled with the optimism a teenaged boy cannot feel

at dusk an eastern sky takes on little shimmer and no hope for tomorrow
a boy sits by a western window on a brick hearth by a small bookcase
the potential of the west is apparent in the dipping of the light behind the woods curtain
the slight fog rising testifies to the rain that uninvited fell all morning
the books he reads are filled with the past and cold invitations

he wishes for the air filled
the southern light
the western light
the warmth combed through gold grass
the voices whispering
the hard canopies pierced frantically

and when he has them
he'll wish again

Hell's Bell's

he is sitting on the hearth
thumbing through books that are America's 1950's idea of literature for boys
facing a window facing west
listening to the Beach Boys
he is strange . . .
strangely drawn to the flickering sunset
the pines and maples and oaks and hickories that define the western border of his vision
form a wall
the eggblue light forms a shell
shell
's hell
sell
there was always a going there to be had

he did
he's here
he's me

Treatable

she is formed
o broken
shattered one day shattered another
her calm bewilders
she fights herself

I can't help it
get better get faster get slower
it's the peace that passes understanding

it's a passdown
after formation
information
for making it better
please pass on it

Asking For

simple as it sounds
something is wrong
nothing adds up
beneath flurries loads of leaves form winter's blanket
ice is partitioning the warm from the warm
ice is stopping
the statistic that matters doesn't apply to one person
you need to find what you think
your place is
locate yourself
triangulate using 2 useful things
relate in pairs and repeat
etc
the point when things tip is the point
of no return

March 6, 2003

On Walking Past an Oak

I'm done with this battle
too much
and too little

Kingman Fishing

the Santa Fe triple engine struggles up the Kingman incline . . .
no it doesn't trains only thrash in their machineness
the flatcars carry stacked truck trailers
the string a mile long is heading for St Louis
its wheels are hot and rails too climbing
up toward Flagstaff

the rocks and bluffs here radiate red
the backlit moon points out the wayward sun
I'm in my room after the last train before dawn
typing in these last few words hoping the end
goes by as slowly as the last few cars
where bums and the adventurous look up
at the heaving nighttime sky

TLR/Rear

memorials sprout
crosses covered in blooms placed by
marks in the road detailing
for investigators where it happened
where important pieces were found
meanwhile as late afternoon light hits the shrouded cross
a comb and brush still holding on
to her long black strands disintegrate
these things placed here by loving dropoffs
fade lighten grow lighter
strongest memory < pale ink
 $\lim_{time \rightarrow \infty} ink \rightarrow 0$

Scattered Remains

they are mostly crosses
vases of plastic flowers maybe
always something personal
where they died not where they are
graves minds inept writings
by the side of the road
pickups drive by kicking up gravel
cars go by and the red and white flowers catch eyes
a curve a tree an embankment a bridge support
attention at rest or snatched away
mental acuity low
why here why now
who is it for

Today, At Noon

the buildings
cinder blocks
2x4 frames filled with bricks and rough concrete
heavy roofs and pueblo-style ladders up to them
dog dog dogs
mud dried mud hardened into permanent ruts
stacks of twisted logs
old refrigerators with their doors peeled away
bear clan corn clan
silversmiths and farmers

an old man walks slowly down the road
surrounded by dogs
walking by stepping entirely onto one leg
waiting
stepping onto the other
he is in those clothes somewhere
all he's seen is nowhere
the mesas are lined up
the rain has washed the plain away
dogs approach cautiously looking away
we approach the edge of the mesa
and look out from the center
of the universe

Silversmith Debating a New Style

at the edge of the mesa
facing the San Francisco Peaks
top-white and jewel-like
with the smell of Hopi stew brewing in lamb broth
and juniper boughs burning spewing smoke above the village
my heart works on the problem:
mesa or plain

Hopi living piled on each other in high-heaped villages
or alone with a section surrounding each hogan Navajo style

long distances expand to make this place
more than the center but the living heart
the full lost life of all
each one the same in its abstractness
different in every detail but the detail of everything forgotten

the path down is a dirt track
connecting old steps and stopping off
points it continues to the water hole
the place where living seeps up
even as high as mesa edge

where smoke drifts off
toward the peaks
toward the alone living places

Together

imagine
—for real life is too clean—

two
people hankering for the flesh the other holds on to

lives
they may throw away from the other as if

holding
were important enough to die without

on
a night filled with the web of branches holding lives two imagine

together

Lost Together

the desert

gravel matrixed in sand or dust
hard birds harsh in brown and white plumage

hard green bark and leaves
pungent smells from seeking water

arroyos and washes carved deep into the desert
like veins returning blood to its hearthome cooled

from its long journey to the ends of the world
everything here is conserved held back

we speak with animation but she never glances
my way or speaks directly to me

I watch her hair moving in the wind
moving me slowly away toward the mesas

behind which the sun hides
behind which the green is cached

Hopi Legend

walking toward the edge of the mesa
the man with names in two languages
hesitates before stepping off
falling down
floating up
as will happen whenever languages sharing the same man
have nothing in common

Piptsantiva[†]

death places:
the tree in which the body is found
along with signs of violence—perhaps murder
perhaps suicide—three trunks formed into a seat

the viewing place which is sometimes the ground
by a tree in which a person has died
dirt and insects infect the affect of the viewer and the dead

the burial place which
perhaps
is a shallow trench covered by river-smoothed stones
making it harder for coyotes and badgers to dig down

who cares
we wonder
who cares which of these places are distinct
as we find that life is the process
of forming a mental picture of our death

[†]—start forming a mental image

Piiku†

was it right to put them together
two urns in the same vault
the vault just big enough?

I placed their story with them
so they will not forget themselves
and so anyone finding those urns will know

I wonder on it every day
I wake with these thoughts
fall asleep with them

right now they are under the snow they hated so much
but soon Spring will engulf the air above them
they are pressed together as they rarely were in life

thinking of them makes me stupid
words do not press themselves together
with passion or lust when I think about them

I am weak with being alone
I find my strength by being alone
just me just me pressed close with only words

†—press close together

Desert Dissertation

captured after attraction
filling a need untransplanted from afar
we've found our way up a wash then a ravine up to the mesa
which flies the flag of past pride
she is helplessly beautiful
I am reduced near her in her
role as debilitator
she is the wash
the ravine
the way up the mesa
which is living
which is dry in the extreme
which is hoping hope
rescues the season
a need transplanted from afar

Laugh Riot

holding her death certificate
I laugh

that it would certify her difficult achievement
alone one night
weak frail afraid

Interrogation of Nature

cars piled up
the ceremony is under way
beneath us the valley is laid out
our hands are in our pockets
displaying our endearment to monotony

there are no more reasons than these
like leaves they blow this way and that
there are no more loves to achieve
like branches backlit they inspire more
than they deserve

Alone on Day *n*

what if you heard that you always needed to act alone
no one would help you
no one could be trusted
that the world was there to be suspicious of

and sporadically it seemed true
at times people were not reliable
even those closest to you
like two trees with red leaves in front of a relapse of green

and at the end
it seems more true than truth could endure
as the paintings your husband painted spin
your head is about to hit and punctuate the end

and the arc has proven itself worthy
if lonely as hell

Wha???

let's figure on the heat blending up
the chaos settling in like a pattern tearing up
like hair unbrushed for many nights
the explosions are lingering on the surface of a pond
and my philosophy is to love and to hate
my philosophy equally as it suits me
I like the life of loneliness
if only there were someone to share it with

Lament in Hope of Living

life's flurry dries up
in a form of heat disembodied and magisterial
the great welling of words is a dialect
being formed from the dying of light

I've wondered about fear and how long it can grip
the fate of one flake through a long winter
from first falling to the inevitable
melting and welling up into the base of a stem

we pray
pray as hard as we can
for the stem to be

Can I Share Your Trip

from here on Colorado the instrument-tipped mountaintops
rise out of haze like two worlds pasted together for a project
and despite the haze the sun is insistent on turning people red
a woman walks past me to the corner where she waits for the light
shifting her weight from one leg to the other—she wears an asymmetric skirt
and a black Victorian hat and she is classy in the way a call girl must be to succeed

the only shade is under olive trees whose Mediterranean green has haze built in
and the pumped watercourse is fake with the addition of pump roar
everything here seems fresh but also in need of repair and the hanging
of the air just above the rooftops signals isolation from real tops
my sorrow is filled with unbelief and hope and the capacity for hunger

Beloved?

With Her Hand

let's say the world is full of fawning
delight in sampling the usuals
the pleasants the languishers
and wherever whenever and
their simple siblings of evertude protrude
the laughing nymphs trickle by

allow me the tragedy of gazing at branches backlit at dusk
trying to find there the path that leads inward
the path buried in the rush of convergences
I've lost her I've lost her I've lost her
listen: my name is lost and I tangle among
the soon invisible branches

On It

Windy Day

the house large luxurious lonely as a single wind
whipping the lake's surface to small mounds
holds the rattling 'round ghost of a rich man poor
in relations and passions a man who died in the grip
of cold water we felt his cold hands on our napes
and heard we thought or imagined his whisper
and blowing chimes we fell asleep under his spell
and woke to dark clouds covering the sky and diminishing
the mountains mounding up around the lake

Time has abandoned us—we fear the room
behind each door. We have nothing to reach for,
but we browse his books for clues we cannot
examine in any fashion. I've prepared the potion
that will zero his memory and as it compiles
for optimum execution, a drink float into my hand
and his voice like a bell chimes in.

On a Lonely Point

Cornering

like planes into a major hub
we're lined up to stop
in an order we cannot know
with times just a formalism

why did we do it
we walk from room to room
we are looking for validation
outside sand is blowing onto our windows
and the view of the path
is being obscure

there are many who love us
our job is to walk and walk
being obscure over and over
like planes landing
at last

The Migraine

Tahoe In Spring

The mountains ring lonely around the bay
and throw their images upon it whenever
its sheet is clear—times when the wind
grows calm and nothing falls from clouds.

He sleeps alone in a bed made for two:
It is part of his lure, it's part of his own trap.
It's the scene of his latest liftoff.

Plow here. The bear is not looking
permanently. The act is slowly running down,
and the liquor is evaporating away.

The fir has a bleached trunk—
it's as old as the mountains and as lonely
as patience. At night, like him, it creaks
as the wind and memories shift
past it and in through his window
and out through the dreams
of what has been and always
will be lost.

Mourning In Winter

Bus Full of Singing

Behind the house the mountain leaps
past homes perched ever more
delicately on stoney shelves
and footings dug deep and poured concrete.
As clever as he was these were more solid,
the mountain higher. He was like the carved bear
he bought from the chainsaw man: fixed
and stationary in his dealings outside.

I hurried down the hill to say goodbye
before he left but the bus drove up
filled every seat and the singing.
Down to the lakeside road then up and over
the farshore mountain, the bus keeping up
with the singing of its driver timing
all the ends to his arrival where the clouds
go when all the raining has stopped.

Cares Raining Down

Certainly

certainly we gathered today
certainly the speeches were special and sentimental
certainly no clouds formed within miles
certainly the crows made a distinct "caw, caw" sound
certainly we can draw conclusions from this and other sketches
certainly the food was unappealing though expertly prepared
certainly we learned of his good points and the songs were lusty and official
certainly the conventional won out
but the wind blow the air about so we know we all breathed in air he once did
seen the sky he once did
smelled these rough smells he once did
live even now as he once did

He Once Did

The Romance Keeps

these nights keep coming
warm as fresh bread and promises early
in a torrid affair and the possibilities
of you are hidden and endless
let's play we stay together forever
and death will seal us with a kiss
there are such lucky as us

your skirt lies in a heap by the bed
warm and wet from the night
outside the air is drying out the dew
a flagrant moon left behind

the fog last night has burned off
and blown in toward the fields

razors await us
that and sharp knives
shovels and hard back
breaking work

Fading In

Overgrown, Wet, Forgotten

three fields stacked from the road frontage
back to the West to the woods

the first where we plant primo grain and corn
and in fallow we let the timothy grass and rye grow wild
and cut that for Winter roughage

between the first and second a stone wall
covered with brush and trees was placed a century ago
or more and in that back field just hay grows
and weeds pop up the slope down back goes down to swampland
and the field is shaped like an L

finally down a road through the woods
lined sporadically with car hulks and wagons
the field that's growing over where we buried
my dog after we put her down

they represent the ages of man
and they are overgrown according to the wet

rain is the habit of thinking too hard
when the atmosphere is too cold

Out of the Game

Ways

the path we take up the mountain
is less important than the one down
because our hearts pace us going up
but nothing holds us back as we hurry down
until we collapse and fail
somewhere unexpected
along the way

Going

Way

One day we decided to hike
to the bottom of the Grand Canyon
and nothing was in us to stop us.
We got to the River and sat down for lunch.
We had carried a lot of water.
We sat for an hour.
We could not stand up because our knees were frozen
and our muscles worn down to nothing.
We needed our hearts to slow us down
but the river was too alluring
and our hearts beat lightly
while our knees and legs
begged silently for mercy
the only way they know how—
by churning until nothing is left
and we cannot make our way out.

Out

Lost Images

driving fast up the 2-lane to Hopi after dark
hugging the centerline, it two-halves the road
like training wheels, I recall your faked
moaning too in-time with the ticks which burst into yelps
as the clock struck twelve and twelve more thrusts till
I was through the bumps tapping the tires remind me
of time and the way it stretches a thought into a memory
and how a secondary thought stitches memory into story

the barrett on the bed table bursting with your broken hair
the pueblo the kiva the Mudhead I'll find him making more

memory
what's it for but to keep me going
minute by minute
looking for you seeking the mesa's top

Dust Road

Hogging The Road

the long expanse of sulphured lakebed
and far to the South a dust devil made from the disturbance
of a tractor plowing; heat covering it all and shattering
the image of blue hogging the sky in my memory; and though
the dust prevails and the hat of longing sits atop my head
there is no such thing as the breaking of thirst,
no relief; I begin to resemble the minerals gathering
in the matrix of important ore like lonely people
when the rich are around and the beautiful or the otherwise
lucky. the road here hugged the low base of a mountain range
and I drove her fast to hear her music like a needle pierced deep
into the three-dimensionality of her but I was too slow
and her music risked the lives of sweetened bees lodged underground
as if an earthquake would bunch up along here someday.

Bouncing and Singing

Lovers

we walked through the fog as if it were a park
people we passed swelled into focus when we passed close by
and when they stayed far off we neither heard nor saw them

without touching you I could never know who you were
because the fog of knowledge is just a close canvas
on which we painted ourselves but what we painted of each other
drifted downwind miles where the world would pick us up
days later entangled differently

what flowers we'd send would depend on the alleys
and what we found in them—where would they lead

they were like fogged over streets going lesswhere
not important changed as the city moves on

playing chicken with you we move our mouths closer
we do this for years until one of us veers off
the mind and truth are like this
the truth and the world are too

I find them holding hands
afraid of the fog

Truth and the World

Miss Hopi Writes

Miss Hopi wears a blue yellow white and black dress
her hair in a pony tail hangs to her lap as she sits for the photo
I wonder if she's pretty—her face is round and she smiles well
her eyes don't focus and she is scared to talk when representing her people
she models Hopi clothing like the manta
a rectangular piece of fabric worn as a wrap-around dress
it is folded around the body
passing under the left arm and fastened at the right shoulder
sewn part way down the right side
held at the waist by a woven belt
her hair is tied into the traditional squash blossom
her beauty comes from the mesa
like rain after the thunder
rushing down the wash
like rain after thunder
whether we hear it or not

But Doesn't Sign Her Name

Stone Yield

Some things like stone
yield everything to sledge hammer blows
crushing deformations
the chisel deftly placed and tapped like teardrops once or twice
the onslaught of spring glacier melt infused with dissolved irritations
the chemistry of man-filled air
washing up on white-sand beaches
the hard flow of a mountain spring
the soft embrace of old man river
and as most often happens
drops spaced long apart
and diminishing.

Like Love Like Life

A Tale of Passion

here
is the fashion that makes up time
of one thing leading to another
to a brushing glance becoming a hand in hand
to an extra night or two in a foreign city
where what goes in and out of the mouth
follows patterns I will not fathom
here
is the place of disrobing
where nothing becomes everything
where the strange becomes too much like home
where the passages of expected silk are simple flannel
take me to the bridge and let's fondle
the idea of flowing water
here
is why we know the sky is slender
why our clothes pile up and suffocate
why we plan our goodbyes more than the hellos
we are little and everything
turns out to be nothing
here

Told Here

I Done Did My Best

fucking like going to heaven
mingling of clothes
keeping the hospital corners as is
steady even breathing
the stains
emergency room—get it
calling for Christ:
Jesus Dunn
is this your best?

well, the pollocking thing was good
is this what you meant:

the groundfish complex
is the most abundant of all fishery resources off Alaska
with a total biomass of more than 26,400,000 metric tons
walleye pollock (*theragra chalcogramma*) is a key
species in the Alaska groundfish complex and a target species
for one of the world's largest fisheries
pollock produce the largest catch of any single species
inhabiting the 200-mile U.S. exclusive economic zone
during 1999–2001 pollock made up 73% of the average groundfish catch
in the eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands region
other dominant species harvested were pacific cod (11%)
yellowfin sole (4%) rock sole (3%) and Atka mackerel (3%)?

Yes, Dunn, this reminds me of fucking

Locally

WorthLess

every night I imagine it
or see it
the beautiful woman walking
melancholy away as if just a wish away

and I count
the years, the months since something

to the woman
she is ordinary or plain
her special parts not special at all

to me
she is beyond
there is no pretty way to say it
but what's ahead is not worth much
and what's behind is worth less

But Isn't Random

we all fell in love
back then
with images of the other
when she was not even aware
not dimly not keenly
of what her force was on us

we exist as the echo of that moment
when we wished to speak what we felt
but couldn't and all the compromises
of whom we deserved like balls in the lotto
sorting themselves out into something that looks
but isn't random

Hard Angels

snowed hard all day
so much that it never broke dusk
two feet fell that day
the road turned brown from pulverized snow
the gray headstones grew some contrast
in the form of hats and epaulets
an angel's hand held out filled with snow to a ball
later we shoveled driveways and cleaned off cars
for payment in hot cocoa and donuts
I wish I had a girl tonight
we'd make hard angels all night
on account of the snow fall all day

John Doe

since dawn today
how many pine boxes have been laid in the ground
in neatly cut and dug holes
filled in by backhoes
and falling rain
by the fence flush with tags
in a part of town that favors tarpaper shingles
gray green or blue—light in each case
—and lines hanging clothes and large underpants
where the only words spoken over the dead
are workers to each other or to their wives
or buddies on cell phones and speak of the rain and heavy work
the size of the women's cotton underpants on the line in the rain
or the number of John Does showing up each week

the metal markers will rust or be kicked over and raked away
the workers will forget the details of the day's labor
by the end of the first round after dusk
and all the chances of warmth
will be over
and the mistakes frozen in their time

Jane Doe

Emily Walks Past

sleep is the passion
hunger forms after sleep
hunger is passion whose celibacy is death
watch the eyes nervous after sleep
I can follow after
I can smell
sleep is my passion
only one left

Lament's Simple

walking back after the burial
the clayed soil clings—
a sort-of gooey memory
its parts not crisp
clings to my shoes—
to me—
halfway down the hill it starts to rain
but it's not till I reach the busy street parallel to the river
that my shoes come clean—
wet—
but clean

-o- -s- -b- Leftover

Three Aimers

fresh fallen rain trailing down a rockfall
clearing off the dust sending down to the flats
where the dry earth drinks it up
a patch of greenery lost in a line
or circle

geometry and mathematics
are coincidences between language and truth
and what little faith we have is rewarded
by scientific discoveries sounding
like fabled mysteries revealed

three women peeing in a triangle formation
pinching themselves to hit the center point
in focus and who would think that women
with nothing pointed could aim so pointedly

similar each done called changes
of us
fill up the hat to

Called Amy Ameer Aimee

Problem

inside the sealed woodstove
a slow crossbreeze burns the logs to embers
and another burns the smoke itself

the heat is less but lasts
longer into the night
like a dream solving
the day's puzzles 2 at a time

two maples
one on each side of a stream
put their heads together and merge
to one large mass of branches and obscuring leaves
put their roots together beneath the stream
and tangle and drink
and become one
almost with a stream through its heart

solving the problem of why
rain falls and the seas sweat

Solved

Lover Behind A Dark Tint

behind tinted glass stopped at a light
her profile is barely there
her head almost all hidden
behind the door post
she is blonde but the dark gray of the tint
makes her look expensive
her wolf shaped profile
just wolf-shaped enough to make her overtly
sexual—she is speaking
few words with long breaks
sun fall behind a shining yellow hill
reflects in the darkly tinted window

she looks forward in her high cab
I look up at her for the minutes the light is red
the live oaks don't move on the hill
neither does the dried grass nor
does the sun seem to move nor
I nor the woman driving me
home and she just stares forward
above me wolf-like blonde
speaking sporadically
as first the wanton sun going down
and then the traffic light turning red
put our love behind

Faces Forward Always

1967

a band in a cavern
as large as a gym or cafeteria
its guitar players need no more reverb
than what the room provides
and through its open doors the hallways splay
outward and echoes from the walls that turn away
mix with the straight sounds that loop
back around so that part of each new note
is a note struck seconds and many seconds
and minutes ago

at a locker down one of those halls
I saw her turn toward me then away
in a sudden rush to get to class
her hair sleek and tangling
her skirt gripping her thighs
the books cradled in her arms
all this took away my air and I gasped
and never said a word

in every mix of stratocasters blending
reverb and heavy slow melodies
plucked string to string
that little wash or whisper
that is my gasp and the only love
that opened up that second
still wafts from hall to hall
diminished to just below
the aftershock of forgetting

1968

Theorem of Area

the door to adultery opened up
once in a city suddenly warm in late fall
and a discussion welled up
about the scale of love
from 0.0 to 1.0
and where on it we each sat
0.6 and 0.71 I recall

the streets I recall
were concrete patched with asphalt
squirrels and drunks roamed the park by the museum
where I touched her tinted hair and by accident
her neck
those touches as hesitant-
looking as the impressionist brushstrokes we read about

we were holding hands
when we met the friend I couldn't recall
though he was my only black friend
and he must have noticed
she was young and I was old
the predictability of 0.6 and 0.71
I recall another friend noticed I loved her
and commented on how straight her profile was
not wolfish as a sexual predator's might be

in a matter of days
perhaps six or slightly more than seven
she left
what was the door to adultery for me
was merely a door for her
squirrels and drunks when they roam a park
cover lots of ground but their paths amount
to nothing

A Mile High

Death With Dignity

a second important service
represents the dying company
if it wishes the member
during the dying phase a woman employee
or a coworker stands for it
to the side

discussions with the ill member and
—on its desire—
its intimate persons
are to facilitate the time
of the parting taking for the concerning

who suffers leading illness
from one infallibly to death
or from an unreasonable handicap
and its living and suffering
would like to set therefore voluntarily an end
can as a member of the association
ask to be helpful it in free death

Asks For Little

One Day Soon

the fashion is to play it cool
sit with others and pretend to be enraptured
worry for some time for the hair issue to be resolved
watch an unlikely team win
my hand was filled ever so soft
into the experience after all
I turned out the boyish
skin taking away the last
mental barrier to this weekend
got up on my knees with my
three days—three days and nights—
kneading my knees further
smiled that smile at me
a smile came to my lips
the rest of the weekend they teased

Time Will Tell of the Past

Slavery to Insistence

with little more than motion
she conveys it—emotion
she finds expensive to display
but inexpensive to procure
she dangles the goods and snatches
them back when the price is right
she is for sale in every metaphorical way
but none that are real

I say this is serious
I say it seriously
she will be there
beneath the cold

Banishment Underway

Sparse Spare Spite

in sparse country the lives that live longest
choose the fewest

times and places and things
between two important points
lie vicious vistas and charming locales

but in the end there is little
to choose and so the act goes on
unrewarded

I've drawn a line between the two most
precious places in a man's life

and do you think it was a line connecting them
or marking their separation

and from this we know
who lives in the sparse country

Lines Chosen to Look Like a Cross

Ugly Days

next door they lay out in the back yard
she has her top off lying face down
and he has his arm on the small of her back
while he sleeps while he sleeps
the mosquitoes flicker above his back
landing to ingest a little and then fly off
back to the small pools and stagnant waters

later her bottom is off too
she lies face down still
and his arm has moved down too

maybe he doesn't feel the mosquitoes
maybe he likes the little stings they give him
or the loss of blood though minute has a profound
affect on his happiness

but I'm just a boy and the magic of what's down there
—or mystery—may be solved or understood
her son, my friend, described it to me
and it made sense only as the mystery of the crucifixion does

all black—it's all black
as if he passed out just as he saw
sex and beauty mixed with mosquitoes
and swamps and recollections
and ugly days

Next Door

April 26, 2003

Let Go

in the saddest story on TV
the simple man walks away from the grave of his lover
buried on his farm in Alabama

I wonder who let him bury her there
when all the rest of us are forced
to let go

April 27, 2003

Mud-ku

mud beneath my feet today
one day above my head

Mud-Ku 2

down the dirt road
mud aligns with my vision
wearing boots with heavy lugs
soon my boots are clogged with red rich mud

on the bottoms of my feet
adding to my weight
already heavy from heavy thoughts and bad alignments

no matter how well they pack down the sod
mud erupts once the rain hits
now this dirt is mud over the top of my head
adding to my weight
already heavy from the foolish route
full of crookedness
I took to get here

Kansas Corner

on a corner
a used car dealer sweeps the gravel off his sidewalk
along a road that once was the main road
through town and 'cross country
he sells
only a few cars a season and makes do with oil changes
and wiper blades
his wife the homecoming queen
once reigned in this town and the next two
and he the old QB once reigned
throughout this part of Kansas
he watched and she watched them
all leave to foolishly try their luck abroad
where crops don't count and the sea breeze is not piped in
they'll be back he said
they'll be back she said
we are royalty around here they said
he pushes his scepter out out out
pushing the gravel down the short entry slope
to the main road and he waits
and she waits while their heart beat slower
as time winds round and round
and the never-stops wind braces
for the next long day and dry night

Western Part

She Held This Check Close

the last of her
fell from my hands today
as I endorsed the check she wrote

one year ago
Richard. P. Gabriel
Administrator of the Estate

of Helen P. Gabriel
and they fingerprinted me
took my ID

capturing my guilt
of being the son
of a dead mother

Because She Could Depend on No One

So

now the air is calm
flights have shut down for the night at O'Hare
while below or above or right next to me
the muse of many poems sleeps or reads or fucks
across the parking garage the standby lights
are still lit anticipating something special unexpected
like the rising up of a jet bound for home
or coming back are you home
are you in Chicago what I've found out is
it's too late for me too late for me it's
too late too late too too too late too
late look it's dark and all you have time for
before they come is to write it down
people around will give you credit
credit you don't deserve the life left in your
words are set to diminish
set to be worth nothing
like the fucking you didn't get
when you wanted it
so

Buy It Then Leave

watched you all day
the same darkly lined eyes
your mouth in sensuous shapes
forming for you
foreign words explaining things I can't care
for any more I saw you look
look and not look
away as if maybe from behind the hard
to choose words you saw
something
old and wondering how many years
no months
maybe weeks
days or hours
I have to write about what
obsession is
life without planes where you
and other you's like you
can't exist
soon I won't

Real Good

the scene was routine
like regret hugging the floor and disappearing under the door
she smiled and see ya
heading home over Utah
the land looked like sea
waves or dunes
through unsettled clouds and we came up on a town
with roads leaving and winding up to open
pit mines where things like love
don't happen when the trucks
are hauling

Bye

Not a Word On Leaving

her secret is in
the doctor we all take it
is out like a coyote hugging the far row of old
stores in the once alive town foreign
beside the unmaintained road
replaced by the interstate
cut through the shallow hills
of west Kansas

like the coyote looking for a last meal
I picture the day in front of rare paintings
where I touched her hair and the back of her neck
the rest is history
as I soon will be and she
already is

Clouds Over

when the Old Man of the Mountain
collapsed in the dark and fog of night and distance
my parents had been dead for a year
and things since have taken the turn of dying
instead

of the things they loved in the world
and made of granite the least
has fallen into a heap gathered and sold
on a technology blunder like rotten rock
depended on to do what it cannot help

the connection is slight
as if a wind had made it around the world to warn
of small things
but imagine the emotions held together
by products of the rational mind
and picture the pile at the bottom
of the heart when the fog clears
after the sun breaks through an upper
cloud cover

Exposed Work

the willow launched onto the bank
of a swift-running river
its branches never touch the water
this is a metaphor of self-loathing

One Joy

rain forming the umbrella
of our wide porch experience
her hair reflects the dark corners
of the forest's shadows
and her heat intense as a downpour
reflects everything ungodly in me
the rain pours down on me
then lifts off like steam like fog
like an excuse

Followed Immediately by Another

Like a Wolf

down the hill
she flagged her hair
raising the fear of a close bump
with the application of ivy
adding a border to the meaning
she worked her mouth around

we stopped under a tree while the rain erased
the rest of sound and my face was an inch
from hers

why give it a name
touch her canine nose and fall into
her shadow dark eyes

Or A Steep Angle

Death Dear

after waking from holding her deeply
she mentions she is full of death
come back to life now crawling
scorpion-like down her spine
to her sex posing like an angel
wings-down joining the rain
rolling down the hill
for water rolls
doesn't flow
doesn't get anywhere without turning over
I wake once more when she
pulls the blankets up over me
all the way over
and I am in her
like death dear me

Foreigner

be serious when you look at her
don't worry about her illnesses
imagine she holds the world inside her
let her walk with you even though she hungers
for your abilities only
the warmth of a dark car
masks the dangerous places it can take you

Shag to Back

I told her
my job was to live the life of exemplar
good or bad
loved or hated
to pursue something like the white flats
of ice that bump their way down from the low
White Mountains past the place everything I tried
failed in a river that can't make up its mind
to an ocean opposed to change
and charged with keeping us high and dry

joy rests her back against the hickory tree
her bony back against its shag bark
this is what it can be

Sonnet Fallen off a Squirrel Feeder

the fate of the poem is to sit
unread on the shelf for decades
then pop like a hummingbird levitating
to see who's invading
only to find within the confines
of the metaphor that it is merely
the bored now wrecked from an assault
from within

language I mean
and the curiously undecipherable
stream of windows
hell bent on making the world
into the poet's unreason in a grand leap
of discontinuous change

Knowledge at the Root of the Fear Tree

that house is thawing out
the air having spent the Winter indoors
now begins to age
whatever leaks infect the roof
are cracking open

a year ago I delivered her
where she knew it would happen
but not how
the drive was quiet
no arguments
the warm air cooling with each mile north
she watched each mile remembering
perhaps
each conversation she had with him
so they could laugh over them again
when she arrived
which would be a little over a month
from then

I hang here alone over the keyboard
where all my life is focused
on the end
where everyone has abandoned me
where I alone face myself alone
with the words I half learned
and half improvise
in honor of random change and age

Secret of Poetry and Repair

things fixed are mixtures
of old original parts and new replacements
what we learn today is a replacement
repair of what we falsely knew
a decorative pair of cherry branches grafted
onto local stock as we age
the replacements fall away
the glue between them and the originals
yellowing and cracking
becoming the dust that fills the air
when we expect the most sensuous skies

but I blurt
the fiction of poetry
lacks the little stumble
that separates the great from the rest
all it takes is to learn to stumble
on cue

Warm Wind Caught Up In Winter

out the back door
dusting of snow on the already melt-packed snow
across the yard to the woods path
I followed her steps smeared from her haste
and wind and by a coincidence
or by deliberation in her hurry she missed
all the leaves she could have crushed
through the blueberry patch
each bush an explosion of gray branches
or a puff of blue magic slightly frozen
through the swamp hardened over
her steps slip-streaked but slowed
over the stone wall lichen to a gray
each rock capped by the new snow
across the stretch of pines to the old road
along which we picked mushrooms
safely choosing only the least tasty
then the road ended at another heading across
her path but her path crossed over
and over another wall higher than the first
into an open field where it boldened
then faded each step perhaps lighter
as from a creature with less weight
or a person with more soul

at the point of disappearance
a warm wind swirled

A Fable True With Redemption

Revision?

when we die
do we find that God is just a writer
wanting to see how it comes out
does He revise your life and start over
how much does He fill in to make you seem interesting
to people you don't care for are you less
sure than before what really happened

walking by the edge of the woods tonight
I noticed the wind stirring the trees
more than usual

so that they seemed to come to rest differently
their leaves different shades
their shades less or more under a cloud shrouded moon
the crunch of twigs under my feet
increases as I walk then falls
away the warmth of Summer diminishes
into Fall or early Winter

Revision is Underway

Departure Lounge

I watched them go in
one at a time
into the dark part of a stand of trees
at the edge of a field of timothy and brome
the border between grass field to tree stand
scabbed by brush and tall grass
but through openings and cracks
the stand was dark the ground covered in thick
needles and moss they went in one
at a time without looking back
splitting the brush as if without effort
the dark enveloped them
one at a time

after a long slow walk across the field
as the sun moved from my back to low and straight
into my eyes through a porthole in the forest
I stand and without reaching out I can almost feel
the brush begin to part

Very Late Afternoon

Deep Randomness

all at once
desire and its not
pieces caught in tinder branches
delight and the heat of it
cars caved in in the era
of spring reverbs uncovered
in the clearing away
desire for the clearing closing up
midday the hot white sun soaks
our vision with clarity
then the light yellows and hearts emerge to seize
each other through hands and fingertips
finally the sky oranges all at once
and the cars remember in their brave grills and bench seats
the depth of the song
the rough voices of desire
the rust of strings about to break

Zero Damping

Ions: Art

the hall diminished
(as the law called perspective took hold
even though some man—I fear—
dreamed it up while imagining mathematics
or art when those and science were the same
things) but on either

side offices filled with specialized problem
solvers sat solving
problems by typing isolated from “Rooftops
in the snow, Paris” and bread trucks

scattering like roosting pigeons crossed
by a shadow to deliver uncut loaves
to the rich in the hills cupping LA

specialization repels
the standing tree struck falls
then burns

Science Alone

Light Ads

light
straight down straight up
LA is pasteurized by it
through its heart of fiction
a toilet of a river runs
under a hat of car exhaust
right now a large man is rolling
off a pale woman releasing her sweatened grip
on a soaked sheet who later might
re-arrange a fridge door of magnetic
poetry to form a sonnet depicting the essence and romance
of that pretty tower in downtown
featured in the intro to Boomtown
you know that show where the sulking redhead
teaming with the fresh possibility of sexual oozing
like a swamp
tames the drunk ADA
and the light is as bright as Miami
where it takes special pleasure in slowly killing
its worshippers

Worship at Her

sugar's not

dissolving
in the glass (perched
on your tummy)
filled with cool water
after your usual female orgasm
of cramp cramp cramp
cramp—you squeezed your hand between
your thighs and now we're on to thinking of
moving the irises out back once more
and talk turns to sweetwater
the puzzle of plants transplanted every year
how it sweetens the beard
the showy parts between the sepals and the style
the standards of the flower

(I won't write this part
how she sighs
laughs asks when I'll get it

up again)

Dont' Dream

caught up in a jam

they start to pull the cars apart
smearing blood they turn
the glass to dust the cars will

separate and a woman sits on a pillow thrown
from a van she holds
a towel to her head
it—everything—has turned
or is turning
red then rusty red

Crowded House loops
on my CD but it's the light
the sky's more than half the sphere I imagine
palms pierce like spears
the underside the smell of a tidal plain
explains the thin blanket fogging
the robinblue skydome

the cars wrench apart
the wrench resembling a bark
and a snap
I never dreamed

it's over

Recursive

pissing outside on a cool night
clouds massing past lit from below
sodium orange yellow like a fleeing
dog my legs are spread in case the wind
shifts two planes are passing overhead
heading for nearby airports and I
know someone is reading in them
maybe a little piece about pissing
outside on a cool

night

Lozenge Arranged

rarely I watch the sun lighten
the sun rise
rarely listen to birds begin their twitter
the tail end of nocturnal animals
heading for shadows
those days are saved for travel
or early meetings or rituals
breakfast with a stranger to talk over strangeness
preparation for a 9am speech
checking bags for a trip
or checking the oil before driving off
one time in Kingman I stopped before leaving
to clean the insects from my window
I reached behind my seat for my stash of cookies
imagined the woman I never met
turning to wave bye her hair rich and complex
in the red light bridging a large gap
parts of her still warm from embrace and touch
her mind focused on warming yesterday's coffee
before a day paying bills
my mind focused on the 800 miles
left before the next one

Stashed Below the Tongue

Swan Song

just before I go
I'll find a dirt road lined with eucalyptus
with a wire fence behind them holding back
the gold grass and aromatics succulent green
red bark dust rising in an effect resembling life
with the sun declining behind a back row of oaks
I'll be fresh from a bed where someone would have
tried all they could to acclimate me to the warmth of
herself and the nest not knowing all in store was this walk
down the road and a long deep and unrefreshing sleep alone
at last completely alone

No Last Journey

Waking

no sparrow fears death

flying takes so much faith
in being light there is no

room for anything but appetite
and an unreasoned score sung

faithfully not fitfully
at dawn

To Lessons

Mudhead

walking down the street scratching
watching the florid women walk past
my pants are streaked with grease
blotched with white paint
my sweatshirt carries the patterns of native cave art
sleeves unravelled shoulder seams unstitched
collar pulled loose from the arms and panels
my once thick hair pulled back in a Hopi
barrette showing a pueblo scene corn rain motif
a mudhead my shoes soled with vibram are nearly worn
to flat my job is to enact by negative example
what should not be done

In Pursuit (Manhattan)

Fascination With the Other

the windows I look out of
don't face you we both sit
& write our lives

away making up
a serious message
from the play

of noise and sense
are they different from the birds at dawn
shuffling from branch to wire

yelling it out
holding fire across small valleys
their secret's not out

if you can lure one close by
I mean really close perhaps
at a picnic table where your scraps

are more important than death you can hear
them singing and chattering all the time
nonstop like a chatterbox comedian

it makes you wonder
how can all that material be stored
up in those tiny heads

and if that's true
what of you
who or what is your enemy?

Explanation Protocol

God's Confession

music—I've put it on
set to repeat the headphones
close the world off
it goes on & on
the music my memories
the silence the room I'm in is
the silence the music makes
of everything else
like a pump the circling sounds
the cycling memories stay alive
by simple repetition force
out words like these
keep me from hearing the phone
ringing a line to God
finally ready to confess

Stuck On Repeat

music itself has a tendency to release the mind of all rational thought processes

keep the sweat that forms on your
head trapped in its sweatband
the sweat of thinking doesn't interest me
even the sweat of work and working out
as pure as sweat such as this can be
still reeks of a point the point of existing
or of existing better instead
strip off your clothes and sweatband
clean this moisture off completely
without shame perfume yourself
with yourself neutrally presented
stand sit lie down exert yourself
sexually without using a muscle
without looking no listening tasting
is out let me
taste that sweat the absence of rational thought
is the essence of living as Lorca has continually
tried to teach

No Sweat

Dwelling All Day

thirty years ago we lived in farmland
in Illinois—30 years 2 wives 2 children
and a long career ago. on a day like today
the cicadas would come and buzz
the wind would smell of corn and soy plants
we would not hover over computers or listen
to digital music the windows at night would be open
and we'd listen to the storm come up the slightest
valley toward us. distant thunder and strobes
unconnected then closer and closer together
and the air growing grassy if a funnel cloud
had formed somewhere. we had no ambitions
and didn't think much about anything
we'd take days off to read a book or ride
50 miles to a park and back. our friends
would come over and we'd grill steaks
and make tough salads. a big night was watering
the tomatoes by hand. night passed calmly
we slept the night though
the sun woke us up
we cooked simple breakfasts
the commute took 5 minutes.

now here
after tasting an ambitious success
on the Coast I dreamed of when adolescent
the only thing left is failure
and dwelling on it all day
all night

Dwelling All Night

Bare Bones Story

the bridge they threw the body from spans
a dry river bed that in Spring
overruns and courses with the spume
of snowmelt churning over the rocks
erasing evidence of extreme lethargy
inactivity when Summer's loathsome vertical light
and flattening heat entice the rocks to harden
to boneshattering proportions they threw the body
from the back of a yellow pickup one with his foot
on the toolbox and the other with his foot
on the sidewall they threw the body through the gap
where two girders Y'ed onto a pier 30' up from the tallest
rock what were they thinking when is the next deluge

Ripped From the Headlines

Bike To Philo

the road to Philo is upwind there
downwind back when the corn cracks
in the midday stillness the percussion
brings on cicadas volunteering their racket
in waves like lust passing through the bedroom
on a sweatnight with my luck a storm will come
up before I get back to town even with its forewinds
pushing me 25 30 mph past the corn that hours
ago couldn't move without its parchment racket
Philo up on a low hill

its strange Victorian
the cottonwoods we hid under when the rain
was heavy as a pond and the hail afterwards
peeled the paint off every car still on the streets
my luck with storms never improved every trip
to Philo it seemed provided evidence on evidence
that I didn't belong or that the sense of nature
was never come back as then she is still what her mother
feared she would remain her mother now safe
in the cemetery on Philo's hill twin like Emily
she stays indoors and waits for the storms
each Summer afternoon signaling the hour
I would slam her screen porch door
and hightail it back to Champaign and something
about centuries

Unspeakable Muse

Commonalia

unaccustomed to tight fitting clothes
he shut his eyes while walking toward sunrise
at sunset when the heat in the bayside city
reverberated across the stone and concrete
street caverns and tendrils of ocean cold
tickled the evening's mood

the sight of them
made him nostalgic and he just hated to be
sentimental about panty lines

The Poetry of Animals

Approximation

lovers hand in hand stiff
as stone and cold from the long night walk
the particulars of the venue sashay
with them to the bedroom their clothes pile up
as if on a hot date of their own
their love styles wrinkle their skin
on the cup shaped side of things
after the cinders going up the chimney
signal flares at the lighting of fire
the deep throated clink of ceramic cups
on a granite countertop speaks of their station
while the sweat and yellow stained sheets
speak of the nearing of another crossroads

As Things Lower

Sentiment on Scale

the scale is small
of little towns scattered in a just-broken-
up huddle and the distance from where he lands
to the hill that claimed his little family
is long in the geometry of that place
but short in the span of the foggy mind
comprehending little more than the spaces
between the markers but balking at the greenery
closing in making a mockery of the altering skies
when the distances remain constant or increases
with the passing of memory

Distance in the Abstract

Note Monotonotonotonotonotonotony

an unpeaked wave comes up over a stand of rocks
rises up in a fit of attention then falls over forward
and runs up the sandy slope
one half running back the other drunk
by sand the ocean seems to shrink
from the shame of presumption and the half-success
of its thrust to make an impression on the edge

the floating tops of seaweed rock in the sun
wiping and wiping the water's unfaithful mirror
a low wave flows over the rocks
lifts but never peaks and creeps up the slope stopping halfway
slides back and joins the pooled water forming the stupendous
bulk of the oceans and seas pulsing like an idiot's clock
or inconstancy incumbent a wave comes

repeats its brethrens' passage and another wave waits
while the low point lingers each wave makes
its appearance out of nowhere as if unexpectedly
but the statistics of the situation commands
that each wave falls within approximate bounds
but impossible can happen at any moment
perhaps the next wave that comes will wash up to our blanket
soak us soak the dunes above us soak the sawgrass pond
soak the road soak all the way to Milwaukee and ping
off a shooting drop of seawater with gazorch to make it
into orbit and the sloughing off of our lives on earth will begin

but the sole occupation I have lying next to you is the sun
expanding its effect of light on my constricting headache
that varies its flux oceanlike and I fear one day
the pain will extend past my consciousness and I'll crush
my own skull in the clenching of my teeth and at that point I suspect
you will move your ass two more feet away

Not Monotony

Three Violences

three dimensions define
physical the part that's affected
when you're thrown through the air
and land breaking half
your bones

informational the part that's affected
when you're thrown through computer animation
and land inflating into
the zeppelin on the Led Zeppelin album

conceptual that part that's affected
when you're thrown into Plato's cave
and land as a shadow on his wall breaking
like a wave on my brain

somewhere there's a scene where the shoes
of a child lie but the wind never blows

And A Puzzle

Listening

sitting in a hot house
day by day Florida the fountain of age
motes and wasps baying dogs each night
the car won't start and she has no one but her son
thousands of miles away she won't call
the food's gone neighbors are right across the street
in the next yard right behind she won't talk
to them to anyone

today the first light breaks onto a small hill
nothing marks it special
traffic passes below it's a small place
this is in the North in the West the son
reflects on the concepts
listening calling

Calling

[Click]

there are struggles
like the one to lift one's heavy body off the bed
and make it to the toilet 3 times a night
facing the fact that fittings are eroding
seeing who will sleep in the same bed
with you and realizing your luck [turn—in case Jo reads this]
fixing once more the unhappy pipes
reinstalling the operating system [high tech tip of the hat]
watching your average bike speed decrease each year
noticing your rival pull away [metaphor]
reading your early writing and seeing you didn't really get better
watching your diploma yellow and not care [intentional ambiguity]
wondering each night around now whether you'll wake tomorrow
feeling the counter counting down is near 0

and there are other things [click]

[Clunk]

Near SFMOMA

water forced through channels
in the concrete not like rivering

through a wall I said
pulsing the overflow
defy fashion with body heavens
the subtlety of the penis
enlargement mega-site let's imagine
the look on her face

I recall the corporate patio 30 floors up
looking at it from another building
looking down but it's
not there

anymore?

Passive Blame

I woke to a prompt
damn thing crashed again
no response

an app
that crashes the OS is bad
as a yellow stain she can't recall
bad system call? like asking your heart
to think or maybe it's something I installed
corrupting system data? I tried it on
other systems and the crashes are less frequent
but they happen my machine crashes only overnight
cron daemon? nothing special but I turned
them off anywho

I did a clean build
checked the cvs history and nothing I changed
should cause this I diffed the files with previous versions
and I don't know what I did
checked the system logs and even ran the disk diagnostics
in case it's corruption

we shipped it a month ago
and we hear reports of strange crashes
prompts appearing mornings
lost work from reboots servers dropping
connections hours lost recovering from journals
yes it's safe but annoying

they look funny
at me since they're sure it's my bug
sometimes I get a stack dump or odd exception
or it runs for days a week without anything
it passes all the tests I've inserted print statements
extra tests consistency checks we've walked the code
in groups I've even had others recode the suspects

nothing nothing nothing
can explain it I don't sleep well I trace the code
in my head I pace watching the blue lights in the city
waiting for a sign from my machine running fine all night
I've carved a fetish from turquoise and poised in on my cpu
a badger polished it as best I can whenever I doze off
I wake to a prompt whose bug is this?

Heartfelt Aggression

Industrial Strength Tips

the lights fulfilling the open space
of the conference center, the landing
where we exited, the rambunctious speeding
of taxis and autos when the light turns,
the reverberations of sirens coming to our one
spot from one spot by 10 routes, the city-illuminated
fog blowing in yellow highlighting the sky behind blue,
the white lights tracing the curved top in the neo-deco
hotel 3 blocks away, the scent of brackish water and salt water
from the Bay and marshlands we can't see, the exotic
vocalizing of visitors from far away, the circle she scribes
as we adjust ourselves to each other and the ocean
wind, and falling is, leaving is, longing is,
pirouetting is the mechanism of disintermediation

& Tools

Fragments

the hall frozen
into a passage for ladie's choice
night presents few choices
though there is the seduction
of hypertext linking the sex scenes
into either a man's or a woman's serious
adventure

as else is fixed
or worse in the sense of repaired
when we crave the maddeningly irreproducible
the hall beckons with bright sunrise at one end
and the other

fragments of its consequences
cup us in the scoop of fiction's hands
the verge of exploding is what we are on
metaphors collected initially in footnotes
have been swept to the end enabling
superior lies

for all the talk of words
the peeling tires trace their perfect
enunciations into a proposition neither
true nor false & if you begin well
chances are

the end will almost take

Else Is Fixed

Gothic Metal

passing by the field being plowed
in the thirsty afternoon by the coast
near Castroville preparing for artichokes
the dust rises at sundown in coils
encircling the artistic need
for answers to the stupid
questions love confuses with
death

Lesson

Lacuna

what's the purpose of melody
how can distortion be truth
grimace signaling an invitation
propriety makes you a Mrs
in the classic scene of a car driving down valley
clarity signals the distortion of truth
melody is an invitation to purpose
Mrs grimace makes a classic scene

where others require clarity of thought
refusal through the grimace
propriety invitations to considered teas
I require the animal vision
of a language I can't know

No Such

Technapology

about our machines
art is laid like a woman
next to a man and everyone
knows the machines will win
every time and on and on
without failure

 until
some bit of electricity
eats through a diode
or the last of the oil drips away
& wears off the polished race
which will heat up and burn away
like the circuits on the other side
of the diode

 like the woman
when the man has finished
art will lie there until the machines
are taken to the dump
she will squat until all traces are gone
then she will wait for her next satisfaction

Drip & Wear Off

In Constant Direction

poets rarely pose the question
directly preferring some noisy
approximation like the linear scientists
from Newton on down who drew
lines boxing us in like robots
in a survival lab rooting each other out
in Darwinian insanity

speaking of which
nothing adapts
something else is created
maybe better
or not
and things die
populations—get used to thinking this way

well, some subjugated poet
is busy typing this in thinking
HE IS GETTING BETTER
when in fact I will look later
at his effluvia and select and revise

the only practice he's getting is typing
and let's count his fingers for him
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
O frabjous joke

He's Worse Than Bugs

a tax bill—

who would know that the passing of one generation to the next
would be marked by the tax bill
last year in their name and this
in mine my address
arriving due 4 weeks—

this is the letter I'll read
the fact I'll take note of
the message destined to change destiny
the portion of me that remains constant
the essence of bureaucracy worth celebrating
the efficiency of the mundane
the line the edge that clarifies a fundamental construction

this is more important than the day
I buried them both and my daughter

didn't cry

The Town I Deserve

what waits
in the air beyond the next hill
will breathing get harder
will pulling out the next few words
pulverize my sense of indirection

fundamentally the thought of being alone
of having no father no mother
no brothers no sisters no wives
no readers no fans no guy wires

only the mistakes I am able to amble upon
the little tears I expose at the least bit
of sentimentality

what do these things say
how cold is the space beyond the sky
how cold is the place beneath the earth

no one comes to watch
to strip down

my town is dripping from eaves
onto sidewalks into gutters and down storm
drains to an oil-heavy river whose
course I never noticed nor knew
nor hoped would be fundamental

And Its Drainage Problems

Train Coming Up

up a slope barely against level
a heavy freight labors outside my hotel room
outside a small city outside the scope
of large places and influences

outside the normalcy of literature
we make little circles like bees
whose scribble dance informs through habit
but we inform through inhabitation
the little room we make that no one wants
to live in where the little descriptions
and stories can't appeal and ache
like a kidney stone

that train is still pulling
it spends more energy shaking
everything around it than making
progress—yes like that let's write

Grade Slight But Impossible

Storm Approaching

she hung back in the shadows
curtains blocking as many lights as they could
behind the lights and behind buildings and streets
a disturbing river flowing slowly

standing by the window I watched her with desire
she I'm sure wanted me to kneel by her and stroke her hair
I weighed the possibilities of what she wanted
what she would do if I guessed wrong
how much would I lose
the risks

soon my eyes watered
from the sudden change in temperature
of an approaching storm
and drops began to form on the window panes
and then drop to the carpet we bought downtown

when the rain slowed later that night
and the room was emptied
and the river was flowing slowly once more
my head began to ache
instead impossibly of my heart

Closer Than I Thought

Rear Push Engines

the bar's green ceiling was made 100
years ago & painted last year
the genders of some patrons are not obvious
the beers are universal from Atlanta Munich Prague Boston
Bob Dylan singing "All Along the Watchtower"
Jethro Tull doing "Aqua Lung"
'60s' dresses emphasize sexual views

the complex close harmonies Brian Wilson
devised indicate his genius
and the syrupy melodies over '50s' chord structures
acted like honey to my ears
I drove and became the solitary man
of "In My Room"

in the Blue Ridge Mountains the singing
and cooking are simple involving wide variations
in pitch and butter the writing here is idiomatic
syrupy and they beg for emotion
when there is so much left to do
with the reason

For Going Uphill

Scrambling

sentence-frames
given enough of them
tighten each word's noose around a meaning

when the trapdoor flops down
meaning slips neck-free
gets the hell out of Dodge

Horse Sense

All In A Day

all day the cows pull apart
grass and reconstitute it as themselves
while around them in surrounding fields
students learning the ways of cows
mow hay bale it load the large bales
on wagons and move them to the barns

the day warms until the air turns to heat
the wind settle in vales and valleys
while the river robbed of rivulets
slows and delivers its warmed water
to larger rivers ever farther downstream

the cows regard the field they're browsing
the barn and silo nearby in the field
the students sweating on the open tractors
the sun launching its means of heat their way

all with the content of a full belly
worked working and worked over

no not good enough

all with the love no needs spawns

yeesh

all like a day at the beach

uh uh

all like the dumbs cows they are

truth is like this

Cows Dream About

Club Obvious

the old woman regards the poems
appreciating only the ones that make her cry
the young one regards them
closing the book when she regains her moisture
I followed the one who walked out and down
toward the brown river along a path
made famous by the passage of women
fireflies without coaching blink in sync

if words fit like boxes inside boxes
the meaning of "smoke" will switch on and off
between fly free and die depending only on
where the stanza break

happens to fall

Essence of Memory

Wishes Like Ground Effects

I've asked for one thing on the last beach
after the sun rises painting the waves before me blue

for the golden woman to walk down the beach
toward me her hips rolling like ocean waves
her hair like halos looping behind her

I've asked for one more thing on the last beach
after the sun hits zenith and the sun bakes the sand sin-white beach

for the auburn woman to wrap her arms around my chest
her legs around my waist her waves of understanding
around the slightest pebble on the infinite beach

I've asked for one last on this unreal beach
as the sun drops away painting all the deep orange of filling up

for the dark woman to pull her mouth away from my ear
to let loose her arms from around my neck to pull
herself up and form a bundle of beliefs and walk away

never looking back never shifting her pace
never disturbing the sand beyond packing it down

That This Would Really Happen

Others in the Night

the light down
for some hunting begins
others lie where they stand
when the light drops
below a waking level
I walk from barn to barn
where hogs grunt in their sleep
and piglets suckle in the last
of the light they lie on concrete
dream the dream of large but short animals
who know they need endure
no sudden awakenings
as men sometimes do when the night
fills with rage so strong and persistent
they wake and touch first themselves
and then their others

Mystery of Sleeping Deeply

Fragments of Foils

when the snow had fallen enough
that it began to cover the ground
and the spaces in the streetlight's shadow had filled in
enough to form a tentative silence
one fragment of void fell away
and a new one in an unexpected place
turned an enriched blue
mimicking the happiest day

Soliloquy

Abstract Anacoluthon

the river has spread beyond its banks
trees their bases covered by water flowing slowly
unexpectedly don't thrive soon falling into a drowsy
course of rotting

meanwhile birds nesting in these trees thrive
and dispense their fledglings before the leaves begin
to yellow and the river subsides from the uneven flooding

and while this small situation plays out
somewhere an unknown man is portraying the heroic
in a tense confrontation which for the life of the innocent
will play a role as important as a brave surrender
when defeat is not yet assured

On Learning of Vercingetorix

Make Her My Queen

waitresses with faces hard as barn planks
chiseled in the manner of the Old Man of the Mountain
(now rubble at the base of Cannon)
their bodies encased in gray dresses or pants outfits
under aprons apparently
used for children and men's pleasure years before
now house the resolve habits form
in people who work at diners

I order grits with anything buttery
or greasy from the griddle
and coffee brewed fresh but tasteless
orange juice reconstituted from something only like
orange juice

that night when I reach down
I'll think of one of them
make her my queen
I'll shut off the in-room air conditioner
open the window so the sounds of crickets creak in quickly
and then the coal train pulled and pushed up the little slope
will expend as much rocking the motel as heaving the coal uphill
first past where I dream of her
then past the diner where she attends to men like me
she who was surprised to learn that coal trains roll pass
on the other side of 40 every hour
all day though I watched it frazzle the surface of my coffee

Every Day for 2 Weeks

Word Work

two houses faced their worst fears
this past year not a window cracked open
nor the door no water flowed into the pipes
nor were foods cooked a car sat idle
in the wrong garage somewhere a hole cut into sod
healed over

I am crawling alongside fear
who is hiding from the laborers
whose job is to shelter the faltering
and fallen

I stay away thinking work is more important
when the words would follow me anywhere
and lay down their very essences in answer
to my whims what they say would be similar
no identical to my lies

keep in touch
is a metaphor I've dropped
like a food item neither tasty
nor at a useful eating temperature

Scaffold In Place

Satan

he can do it all

ride through town fast and quickly tickle
each girl to see who laughs seductively

spend a decade in a city and bring the feather
close closer too close to the nape of the neck

he needs followers
but not too many for
his management skills are limited

he prefers the lawsuit
to motivation and morale

he sees the ceo and thief
the same but prefers the ceo
because of delusion

in sexual harassment
he prefers the harassed

he needs a challenge
so those predisposed to evil are left to God
and childish ideas

like purgatory
he shouts from op-ed pages
"this great middle America
has basic common-sense values"

he reaps all day
at night he is the bookmark
in cottony bibles

he is the advertiser
who mudslings
at evil

for great proud virtue
is the stuff of shit

he can do it all

the guardians of good are
inside not outside
the cage

He Can Do It All

Satan

he's an artist
the evil get breaks

eradication or say
another chance
at God's dude ranch

he likes the smug good
finds ways to lay claim
and God likes the fun

they meet for beers
discuss how to carve things up
keep us on our toes

black & white pose no challenge
represent little thought so they're
disposed of quick

grays make their days
someone with a dilemma
delicious

making great black art
out of something white

that's his sort of challenge
and God's his biggest fan

Black Art

Inquisition

God looks on
as his gatekeeper questions
Satan

Jesus
playing in a sandbox
with a chariot set listens too

like any small town
the sound of a pipe emptying water
into a pool dominates the square

Satan begins
the roads filled with holes
have been returned

to wandering fields
paths have been restored
and the worshipful have been laid to rest

the principles of temptation
have been defined and honed
and no one tested whose outcome

was in doubt and they have been cleared
to endure no further than the gate
they choose but now

let me tell you of a man
walking the edge of a two-rut road
I met my first day

I asked "do you know
it is my job
to tempt you?"

he bent to pick
the ticks embedded in his skin
and I could see the sun bother him

"God has taught me
it's my job
to tempt you"

I did my work
according to God's
plan as all have been taught

Satan Ends

Carson Fantasies

we fantasize the sea
once more falling open
then pushing up shut
the clouds are dissipating
or turning blue and
the wind is calming or
it is warming

tonight is my night to suppose
everyone is leaving me behind
while I file away the edges of my writing
remorse simple things
perplex my sentences
force them into simple cages
when I desire the lovingly
obscure andrenalin-soaked
coughs and quacks
of wifeless prose

the ocean for me
is adept at rhythms
and nothing more
not even the metaphors
that drive sirens silly

I pack up my Anne Carson
and head for a confluence

The Last To Know

the bitter smells of a dying river
sugar maples filled to overflowing

the beech tree by the corner—
drop a diagonal for 100'

the years I walked here not sure where
whether it would be filled

the boring long same rows
the heavy climb up a long slight hill

now things I find are mine
something like a god or their nightmare

I try not to think of dying
the sudden stop

not being part of it
the insult the harsh criticism

the gap is mine to fill
without a stopgap the river would flow endlessly

the freeze-frame not
the film that continues on

Poetry Equipment

sitting before my writing equipment
bought to display these words in perfect beauty
on a white technologically perfect
with deep blacks in the electronic inks

I've magnified the font to 300%

so I can really see the curves of the letters
antialiased on the screen and as I type they
appear quick and perfectly lined up and I feel
like Strong Bad there words are The Cheat
sitting below out of sight and popping up
they are sitting in a plastic vegetable crisper
and as I hear them they sound out mmff mmmfff
mf some say poetry means and a poem is a perfect
little package with a turn somewhere and emotion
popping out they speak of Franz Wright
that stinking bastard who's drunk himself into some
kind of corner and he makes his living bad-mouthing
himself his father was too sickeningly perfect at the end
and so we can't sound like him so we veer instead
like a car driver picking the pedestrian over the headon
toward Stafford but what's the difference
The Cheat's got nothing to say
and the equipment is too expensive to run any more
tonight

Probable Yellow

lying here the tall hedge blocks
the sky at a random angle
the new growth is probably yellow
meaning it is many colors throughout the day
but most of them are yellow
but now as the sun ripens for down
it's orange over mixed green
pallid blue behind & behind me
the sun going/gone down
this is a decor to recall later
when writing but not this
not this warmup
a decor of mental props
a saloon front without a saloon
a stance like lovemaking
the surprise beneath the dark circlets
the decor means
colors change when ends are reached
signal significance
move inside like God moved inside God
to make room for human meaning
but this is when the caretakers line up
and clink together their hoes and rakes

She Left After We

she left her sweater on the floor
after we screwed right there
after we were done she grabbed between her legs
she left me there and went into the bathroom
she left quite a lot of water in her wake after cleaning herself up
after we were done with that and the cleaning up and she put on her clothes
she left leaving behind her sweater which I knew was hers
after we parted because it had her smell on it it was something
she left along with the sweater (actually on it) but she never acknowledged being there
after we had lunch the next day and for days and weeks afterwards
she left it a mystery just lying there and I'm sure it's my trophy
after we talked about it she said she would never speak of it or to me again
she left for good but that sweater is still there on the floor

people wonder why it's there still on the floor

Enough For Me

the horse ran off
after we made love under cottonwoods
by Turkey Creek after got up on hers
after cleaning herself up after
she untied my horse while I was turning
my legs right-side out and my horse started
to run toward the horizon over sulfurous
sand casting illusions upward

she rode off after him
maybe to return
but I'm here with water flowing past
and game here and there
and the memory of her solacious sexual
grip and one more thing
thankfully
my gun

Aphorism Without Amusement

the reward for heavy snow
weighing down thin branches

the delicate balancing of brute
bulk

the lightness of existence
bending

the breaking point
broken upon

As Useful as an Essay

Songtongue, footbird, milkgoat,
goatbird, tonguemilk, songfoot,
footgoat, songmilk, birdtongue,

tonguefoot, birdsong, goatmilk,
milksong, birdfoot, tonguegoat,
goatsong, milkbird, foottongue,

tonguebird, footmilk, songgoat,
goattongue, footsong, birdmilk,
milkfoot, birdgoat, tonguesong.

Poem Survives Breakup of Author

it's not proper to keep
too many poems around
to hoard them and work
them hard like mules—
they can't produce
further

if you think by languishing
they would bloom—

you just pick at them

they almost certainly had time
to understand their fate

Poor Substitute

poems today are written
by the lowest bidder
training provided by mean
practice

stairs stacked upward
seem perfect but the shaky minds
of men can't build perfection
of any form

the hand shaking
is the handwriting
of God

or things like Him

Minute 1

I've seen her close
under the small trees making their green
her sides in shaded silhouette
like the hourglass God uses
to count out
our sins which cascade
out of our mothers' wombs
just as we do

I've dipped my fingers
in the sap of bitter trees
and pulled up stinging grasses
with just my lips

the water flowing slowly
out of the soggy soil
carries the love of God to us
carries every taste from His lips
to ours

Quick Clutch

under the jacaranda the water bubbles up
from a frigid fountain

many small seeds try to take hold
but light winds blur their attempts

along the back wall ivy
smothers the life out of all that's valuable as long

as it becomes green some time
during the coldest year a year

with the least light a pear's
sweet fruit warms even as its juice

cools in its matrix
ferments into an obsessive surrender

Choose Your Pickle

if all the snowflakes
fell into lines and patterns
painted a message like the snow
on old tvs except
cogent or coherent
showed us a message with great
meaning and refinement
a message that fell like a curtain
on the forest floor
something that appeared at random
and was random for many minutes
until a flashlight caught the pattern

how would it fall to the ground
as a fragile melody or hard
reason

Stares

heat pulls the sweat from you
then the sweat stops and your
energy is pulled too soon you wither
and dreams start if only

you could learn from them
write them down with embellishment
toward the real it would be worth
the bother of this type of death but

the sun sets and soon the desert is
cold the sounds of water flowing
fills the night air sullen black all the way
up to the sparkles where maybe a poet

stares back while you stare up

Talk About a Whimper

the end of our wait
for the estate of my mother
to close has occurred and the document
sent that the lawyer claims
passes all her estate to me is called
a "Waiver of Full Administration Affidavit"
and now I've become once more her son
and not a fiduciary

Dumb Jock

we burned leaves on the edges of the road
where the sandy strips were oily from cars
dripping and so autumn held for us
the warming smells of hearths
and the air added old-world chokes
on the color of sunlight revealing the reds
and oranges and yellows of the change of seasons
it was the time of year I'd burn
for the girl I loved who wasn't able to respond
to my silences and longing though she wore twice
a week the green sweater and suede skirt
that twisted like leafsmoke in a curling wind
my dumbfounded mind while her mouse blonde hair
spilled onto another he-man shoulder
and I moved the books from my right arm
to my left

5 Maybe 9

the window wasn't fogged over
but nothing was visible through it
or the back yard—if there was one—
and woods behind that—or the field
or the garage or the barn or alley—
nothing was there but the black
and rain I think since I could hear in on the roof
corrugated tin would be a poetic way to describe
it based on the sound of the heavy rain
sound like nails poured and sliding down
onto the wet ground or it could have been
a slate roof with hail though the metal reverberation
made it sound less so

then the flash

5 maybe 9 distinct jagged jolts
blue lights like strobes

yard with debris
swing twisting in stages
junk car no doors
pools of popping water
disturbing wind

and the woman
w/flooded skirt tangling
hair whipped

as if the storm were just a stray thought
occurring around her on her
way in to lie down with me in a bed
in this stranger's left-behind home
on a night unimaginable but glimpsed
5 maybe 9 times

Shown

photos of the dead
they never see them
so their sideways stares
and purpling wounds are not
a matter of pride for them
their corkscrew arms
and bent upon legs
have little to do with their hugs
and slow hand-in-hand walks by the river
that one grimaces in the likeness
of a dog crushed beneath a flatbed
says nothing of his smile
this reminds me
the dead have better things to do with their time than war
it's called nothing

Killer Kisses

we paused to kiss
by the creek where it becomes
a river by a well where it becomes
our nourishment we paused
to evaluate the relative temperatures
of our lips and soon
were lost in systemizing thoughts

that night Mars loomed larger
than anyone had the right to see
they say it's red with the luster of hatred
but the sweet lights of the city
cast it to pink and the war of love
is engaged

Year Ago

now a year later
they both are gone

not long ago they both were in the living
room laughing at their shows
some still are on and being made anew

not long ago we were touring the garden
pointing out what was growing well or blooming
and what needed a change

not too long ago she was cooking me breakfast
heavy on butter and eggs even though she could
hardly walk and it wasn't

too long ago that she was alone
and it was dark her worst fear
the lightning was on its way it seems

long ago when she must have known
what faced her in the darkness strobed by lightning
was the one thing no one could help her now it was so long

ago her father taught her this was the way
she must prepare every moment of her life
for this

Reso-Phonic

the bottle is like a jug round at the shoulders
then narrowing to the base from the shoulders up
it flares out then in and finally up and slightly out
with a finger ring off the neck to hold the jug to your lips
with its body on your hitched up shoulder

screw caps from the beginning
from a time when wine was considered upscale or highbrow
and caps meant cheap

I bought wine like this for the boys
when I looked older and they seemed to need it
to buck up their courage for the years to come
when playing star would become more menial

it clogged their heads but cleared the way
to slogging out of bed to work and back again
the only good to come from the work of Carlo
was to provide a lonely master a slide made from the neck
of such a bottle to let loose the noise of a National
Reso-Phonic Guitar on Venice Beach

the bottle keeps it up
grapes keep growing and expertise is misplaced
the bottle makers know their trade

Yikes (My First Political Poem)

the first thing intolerance tolerates
not is tolerance

there was a reason tvs were black & white only
for so many years: it's easier that way

you need all the white there is to be white
just a little black makes you black

reasoning and logic are easier to use
when only true and false are permitted

some call these 0 and 1
then second-grade arithmetic is enough

to see color requires neurons that do more
black & white is just a difference

intolerance is ok when it locks onto
altruism but when it turns to the self

Le Berceau

Gustave Caillebotte seer in blue
shadows of blue the front parts of small waves
—all blue—
the effet de neige in the view of rooftops
must be blue for that is in effect
the effect of blue
at least no one said something like

“seen up close they are
incomprehensible and hideous
seen from a distance they are
hideous and incomprehensible”

all this shades to a vague troubled gray
that excites the enthusiasm
of the followers

at a distance one hails a masterpiece
in this stream of life this trembling
of great shadow and light but come closer

it all vanishes
there remains only an indecipherable
chaos of palette scrapings
innumerable black tongue lickings

what a bugle call for those who listen carefully
how it resounds far in the future

Well It's a Funny Impression

Vue Prise à Travers un Balcon

a narrow scene
in the apartment of the bourgeoisie
of business
a man partly cut off by the right
reads a paper
he is prepared to put it down for any reason
the woman stands well-posed by the balcony

looking out across the street
she is prepared to turn away for any reason
it seems but three facts prevent the scene
from breaking beyond its boredom

the only colors are blue gold
black and white

five capital letters from a sign across
the way read NT__RBU

as if painted by accident by
the sidehairs of Caillebotte's brush
a man stares back at her

and this explains the 2 colors I missed at first
the green leaves of a potted lily and the earthy orange
of its pot

Craft To His Fingertips

Raboteurs de Parquets

they work hard but remain thin
thin arms narrow chests
seen above and from the front as they kneel and scrape
what we see of their faces is strange and unpleasant

wine on the hearth shirts and coats in a heap
shavings growing curled what is remarkable
is the light through the elegant window behind
the way where they have scraped is dull
where they haven't reflects the light into our eyes

the scrapers backlit talk quietly
the painter thinks of the perspective
and of the beautiful nudes he could have painted

the good taste of this is doubtful

Such An Approach Was Necessary to Lend Some Interest to the Subject

August 1, 2003

Soleil Couchant, Sur La Seine, Effet d'Hiver

sun as tourist
departing the Seine
water surface unstill reflecting wearily
men in boats a conspiracy of sticks
city fogged and smoked
a raft of smoke flagging
in the wind's direction
swarming color astonishing foam
what is in store seems the effect
of winter seen through the healed eye
seizing

Date Added to Signature Later

Moe

I met Moe
and Larry while they were slap-
sticking around Pleasure Island
after I'd cut my hair like Moe's
he signed an address book my mother brought along

did he notice the tribute
I paid by scissors

Optics as Secrets

lefthanders appeared
suddenly in 1420
along with realism as if art
were done all with mirrors
left as right and so on
up for down was it tracing

drawing upside down
we focus on the visual
not the cognitive
the dark room

was it the walls outside
or other ones
that turned the dark to art

O

above a helicopter ascends
curves around and away
from 500' to 3000'
then the buzzards circle
but I'm riding a bicycle
fast downhill past the sugary smelling weeds
and their darkness is blurred in my bad eye
but the helicopter descends
curves around toward me and down
from 3000' to 500'
then the buzzards circle
the sugary smell masks
for me the smell that attracts them
a pair of vultures with sexually red heads
above the helicopter ascends
curves up and around
from 500' to 3000'
I am bicycling away from this
the darkness in my bad eye
the sound of the helicopter
the sugary smell of weeds
wind from the sea in my face
all the grass around yellow and brown
all the trees green with leathery leaves
my feet spin locked to my pedals
the vultures rise and circle
circle and descend
the sugary smell of weeds blows by as I pedal to the sea
where something as straightforward as beauty
has been evacuated

0

Too Pretend

I hold in one hand
the scent of a sweet weed
bursting with scent and ooze

and in

the other the meanings of half
the words you will ever say

and then

the wind blows—
the scent bursts
away from the one hand

and when

the time comes
pale ink will dance
on our graves

Whose Isn't?

ok so she steps up onto the long center stage
in a torn clinging white dress
the music is not loud but the reflections of neon
ATM signs in the mirrors are
she sprawls she crawls she splays her way
through first song down to a thong
her highheeled feet thump and crack on the hardwood floor
a sound the blaring clubs cover
bills folded over low rails lure her to the men
or the few women scattered
and she crosses spreads curls and folds her legs
into perfect viewing positions

song two

beneath her thong has no meaning
and the invention of shaved nudity is its own ars
she open and shows
her eyes cheery from veiled longing
look deeply and blankly from face to face
she bends and hangs upside down
the sound of her plastic shoes reveal the artist at work
her name is Destiny
whose isn't?

Get Off

oh superb
let's be superb
while we're at it let's
keep our power on keep it growing
through the window stained by grease and smoke
the restaurant sign across the street buzzes on and off
the bridge takes then releases the weight of freight trains
moving east then later west
we're superb
the pick of the litter
not litter like the liquid lux cans rusting out by the railbed
but litter like the cute we-uns men choose from

hog's laid down his 20 and we've buzzed him in
let's see whose little skirt
is the turn on

Written On Her

she was covered in tattoos
except her face hands and feet
but beneath her tight pants tendrils of green ink
dropped down her arms were covered in red green and blue
where her shirt rode up in back there were tiger's eyes
the ink spread upwards from her breasts
her hair'd been colored red
she carried two beers to the outside table
where she sat with a honey blonde with hair long enough to sit on
and they shared fashion magazines

between where she sat and I did
other women were sitting eating from yellow and blue plates
brightly colored food
deep dark green leaves and spears
tomato red sauce and salsa
yellow corn and cheese on brown bread
toasted and oiled

around us buildings sheathed in tinted glass
reflected from everywhere the sun approaching
the fog gathered on the far side of the hills
and I watched her slowly turn each page
while she studied the women posed upon it in camisoles
and purple bras with the green granite behind her
behind them sipping their beers
and all around us what men make
including ink
including patterns
including her

Nowhere Name

did we appear from nowhere
my father's name when he died was made up
my father's name when he was born is nowhere else
google altavista
no one can find another with his name
I have no relatives
no one knows where his father is buried
his name does not appear in the book of all names
in the country his father came from
imagine this if you can
imagine being literally nobody
did I write this

All Strangely Sincronizza You

to Rome 300 persons have entered
at the same time in a store of books and discs
asking to give them nonexistent biography
of CLAUDIUS ZAMBONI

the store of Rome taken of onslaught

the authors of the transmission jokes to part
could draw new stimuli from the strangest joke
of the last times that it has been put in scene
today afternoon

unaware of victims the store clerks
and numerous customers of the store of discs and musical books

approximately three hundred persons
they have materialized themselves at the same time
to the 19,15 the advanced plan asking to give them
for disowned volumes and works of nonexistent authors
the unexpected customers did not know themselves
but they were all strangely sincronizza you on the same timetable

and they crowded themselves around to the counter
with the same demanded inusuali
the scene is duration ten exact minutes
subsequently to which the crowd is burst in an uproarious applause
of 15 second ones, before dileguarsi in batter d'occhio

If More Boing

With the palm which as for the bird to which the end of heart comparatively the palm,
exceeding last thought,
rises to the decoration of bronze color,

can attach the gold feather
is not meaning the human,
and feeling the human does not have the song of the foreign country, you sing.

As for reason
making us unhappy then you have known without being whether happiness.
The bird sings. That feather shines.

The palm stands rubs between the sky.
The wind moves slowly with establishment
The feathers/springs of fire fangled bird balance downward.

Use Words

we can watch
webcams are everywhere
lives cannot hide
each snap misses 5 seconds
fingers apparently frozen in place
have had time to visit several places
what was alive for one snap
may be otherwise for another
webcams are cheap and therefore anywhere
this gives them color and texture
as rewards for poor design and cheap manufacture
we as people can hope
only that this is not
generally true

Home Longing

the house
the place the grass growing tall after rain
the birds in their surprise
buildings nests everywhere
the predators boldly moving
about as they please
the mice and voles hiding
the woodpeckers making all holed
pines have the pleasure of sighing
without effort and all year
no one has stood against it

what she wanted
was never hers to command

August 14, 2003

Was She

her official pictures
are most of what's left I can use to remember her by
she shied from the camera
thinking it would catch her age
without her consent
her secret
—8 years of it—
was she

Gilligan's Island + Stairway

art settles into attractors
we fall in line for the reading mind
is little more than a pack animal
art is full of context
even Wallace tears up
pages out of focus illuminate
I privately own the space my reading mind
infects but you are torn like leaves from trees

so
a pine needle
falls

I long for christmas like to
blink off & on

for something rotten
to evaporate

Emily=
—gerbil orgasms—

So Emily So

Emily what
did you do in bed those nights
when we thought you were dreaming
up ballad-song ditties
what yellowed schoolgirl nighties
passed those nights with you

where were your hands
your fingers dashing through the under
(brush?) you daring darling
smiling like a stinkbug
(which no one has ever seen)
and so what
Emily so what

Dash Hit

speak Emily
of what you found
irrelevant to write of
though the quirk things
you dashed off were spellbinding
when after a walk (I'm sure)
from the garden to the bedroom
you spotted some flies
once more
(you temptress of fate
seeing beauty in blacks wings
and invisible hair)
we believe black photos of you (and white)
meaning your grandmother

—
like habits of baking tarts
for kids when in
fact you suffered the lust
like anyone else and where
were your fingers when
the dashes hit

High

Tibetan girl
abstract words
eyes hips mind
& lust available
she is dark
like god short like
prayer carpets
she wears signs of modern life
she is postmodern in the nature
of herself watches and blue pants
she says nothing
never nothing
it is as the mountains
have demanded

Pictured

it's the picture of her she
never showed her thin self smiling
like a shy girl her eyes clear but not
straight her smile thin but knowing

I find her alluring & ready
for life started late
and ended alone

everything she feared
I wipe away
what she wished
I write into her life now

Show She

packing up
throwing things out
giving things away
keeping things

I wasn't ready for all the new things
she bought some
she made some
shoes never worn certainly not outside
smocks just made and heart full of color
towels 20 years old but never wetted never having dried
a single person

letters to her with their pictures stored among paid bills
in shoe boxes in the closet or in a bureau

the narrow direction her mind moved in
the short list of foods and places
the path through the night's tv shows

details she kept like what time they stopped at the first rest
area in South Carolina going north
mile markers of all stops
gas and rest

I picture her buying things
just to have them
to show herself she has a life force
to show she can

Dirt Treat

homes—they are plopped down everywhere
in nooks no one would think of
with lawns (sometimes) the size of cornfields
the people who live there (I think)
mow them every week in summer
on John Deeres
green like the grass they want to have
trimmed

homes—why are they where they are
lights on in rooms out back
blue lights meaning tvs
their entertainment served up standard

I drive past them after sunset
not by much but after
and this is the hour they shine with the loneliness
we've inherited from our fate
the fate of everything to be
placed randomly
and treated like the dirt
we most certainly are

My Call

when she died she took the house with her
each day she lay dead she took more and more of it
until now a year later it is still all hers
pulled after her into an abyss
that opens wider each day
I once thought when she left I'd
redo the place in my own style
but now I see it's her's and my options
are to move on or bulldoze

this is all so clear now while I bag
her things for the dump
and still smell the perfume she
wore all those weeks lying dead
waiting for my call

Lighten The Load

today we took her sweater
off the favorite rocker
she used every night for 40 years
its hardwood handrest caught her eye
as she fell the night she died her head
by her favorite rocker

today we took her favorite sweater
where we take all things of hers
no one but us would want

may my tread be one day as light
as hers is today

Routine & Dull

the usual places in the usual order
the visits are routine and dull
repetition is the evil of punishment
they've been gone so short a time that the beech
has not increased at all and the sod has healed
but a little

how surprised they'd be to witness
how I linger over their things
over them

Positivism

my point of view
is the hole just dug

later the hole is covered
and things become clear
and the truth becomes accurate

Brackets

left?
some clothes and pictures
complicated notes about simple facts
some shifts she made and a painting
I should have recorded more
written things down as she said them
my memory porous and tired
I need to write what I know for my children
right!

Secondary

too often the stamp paralyzes
the action of direct confrontation
and deformation

we find the actions of intolerants
intolerable

who we trust
is not a trusted decision

something is growing
at the same rate as my fear

Strong Shame

shame prevents me from making a shapely line
no amount of composition can atone for my stupid behavior
I wish sometimes to fall dead like a bird in a storm
confidence is not worth the blood pumping that keeps it alive
every day like this is a broken bone knitting
hurt replaces pain in a timorous chain
each line in a wrong poem is like a bad declarative sentence
probably

Reversal

I suppose I lived though the merits of a truth
like that are suspected always
among the reasons to question is the possibility
of everlasting life which might be in play
had I seen the end would it be made of pieces
I could have recalled

blood
was blood part of it
was the event singular or stretched over hours
or days

outside
lightning and thunder I imagine
for the end is tragic and dramatic
like a birth
hmm
in reverse

August 30, 2003

Foregone

underneath the satin
we find silk brushed as curiously
as water sought and water repelled
the touch of satin
frames our mood as the extravagance of beauty
rests like flies on rotting meat
and the dead

Like a Loose Tooth

I remember it like yesterday.
The sky was cool and the air blue.
I had been waiting in the living room
looking out the window for my teacher
to arrive in his 1963 Dodge Dart
to take me learn better how to film football
games for the coaches. He arrived
with someone in the car, a woman,
a blonde woman from school, a teacher,
French and Latin. He had the camera
and tripod in the back seat, and the bag of film
and accessories were there too so I had
to sit next to her by the door.

She wore gray-green—a tight skirt
and a tight sweater. She was just a little
too small for her clothes but shaped perfectly
I thought like a woman: firm breasts slightly pointed,
rounded hips and thighs. She wore light makeup
and a heavier perfume than I had ever smelled
before. Her hair was short, not even down
to her shoulders. The car was warm
from the sun and my whole left side was pushed
against her right. I had never felt a woman before.
I had never smelled a woman before. I had never
felt a woman breathing. I had never heard her
voice so distinct in my ears. We were so jammed
in front that I had to put my arm on the seat
behind her neck and my hand had never been so close
to a woman before. When we bumped over
the misshapen roads to the town two towns
over she leaned into me then back, so I could
feel how soft she was.

When we got to the other team's home field
he sent me up in the cherry-picker where I filmed
the game alone. As the day worn on it grew colder.
As expected we lost. And the teacher had arranged
for a different ride home.

I remember it just as if it happened
10 minutes ago.

Wikiku

—explaining Wikis to poets:
like writing a poem
clear enough for Ellen Bryant Voigt—

No One Grows

the great draft lonely children searching
the house is evolving toward a static style
while the leaves are starting their trace toward
the ground and then toward the sea

a kitchen table no one can sit at
the living room where no one lives
the odor no one abides
no one grows
used to

what is the point
our reason is like the flapping bird
or swimming fish
significant only in the midst of air
or under a deep water

But There

every few weeks at night when I sit down to reflect
my eyes stop focussing and the words come out jumbled
—lack of correction—
I feel diffused as if in a congested woods at the peak
of summer or in a blowing snowstorm on a rooftop parking lot

I hope for birds to lead me out
or an old friend up ahead wearing dark clothes
against the blowing snow to lead me in
to a warm room through an unlocked door

but there are woods
but there is snow in the air

While&Still

today I bought things
and reflected on the extent of Levittown
whether my town
—Redwood City—
is a section of Levittown

because that

(would make me as poor as white folks) come
poets today have demonstrated

to put an end
to punctuation as a form
of talent

I dream I am bass fishing off
the Walt Whitman Bridge
having eaten Roy Rogers
and a TCBY filled up on SunOcO

today I am chair
of science and speak only in declaratives
starting with
while and still

while Levittown expands
still Neil Young crosses

Comic Phyz

dredging from Miami to Tampa
under shelves of mosquitos
the Beloved invades my safety
with hesitation in her valves
the aim is a fire
larger than the plain we set our cave upon
there is this truth about the death camps
the weather changes from moment to moment
meaning from summer to winter
and age means time means the death camp
precipitates from the shrinking
of space and expansion of time

Fraud Works All

I'm not who you think even
when you take that into account
your eyes' dim looking-at-me
hovers like piano wire above
a sounding board I'm given to
walking close to buildings
and scrutinizing sidewalks long
before I step onto them
profound thinker
deeply pessimistic fraud
let's turn away from all our works
and fondle the letters they are all
made from

Lurker Hug

too much of the low light
is wasted on illuminating
the little things
the things you know
that lurk that skitter behind bushes
or slowly slide to the other side of a boulder while hugging it stealthily

low light is for getting warm
seeing just enough to get close
and then letting that light act as eyelids
shutting out the stare while
retaining the glimpse

Sangamon Singer

afresh in the corn fed fields
singing the praise of sycamores and oaks
the roads once flat and straight dip and wind
through the shallow Sangamon Valley
toward a brick mansion hidden among sculpture

the women gather by the fountain debating duende
and dudes while their skin cells slough and replenish
and their conversations grow tight in an all-known
circle and intimacy becomes something for yourself

Meditation on Entrances

hollow the dips holding morning mist
pastelling the rising sun and rabbits
hidden in the long shadows of transition
my thoughts like them hold still till
the zigzag run is unavoidable

and hollow the meaning carved
out for relief and sentiment
the singer perched on a tall style
your style an everchanging color
from week to week

me I'm trapped in the persona
a mere voice trained and revised
the long trees bent dead over and black
before the brick gate posts getting ready
the way bricks do to spend the day red

Yes, Let's Go Together to the Sun Singer

I see the road—don't push me
let me walk slower
a pace I can feel under my feet

let me look from side to side
let me stop at times and see the butterflies
lighting and stopping

I see where the road is going
I see you wish to speed ahead

I've seen pictures of the Sun Singer
perched on his style
facing dawn his backside to sunset
don't push me when I want to slow down
I want to see more deeply
more slowly—I feel it all slowing

I see you pushing
going faster little by little
what I know is you'll know one day
that no matter how hard you want us
to arrive together that the Sun Singer
is beyond me—that another last sunrise will come
then go while you circle the Singer

there is a side trail I know
I think it's just ahead and someone I know
is resting near there just off the trail
just off the road—resting in the shade
resting with the weight of tomorrow lifted

Pay Love

the door opens reluctantly
letting me in one more time
one last time I think
to watch them bare all
the humiliation all mine as my response
is the curiosity of those without memories
in an industrial shed painted blue
lined at the gutter with blue neon
at the intersection of this way and that
in the cornfields turning harvest gold
in the soyfields turning harvest brown
where the third crop has been trimmed close
and they'll love you for a dollar
for just one second more

Waits

the photographer waits
a predator eager to pounce
when the sun creases the horizon
or a bird's about to land
the device she uses is patient
for patience is the strongest virtue of machines
in this the photographer wishes to capture
the heart of the machine as she waits
while the machine waits to capture
the heart of the scene
and the scene waits to capture
the heart of the photographer
who waits
to set this cascade going

everyone eventually quits

I mean the athlete on top eventually withers
the one with all the answers falls mute or asks
flowers having pushed up and burst brown and fall
leaves pulled from the dirt in the ground
drop and blow to become once more nitrogen
the slim groom leaning against the garden arch
hands in his pockets and woman in white leaning
on him her hand on his chest eye each other
across the glassshattered room and crunch
hatred walking out this little place cozy in its small reach
spins out of control into the dark pinprick science
prepares us for one theory at a time
hear me now and believe me later: goodbye

Jinx & Torri

was I really there watching two
women lick each others' lips
and split on each others' slits
and every sort of man's insult for the female body
enters into the syllabus for this poem
this epigram dedicated to the blue neon
storage shed where jinx struts her tatoood rear
and bleached anus which she opens
along with her parted parts as black men
watch me watching her and torri lick it up
half fake half real on a quilt on a blanket on a bed
next to me watching like the man I am

her mother's mother collects rags
and oddcolored thread the sunset an hour past dinner
hogs the landscape filling with corn and spreading
with soybeans her quilt will one day represent
the farm squares

they drive here in ford 150s and rams
their desire is quenched by pabst and the lotion show
something even the mothers of their children
will never reveal no not ever never not even
to them

Bitter Blind

let the wonderful explode
a martini in one hand a cigar in the other
outside the snow starts at the tops of my windows
and vanishes at the bottoms
though across the way the roof seems to be gaining
a lighter top as if something like snow
were happening but the city has been folded
by a foreigner into the shape of a clasp
during the making of a novel and now
the hope is that seawater will rise up and soak
away the snow using its finely honed bitterness

this is the dream of a manloving man
whose first choice is couture
whose third is a tight poem
and whose second is up your ass

Abstractions All

the two sexes don't make sense
not to each other anyway
the outs the ins
affection before love
or the other way

while the mist dwelling in the slight depressions
floats away to become the stifling heat of the day
woolly caterpillars hump from one side of the road
to the sunnier one

my job is avoidance

Hog Heaven

even when the sun hasn't taken
much of a toll on the fields
the air is compressed by the smell of cut corn
and from a distant hog farm the warm fetid smell
of hogs laying about

the blue vistas are what the poets write about
but imagine if you will
the contagion of melancholy hogging the roads
when rainclouds drop low to the fields
and even the brown freshly plowed earth
looks gray and barren

this is the beauty of the heart

Odense Has Been Corrected to Oddness

the beauty of the foreign country lies
in its grasp of the other or the strange habit
here in Denmark—Odense for precision—it's the blonde
in all her narrow diversity

where one has lighter blonde streaks through a darker blonde
background another has darker blonde streaks and everything
else the other way round

and the hips
heavy and substantial to withstand the prone bulk of the viking man
she will not speak of this nor acknowledge it in her couture choices

they stare with frozen blue or grey eyes like cats from the world
of snowflakes

the towns inspired Disney while poets blindfold themselves

there are dirt roads here covered with gravel & rocks
and christmas tree farms with short noble firs
crows with white shoulders

even death here—as Shakespeare likely told us—
is foreign and other
I mean
crows with white shoulders

Disney to Dismay

My Place in the Scheme of Nowhere

nightfall on the fast-train
on the overcrossing between islands
the farms settling in as nightfall
then fall overtakes us all
the light from my computer screen
illuminates the window obscuring
the gravel road beside us traveling
fast (me backwards) toward the airport

the sky like the day is overcast
my affairs all far away and me the stranger
moving from place to place on trivial business
my presence like an extra sodium light
between two others on a heavyhearted
Danish road leading to the leaden sea

Below Time

below us the city takes on the color
of blue steel and water has been woven
through it like a couple intending toward each other
there are trains that take less time
than the raft of intentions welling up beside
the wharf

the view is always spectacular
because nothing aside from the boats
and cars moves

there is great virtue in the static

Narrowing

let's figure the ways to lie
noting that falsehood is considerably
larger than truth
this means truth is narrow
surrounded by beds of falsehoods and lies
the paths this way and that way
off this little strip are like warm pillows
or sugar candies wrapped in easy-tear papers

I like the red roofs and the stone-like walls
and we walk down the streets
holding on without passion
without discussion
we think about how narrow the streets can seem
when two people walk too close together
and the rain from the roofs cross over
cross paths cross from on side to the other

Mi/nd

the voice trembles
she sings/sounds of love
de/ep emotions on snapshot
she paces and roams the stage
as if in he/at
it is all real so
when she resets the mic
bends to read the next line
turns her eyes to signal the guitar to stop
if a heart can break
what of the mind

Foreign Places

newspaper laid out on the coffee table
the tv on but down low so the sound of wind
pervades the room

a woman walks from the coffee table to the bar
for a small shot of vodka to go with her plate of saltines
through the window the room emits a warm light

a few pieces of information escape
telling of fragments such as the forgotten book
the unfinished drink at the end of the bookshelf

but from where I stand on the street below
2 stories down and up half a block
the moral is the wind that whips from behind me

to the harbor haven at the end of the street
where people once in love still live
and boats bump against the docks

X-Ray Couch

the docks angle out at angles
providing safe berths for many
small boats none occupied by midnight
but the lights from shore make some boats
look inhabited one looks like two
on a couch makng furtive love
looking like an X-ray with a dark shadow
that shouldn't be there
and can't be ignored

Baby Streets

tonight our job is to walk
back from the museum through the sidestreets
of a college town in Denmark
to our hotel where the night will be consumed

overcast the sky pervades the above-building views
where the winds scrape the clouds past faster
with each cross-street we pass and though

it's just past 8 only the corners hide then reveal
the people walking home or toward lovers
who pace with glasses near empty in their hands
looking down at the streets where these others
will appear

we sometimes hold hands
we move closer then farther
we watch the pavement closely to guard against the unevenness
we talk about when we tell each other
to make the next call any kind of call you want

Wind Up

there are no hills or rises
to deliver the wind somewhere else
this place has never been hospitable

their reward is icy beauty
hard red rocks
cold water waving up on shores all around

in my mirror the creases and white hair
remind me of the ones who have turned
the corner just ahead of me

this street has been turning away from the sun
or the sun has been and way ahead and the choices
left and right are shaded now—by a cloud by chance

and my legs don't feel like stopping anytime soon
eager to get to the crossroads
eager to finally get to where I can sit down and put them up

Travel and Occasion

well well the long day ends
the coins collected are placed in a jar
the newspapers the filled the evenings
are bundled and piled by the side gate
there is cleaning to do but the couch beckons
the small lazinesses that mean little
day by day but everything when the time
comes

the time comes but once or twice
when the anchor drops in a fit of importance
we gather around a man who wishes to
no must
speak and birds fall silent
and the wind slows to a stop
the coincidence of written words
capturing the the moment
needs no verb

the world is big
but we move through it quickly
and can be another place with little thought
our ancestors weep

The Forward March of Science

science marches toward art
spreading flanks around frightened painters and writers
who wish only to paint an alley
or write a stanza on fountains in Spain
but the ones who fear declarative sentences
hope to end once and for all
simplicity and clarity
replacing them with notation
and complexity thinking perhaps
that shallow thinking needs to be buried

science moves in slowly
carrying large boxes
instruments measuring devices
tubes and bottles
tubing and wires
radio links and miles of cords

ahead of the march campfires burn
stories of old bravery are told
near dawn they will take sticks whose ends are burning embers
and melt the extension cords laid down back
to science's headquarters
and long papers will be written
and presented at refereed conferences
all next winter

Beauty Angst Software

free software project travel
beauty and the beak Philippine women turn to
olfactory organ angst is the reverse

on your computer whilst downloading anti-virus software
goatee or not to goatee health/beauty
help me I have till tonight teenage angst

an online comic strip featuring angst love and
directory software metasearch software searches gambling
metasearch phone searches beauty search beauty

it is not beauty within the beast but it is
angst angst swear curse swear crazy crazy
angst swear curse slates slide rules and software

apparently useless software sponsored by ...
can you see the unworldly angst and agony
the pure incandescent beauty of naomi

Succulent Moon

vendors vistas vital
statistics under shimmering vultures
wings shiny under a succulent moon
the hole is being crowned
the pain is being capped before a burst of cash
fleeting photo of passing planes kick up
violent & otherwise still dust & ash
working behind Hasidics I serve the shame
in their tassels and the heart held hostage
under their hats
soon I learn one is a child angry for his years
in an old black suit suited for night viewing
all that's missing is the girl kissed till her ass twitches
all that's missing is the woman and her sheep
for hole needs its shepherd
to guide us uptown tonight

Heavy Walk

downpour outside the theater
where guitars are stealing the night's quiet
but rain is hard too stretching from one side of town to the tracks
my isn't for the young
why do the guitars repeat & repeat
couldn't a machine do this better?
the downspouts carry the heavy rain down to the sewers
how can I get into the soldout show my choice
hard guitars or heavy rain
soaked or saturated
longing or lasting
up the street a shadow slips behind a dumpster
whose infrastructure is this anyways
round the corner the sounds drift in echoes
as the sound seeks all the ways to me
soon the tracks are behind
the rain still rains

Jot Me Drop

mannequins set up showing how
the fuel rods are loaded

country songs are published
as poetry without any kiss your car day
sausage pizza day mule day
electricity day look back on your life day
honey and harvest

when you write poetry
jot down ideas or things that a phone ringing
made me drop

loudly the return of seasons
limits my defiance

Claire feels she is inserting fuel rods
into a core like the way poets use poetry
to regenerate the defiance and parodying
of the enterprising spirit

Perched

the place waits
under a tree
in the shade
by a slowmoving stream
exiting a small basin
that must be being filled from a secret source
the place that is dark and timeless
that is underground and hopeless
that is landlocked and lockjawed
the stream that near the end of winter flows strong
fed from a thousand little streamlets
made from places of melting
places not covered in shade
my resting spot
where no one will speak so I hear
where memories flee
where the strange gather
by a rock left for eons
under a tree ready to fall
landlocked and timeless
time passing as a stream downslope
underground in places
with patches of hot sun
by pineneedles packed down by snow
in the shade
under a tree
the place waits

Convergent Bogus Yogi Bear

cone makes an epigram in the dusk of wheat
magnetizes yesterday while the furrow of a magician allures
a curb of notch as taunt of fumes

discard aleuromancy—except that it must be wheat or barley—
an Italian chemist alchemist hermetic and magician were really
divination by means of poppy fumes on live everyone

the biomass convergent bogus yogi bear magician POP
rippled in the heat of the steaming fumes
flew while glazed donuts of banana wheat fell fall-like

there is a world of almond milk and wheat grass ready
Blaine is this sort of like LA magician dude
set up beneath him goading him with the fumes of bacon

white on top with a slice of wheat on bottom
Reuters reports: The daredevil US magician
apparently drew blood after sweet = you can't smell the fumes

he was a magician as well as a healer, and he was
green on top - from exposure to the smoky fumes of Hades
wheat ridge oh : earth-love

Bait or Now

duende is a Spanish word meaning bait or NOW!!
she stood there red-faced and glassy-eyed glaring
a putrid odor exhaled up from the bottom

there is a new odor in the air and it's burning Blake
on a horse on this planet a wild red head named Kampsen
and an Argie named Paco form the duende team

Spanish women in elevators with duende
pantherous eyes beautiful red women beautiful
gypsy river women beautiful fire-escape women foul odor women beautiful

conceived as blooming flowers their astounding red plush
yes with violin and compass the duende wounds
gas escapes—maybe Sylvia Plath thought the odor would attract

a vender of kabobs where the luscious odor was particularly
and mostly blue on blue with flecks of red
making it necessary to direct the search to a proper leaf of duende

Death Structure Ocean

Kanaloa the god of ocean travel and death
be sure of very little of his structure and ceremony
contact the Great Death and the abandonment of sacred sites

ocean of words her "death" unlike Amy's or Alice's
is neither unexpected or expected
too often the sentence structure and vocabulary are stressful

the twenty-fifth anniversary of Chekov's death
is encoded also in the structure of space
by the opposing elements of sky and ocean

disclose something to bear out Jackson's theory
that the great structure was really a surface
abruptly sloped toward what had clearly been the bed of an ocean

Warmth Seen

wives sitting down for the evening
check the hearth for signs of flames
check the tv guide for shows to watch
the couch is her warm place
and the windows eventually flicker with blue

this simple scene doesn't negate the possibility
of murder the way the simple words seem to promise

Picture This

I wish the fields never resist
plowing and planting
that the trees still left
lend their shadows to the beauty of sunset
I wish the songbirds gather before flying off
so that the dropping leaves have the beauty
of deep song

but tomorrow all I can do
is buy a picture of it from a photographer
who sees better than I can
and who sells things cheap

Midwest Air

the sun like a smear of mud
behind the sky over the runways running
crossways and corn in the behind scene
the smell of fall in late afternoon at the airport
heading home head's up and hopeful
that the setting sun portends my rest
tonight resting after a long day of talking
of writing of dispelling irony squared

the photographer talking shots
and the patience of waiting hours and hours
or shooting hundreds to get the good one

the good one is here out this window
a covered sun over fields getting quick re-plows
combines working hard the traffic heading south
or west to the shock of the end
of another day and the dogfight of loneliness
against the guesses of tomorrow
hinged together like Lazurus versus Lazurus

Hit by Hail

the combine set to cut low sweeps through the soybeans
hit by hail this summer
this is what they thought
branching helps soybeans compensate
for lower plant stands
low final stand densities
branched soybeans set pods lower
to the ground creating a greater potential
for harvest losses
the farm fields set firmly in grey and brown
teach us of plainness
the coloring leaves in stands of trees
are washed out under grey skies
the sun awaits its disappearance
dust is escaping to the east

Using It In A Sentence

Heeshee! Look at that man growing out of your forehead!

Garsh, she's crabby.

It hurt like the Dickens.

For the love of Mike, will you just tell me?

Butts! I struck out again! I may as well quit baseball!
Never mind! I'll just join the Yankees!

Look at those girls!
I think they drive an orange van...

Look how that man is walking!
He must own McDonalds!

Carlie says Peter and Creighton are gay.
Creighton bites his finger and giggles at Peter.
Peter yells, "Step in doo, monkey!"

Oh no! Garrett is running in his gay way
(Note to people who have never seen Garrett run:
you can't understand the full meaning of this word)
after us yelling, "Wait! Wait Carlie and Misty!"
and then as we duck into Victoria's Secret in hopes
of losing him, he runs in and picks up the skimpiest
lingerie and shouts "Hey Misty!"
on the top of his lungs
Yeah, he's definately phizzin' again.

Blast! I knew I should have married Laurie!
Now he's married to my little sister
and I'm stuck with the old guy!

Okey Fresh!
Misty says: "Give me a quote for the newspaper."
Sarol says: "Sorry, I have a no-newspaper policy."
Oopsie, I guess I didn't use it in a sentence...

God is the Final Eigenvector

wow Lisa Pea you sure do smell nice bunnies
exclamated as Jason Parker asphyxiated
her eigenvector into bestiality
poetry 4 sex

smattering parsley smear parsnip smell
parson smelt poet hangable poetic hangar poetry
hangman pogo appraise brought eigenvalue
brouhaha eigenvector brow eight

the entire Internet can see
what your underarms smell like all day
God is the final eigenvector
& some of the worst poetry

Hunger About You

Manhattan
sitting by my writing window
with Thievery Corporation on the Bose Wave
singing heaven's gonna burn your eyes
and I watch the apartments across the street
through those burnt eyes

a woman is making bread
kneading it out on a board
her breasts are covered with white flour
as she kneads unaware of my thievery
across the dark street loud with New Yorican noise
and steam rising faster than any bread dough
near the change-over from tonight to tomorrow morning

the music
counters the street
steam rises
one building has no windows
and they say everyone in the city talks through it

the woman shaking the flour from her hair
shakes her breasts just as the garbage truck
passes by and the song seems to end

With Winter Here

with winter here shoveling with garden tools scraping
I heard Valvoline and True Value are sponsoring
a petite girl who had almost no breasts

pow photo western theme room: staffing practice
and selection tools at work
breasts falsies interracial gay men?

the top 10 ranked by readers are
Land Rover (women/breasts etc)
tune-up equipment power tools
afew respondents listed valvoline

valutakurser valvaka valvaka+sverigedemokraterna
valvoline racing valvulas
vampirella porno vampires vampires breasts boobs tits
ocx oracle VB4 tools vb400 dll

top 10 reasons why my breasts keep slipping
I have a perpetual motion machine
valvoline max life quilt making machine
decision making tools for teens

when you go to the Valvoline Expres for the massage svartgotik
should I bring my fuckin' tools?
he fantasizes about what his neighbors breasts feel like

alien penthouse
alignment tools
alimony antimony & testimony
alkaloid taste of rejection
Anna Banana Anna WD-40 Valvoline Karenina
Anni starts smoking

Scuttle Reason

winter soon on its way
like Orpheus to the rescue
we trade in myths and the myths make us
time has spoken and we write it down
these marks like a dance
like self-love a scuttle to one side
but balanced by another
the science of music is sickening
and the paste fills us with filaments

the surface of the world is well smeared
and leaves bursting loose are hardly a reason to leave
the winds of discontent harbor ill will equally to all
except for me all are exempt

October 16, 2003

Ba-Bing

your enthusiasm for lovemaking
is flattering but mine would be
fatter if you were flatter

Cloud Liner

tonight the clouds looked combed and yellow
before sunset and I thought
God counts how many clouds like this
we look at and after I was done shopping
the clouds were smoothed out pink
and I thought how many chances
do I deserve?

Walkers

every night for a week
many years ago in the northern part of New England
my father and I walked back and forth
on old route 16 which was by then abandoned
as the air grew colder by the minute
the stars growing more numerous
we spoke of failure and how I should deal with it
dogs would come out and bark each time we walked past
then we'd turn down another street
and walk up and down it speaking of
children and careers about the difficulty
of hard work then we'd turn onto the sand roads
that wove through the woods forming
an almost abandoned development
what comes when you sell to the poor
up north on vacation and we spoke
of how many times a man could fall
before he could never get up again

he's found out
learned it by feel at least
I'm not far behind

In Cold Distance

I knew her long after love was an issue
when the number of ripe tomatoes arriving before the frost
was more important or the number of canning
jars on hand

she lived nearly 60 years on that farm
carved from swampland
requiring constant care and weeding
but left without looking back when the day came

she cried herself to sleep for a year
wondering whether she could have saved my father
and maybe her father too

the time had come as autumn does
in all its cliches and killing frosts
she died before the Old Man fell
he died before the Red Sox won

the lights that flash at night up the road
are signals cycling or heat rising
but they like me waver incessantly

Black Hat/White Snow

tonight my face is half hidden
in a shadow that moves like a winded tree
branch back and forth across my face carefully
hiding precisely half but which half
it the mystery I impose on you

I've let loose my control of words
and many of these are not meant as you might mean
them I imagine sitting at the writing school
looking out the window as the flakes fall past
snowing from a cloudless sky in the darkness of winter
long after a class on clarity has wound down its confusing debate

and after the boat sank in the midst of a lake
they never knew how well I could control the words on the page
and what that would mean for them when I got around
to fabricating for the umpteenth time
the details of existence told with no commercial abstractions

long after the writing school in the woods
where I left behind me the footsteps
of death

In The Unchanging Fall

My father was typical, I think,
of many Red Sox fans in New England.
As long as I can remember he would listen
to the games on the radio—
often in the workshop while working
on a radio or transistorized invention or in the dark
in the kitchen when he came in for the night.

He never made any noise,
not even when he made me Ovaltine for the night
nor did he comment much on the games or the players,
but he would walk in and tell me
they had lost or won in a quiet voice.

When he slept after the games that meant
they wouldn't go on he'd sometimes make noises
as if he were afraid to speak or as if tears
were being held back but it was just the way
he slept sometimes in the Fall.

They never won the Series
while he was alive and I'm pretty
sure they won't in my lifetime either.

October 22, 2003

Memory & Landscape

when you lose your memories
you lose your landscape

you might as well fuggettaboutit

Wind Filled Forced

snow is the pieces of hell
that flutter down when God cracks
it open to pour in accumulated bile

covered deeply in blankets and a sleeping bag
I've left the window open and I'm woken
by the snow that is piling on my hair
and the random flakes hitting the lids
of my eyes

the wind appropriately blows
the filled night air sideways

I'm forced to react day after day
to signals with no meaning for me

once I've written it all down
I'll get the chance on the first of the last days
to read it aloud to those who would rather shout
but are this time forced to accumulate silence

MES 61

I never expected to find it
the silly piece of jewelry I found
exquisite when I was 11
which I made my mother buy for me
for graduation from elementary school
as if the accomplishment was worth a price
so high no one else in my class bought one

I recall wearing it one day to high school
and I recall my face draining to a look of no emotion whatever
as if meaning were meaningless
the long corridor between math and english
was filled with children standing at their lockers
exchanging books designed for thinking
for books designed for loving

here it is
a piece of cheap silver engraved with MES
and a chain attached another with 61
each can clasp a shirt or sweater

I was once proud

At 10 and 110

the sun was orange as an orange
from fires far away to the east
and the few tall buildings in the middle of the large flat city
disappeared like the discarded actresses they were
the smoke creating every kind of optical sight
cast the Bendix sign right in front of me
on the Transamerica building miles away
creating the newest metaphor destined for greatness
among the debris caused when railroad tracks
disappear under a parking structure

Short Sweet True

this just in!
it's official!
the votes are counted!
stop the presses!
no one disputes it!
I, yes I, I mean I
am the loser

The Longing and Short of It

the end has been fended off
and the flow fallen into disuse
and that use is destined for distension
and diffusion while the wood sauté
in the brine of early along the banks
of a mud-filled unfulfilled river
taking the long way round
foolishness and foundations
once laid now laid
bare by the road all of whose exits
exists as dead ends

the poet said

Cryptic Creations

she stopped by the window
and wondered about the shoes
gazing at her red and heated
and behind her the taxis rolled on
flooding the yellow sun with vigor
and explosions

among the faces crowding the sidewalk
the one who meant much means nothing
and $1+1$ is definitionally unexceptional
once more— 3 being out of the question
and red shoes being simply adored
bath more in the yellow sun

Ark!!!

Shem raised the rope
and forced his bulky frame through
chapped his knees when they allowed
a braying ass through the holy gates
but it's holy shit fire downtown

his oiled black hair glistened in the sun
as the ass was led around the path
toward the pinnacle of the secret
of the hiding place of the Holy Ark

Noah bitched and moaned about the count
so Yaphet used the pinnacle of a technical
split legged capture bomb (holy fuck)
this kicked all kinds of ass

Ham completely destroyed his bitch ass

The Heart is a Bloom

I might have still been with that dumb girl
but eventually I got the clue and if music
needs a dark yang to the effervescent sunshine
my dear father had taught his foolish
little dumb girl a trick that had robbed him of it
but I was not long left to pine in solitude.
though they did not know a United States Senator from South Dakota
the former Indian agent at Pine Ridge
and Keith tells of a deaf and dumb girl who
was among the wounded

the convent is lovely
situated in a splendid colossal pine wood
we had the blessing of seeing a little dumb
girl speak but how her mother prayed for her!

she is not a dumb girl
she just likes different things than
you do where it's nothing
but frigid air and thick pine trees

her parents are not at home
and I'm looking around at pretty things
I want I burn I pine I perish!
dumb dumb dumb girl
yes Lupé I downloaded most of the songs

Zo Long

no hair dryers or other such devices are permitted
smoking is not permitted inside the lighthouse
hair cutting is permitted if both rooms
are rented by the pet owner

to be a good pet the lighthouse family waved good-bye
to Old Jack as loved children permitted the sweet smell
of their hair the soft diet and medication to prevent his hair
from falling

Turn Up The Muse

the muse stubbed her toe
but I walked on ahead of her
not noticing her not nearness
for hundreds of words

vision is fading away and I cannot fathom
how recently those far older than me have moved
on and on toward the open arms of their muses
amused at how far their victims walked after the faked
stubbed toes and other recalcitrantisms

o my my turn
is about to turn up

Day of Rejoicing and Death Lamentations

some have said it and it
seems to be true that the pain
of the death of a mother
peaks on the day of your birth

in my family we disdain those days
making death more easily swallowed

tonight I drove up a short winding road
after dark through woods in Virginia
and what I've seen is so much more
than she ever did—by her choice
by her limitations by her prejudices

the only states West of the Eastern Seaboard
are the ones where I lived
and the ones you needed to go through to get there

the ones you needed to go through to get here

Science Of Design

on the path from my cottage
to the workshop the smells of oak leaves
in early November in Virginia
stopped me for a moment
and the importance of design
as science fell from my mind
and assumed the importance of an extra
acorn to a fat squirrel

Dark Country of Her Hair

on her way with her parents
home to a country
with protruding accents
the young woman with American jeans
and serpent black hair
chooses the path from the shuttle
to the gate for the cloth-coated group
the way a new idea leads an old mind
to a wrong conclusion

Upon a Hill Near a Bridging

it's the oldest story in the world
it's the most ordinary moment
it's the first moment that I can know that they cannot
it's the start of a series of memories apart from theirs

the surface of their headstone will one day
be pitted with storm damage
and the stains of weather I've experienced
and the tears I'll leave behind there

finally memories will be no one's business
it would be tempting to label this "my own"
the eagerness of time to move on
places us in the embarrassing frame of mind
to stay behind

even when this places the burden of tears upon us
and on the stone
and on the leaves of grass

retire to the written word
and the memories of fans
and all will be well
mother
father
trust me this time

Final & Final Once More

the odor of gas and oil
spreading through the underground garage
and the way she stood there looking at me
as if she wanted to walk away
became an occasion punctuated by a car door closing
and its echoes through a concrete structure
but she stood where she was as if to stay
and the echoes found their ways out of the garage
only after many attempts to circle back

could I have stayed
or circled back
gas and oil
or the wind blowing their essences away across the plain

nothing seemed wrong
not even the chance meetings
the furtively held hands
the cold wind in junk park

nothing was wrong as far as I could see
and she's off to church

Winks Last

sometimes the girl who winks last
is the one who will depart first

take the party girls
who take men apart at the bar
with smart comments and repartee

the cold bar dark from shutters
and smelling of smoke and beer
perfume and cologne shades of aftershave and hooker scent
open out to a southwest afternoon burning
from no shade no windows
just the long distances and long stretches
rainless and pitiless

let's hear it for the girls
destined to wait for the calls
but determined to refuse their requests
balancing power like a tray of burgers and fries
shakes and cokes down at the DQ 2 hours before
sunset and the start of a long languid night of rerun TV

Someone Who Looks Like Catherine Zeta-Jones

she's perfect
standing by the bar
sunset sunlight sharply shading her face in seductive contrasts
she never smiles
her beauty doesn't need it
I try all I can to make her love me
writing creating thinking
but she is programmed for beauty
nothing less is even visible
she stands alone
looking out the window at the desert darkening
not realizing she's watching but not noticing the small and afraid
dash from bush to bush
seeking one last bite
a small sip from a sudden storm caught between the lips of a once dried out leaf
I think she might turn enough to see me
but the onrushing night draws her attention
the beauty outside
the corners of her lips curling up enough to signal her pleasure
and reveal her sadness
my beer warms

Pulsing Intentions

the light the daylight fades
we all know that
and nighttime now in towns and cities devours a chunk
of the darkness we grown to fear

where they lie now is constant in its darkness
such as a night unlike anything they could have known before

their faith in the pulsing rhythm of light and dark
sustains them now
until the rest of us join them

Sappy Cross-Country Drive

the lines repeated
as I drove northwest
from Sioux City toward Sioux Falls
on the section of highway by a loop of river
that used to be part of the Missouri
while she slept in the heat of late afternoon
past many towns with an Elm Street
she looked like someone I could love
the lines repeated and she was everything
I could think of and everything
I could think of was she

Only Equation

the day approaches
when the light that's passed
minus the light left
equals the life

Don't Look Back

I could have taken her away
we could have gotten into a car and driven
through the heat craving South
away from the broken down houses she kept up through prayer and tears
not looked back
not got dressed up special
could have taken the curves at the fastest possible pace
cheated death 2 or 3 times an hour
forgotten the anchor holding us back
we could have run away from the past
past the darkening South
past the heat craving deserts
all the way to the Coast
and soaked up the warm wet Pacific air
instead of the mouldy rooms she chose

I could have taken her away
and how different it could have been would have depended
only on what clothes she brought and way she brushed her hair

We Can Run Away

from the back of a truck
we toss away the relics
we place the freshest on tables for dump pickers

the dust kicked up choked us
the sharp edges cut our hands and tore
our clothes rained on dust stained our hands
and arms

the wind picked up but nothing blew away
that hadn't already blewn away

The Bridge No One Crosses

the bridge will always be
there for us
no anger
no humiliation
no retribution
always resisting the waters
with minimal gestures

the other side—
if only we knew it were like this—

let's not cross to it

Budapest First

she next
to the grayed man
grayed hair grayed stubble
deep veins of absence
forks her goulash up from the plate

. . . dark and complex
her lips enfolding and all-important
her eyes hooded as if in absinthe
darklined through an artistry derived from languid history
she glances
—furtively apprehensively I can see—
casually as if distant soft sounds are caressing over the other side of a field
as if birds are agitating over newly discovered seeds
as if the insignificance of a leaf rattling downward disturbs
her fashion of perfection in the dark corner of the burg restaurant
how she wins by deception of everyone
—everyone—
within earshot of her lover

The Hard Question Budapest Poses

air cold
strengthening wind
the silver beech stands strong
leaves have left
the darkening sky promises an ever colder night
the grass though
above their resting place locked away together
like Lazurus with Lazurus or Rachel with her children
remains green against all hope
like Bobby Rupp driving past and past and past
the elm lane tremendous on nights when the full moon rises at its inviting end
my simple words buried with them. . .
what I did I know is more
much more
than they would ever have believed
is this what I was put here for?

Me

what is beneath her skirt

me

walking behind her with my public passion flatlined

watching or is it dreaming

what is in that apartment above me across from the Collegium Budapest

me

walking beneath the window imagining the newspaper followed by bed by the

window where she will remove the skirt showing me her marvellousness

which she revealed only by her motion down the street

what is beneath my heart

me

wondering whether the end is at the next corner

watching me approach the wondrous

window where she will remove

me

Getaway In Her

the woman with 2 French Bull
dogs opened the door and out
in front of the restaurant she used
them to ask me home with her to her
apartment in the dark part of Pest
where she promised to make me
a plum pie and pour me
a glass of dark red wine before putting the dogs
in the sewing room before we crept
beneath a down blanket with the light
from the Royal Palace ago-ing past
the gauze curtains all orange and red
across the Danube but her eyes
were as desperate as mine and sad
as her dogs' snuffling around my feet
by the light-meal restaurant at 10pm
in a city where everyone comes
as they are

Black Sea Dreamin'

the food lies heavy and greased
on white Eastern European porcelain
in a city not far from my homeland

with a fast car the dangers
of rising after an all-nighter
passengers drunken with ill-at-ease sleep
in a European diesel designed to make for dawn
like the light membrane racing
'round and world making for infinite open road
are not as much a danger as a promise

but the people who might know what we could find
don't care forever

Away From Budapest Pre-Dawn

like moments in women
the end is a sprint
superb diminishment
shameful withdrawal

away from this Eastern city
toward the drab remainder
& the victoryless endings

Telling of Loneliness While Crossing An Old River

in Budapest the flow
is downriver
downslope
downtown
there are dark women there
who like to wear
things
unprofessionally
and straddle sex evoking machines
after dark's down in Pest in November
the apartments wake up
the woman who warmed her bed for me
said the road can wait

parapets
principles pointlessness
loneliness
stairs down to the bar then down to the Chain Bridge
the dark streets waking up

come as you are
leave different

Be?

the garden has turned itself over
to the ravages of winter
whose hands tear at undergarments
and pull free coverings
let's let the wind take the rest
take a rest
fall like water down a river
downtown
down the path they told me never to try

you can live your life as if
you were under siege
keep to familiar places and synonyms for yourself

but then
what would the point of Budapest

Skyrapt

I remember the sky just past sunset
in November after the trees had become
webs and with the ashen and leaden clouds
behind them there seemed no possible
further elaboration

lying in the field I watched the
end of the day and beginning of night
my mind filled with the idea of the onrushing dark
being a welcome end

though the effect of the branches
was never clear

were they less of a contrast
they would have made a perfect simulacrum
of a spider web but you know what type
of person would think of that

they left a large stone in the center of the field
and I often sat there half-
asleep and filled with the tiredness
of someone much older

and once my mother first and then my father
called for me while I lay behind it

hiding
I called it
but truth though
had escaped behind the trees
and like the light it scampered west
where I now look hard for it

On The

a teenager locked himself
out of the house

tried to shimmy
down the chimney it didn't work

Battalion Chief Craig Mosley said . . .

about a foot wide but . . .
the flue . . . only 8 inches across

lost his pants
but only his dignity was hurt

Trip Up

Peer Review Reviled

underneath reasoning a river
of unlikely thought draws down
the comments of peers
who circle closer
to eliminate doubt
dissent dislodge differences
make it more like
it ever was
make it like it always will be

peers peer
into the future
and see themselves

Same As A Circle

the car open
ready waiting for the weight
of my foot the road light a long sign
ready waiting for the weight
of the car the pasture taken by wind
ready waiting for the weight
of the road passing by
the car passing by
me passing by
and you
are

you part of this scene
this song
this refrain repeating
remember it repeats
we've defined it that way
because everything a man makes
is the same as a circle

Functions Performed

the getaway is a forceful example
in relation to its architectural function:
the window

by its frontal windshield etc
the automobile forms a quadriptych

this form of greeting is applied
across the gender
to each other
and affecting each other's functions

the automobile serves as a getaway
private confinement

the getaway vacation is one example of modularity

(the stability of the ideas that form these underpinnings
are briefly required to function as invention)

a planetary gear power split device that functions as a form
was one of three pulled from the Hobie Kat kayak

a getaway weekend for four

rigorous training
usually shown in the form of pursuit of a purse-snatcher
or getaway car can be performed by most men
in Hollywood feature films

land use and the urban form of cities
fundamentally shaped the need for choices:
they invent names and functions for planning

all cars are getaway cars

Facts for Decades

the house is sitting there right now
and Richard Gabriel has no knowledge
of its clocks ticking from batteries
strong enough to tick a clock for 18 months
some slight air movement is taking place right now
all that's left are books Richard doesn't know
what to do with

at the site it's raining
the wind is heavy and from the northwest
the tide in the Merrimack below is at maximum flood
at 1.5 knots upstream
the picture of my father as an infant sat in that house
for 3 decades
now its on a table in my bedroom
the look on his face is totally ashen

facts like these are

Gaze Up-

on the roof soft tar begins
to flow from the slightest low
spot to the highest
pigeons flap by like passing thoughts
and like them
they sometimes crash into fast-moving cars
on the thruway upstate
when I talk about this I imagine
a city like New York
where down is up-
town and all the streets together
=s the red queen's happiest maze
but back to the rooftop
link it to a parapet and then
look close at the man legs-a-dangling over
the edge edging closer yet
to the edge of the edge
where no cops will give a flying rescue
rather stop by Comeau's
for a beer and a smoke
smoke tips like night sky stars
and we on the plain plainly afraid
gaze up-
ward

Tossed Off

sitting here all I
can do is suppose
& follow threads
no bird singing foreign songs nearby
or even over the nearest
hill

sitting here all I
can do is propose
& follow threads
no cute-taste girls climbing
out of cars &
pissing by the road nearby

suppose propose
all those technicalities
since passion's pushing sixty
grave very grave sir

CEO

men are planning businesses
to capture the country's wealth
and turn it into their own

their plan requires a special leader
who is really just a bully hoping for a BMW
and a life of golf

they think such a man
is the key to success
not the ideas or dear me the products

customers never wonder
who he is because he is busy
talking on the phone

he is comparing the size of his penis
to the 8 wonders of the world
and jockeying like a jockey for the best tee time

I have seen this man
he has stolen from me
everything is in his car—including his clubs

Love Can Take You So Far

not a good idea
the idea of having a drink in a bar we used to frequent
the idea of looking and looking
of holding a glass that another has just held
drinking with no intention of quenching a thirst
not a good idea
no not at all
the idea of going back to one's apartment
running through a lingering rain
looking down to avoid the mist gathering around the eyes
spending the last thing
not a good idea
the idea of pretending it's all right
when you know the dawn is scheduled to arrive
bright with sun against the fleeing backside of a lingering storm

Kindness of Tides

two or three days
hanging in the bar
drinking more than eating
eating everything in grease
longing for the bravery
to walk out into the sunlight
instead I hold back until the depth of night
wander down to the docks and watch
the latenight boats and barges leave with the tide
on such nights as the tides cooperate
on such days as living the leftover life
strikes my fancy

it's hard to believe women like that carefully
arrange their panties to have that effect

Picture Painful

across the square the church is visible
Monet-like if clouds could make themselves
visible over so short a distance
they have mist has been made
the church is lit and around it the darknes is shaded in
by the passing fog and behind all this
the wretched city is draped over unforgiven ground
rising up from a riverbank to foreign inescapable mountains
to the East

but this is just distraction
she is crying
openly
underneath a soft-brimmed hat
in her sweater-soft skirt
underneath her ankle-length cloth coat
who wanted me to be her hero

she walked up the steep street thinking of my home in the warm dry West
she is walking downhill toward the silty-slow river and the chain bridge
and I am who I am
once again

Chains of Love

across the chain bridge
streets become straight
rectilinear head deeper
into the proletariat

she heads for her half-flat
where she had cooked something brown for dinner
before walking up buda's heights to me
in my expensive western hotel by the church

in her flat the heat is wicked
but sporadic like a spanking
her mood is like the dark street below
where women might be at work
the parked cars and vans seem parked
permanently

her stained sheets and unwashed blanket
will collect more of her tonight

tomorrow I fly home
to western sun and manzanitas and madrones
gold red auburn and evergreen

why did her skirt and hair
her eyes
fail
she wonders as the heat pipes click
ever less frequently

Would You Cry?

when she woke the pillow
was still wet
fell to pieces off the sides of the bed
would never find a way again
to support her resting head
her dreaming mind
her awakening passion

at that time I believe
my plane was rising above the city
above her part of it though I had not been there
I recall seeing cars parked
as if forever
on a broken street whose outlets couldn't be seen
but a quick cloud dark with its load of wet
passed over under me and what might have been the beginning
of a shining light passed beneath me
and soon I was home writing
as if that meant anything to her
or to me

Always Cold

by the wall above the city
cold in November
she stopped to see what I was watching
—a woman washing her dog's feet
before allowing him into her house
below smoke rising from one of two chimneys—
rising up as high as where we stood looking down
watching until the force of our gazes
made her look up and we looked at each other

that night after the bed had been turned down by the maid
we shared the mint and I saw how the dark hair at the back of her neck
shortened and lightened as it spread out down her back
and how it reappeared dark on her arms
how fully it covered her after she removed
her panties

outside the window a mist gathered
pushed up from the river
spraying it seemed the sodium and arc lights across the river
where she said she lived and where
we would share her cooked meal one day soon
I lied yes

she was warm all night and until the clock
told me to leave
she was still dark and she stayed beneath the warm pile
of blankets we had placed on my bed

she looked me fully and said in her sugared language
I am always cold

I Mean This Seriously

the cobblestones that form the street
down from the top of the battlements
form probably a rough surface for her sharp shoes
borrowed I suspect from one of her working
friends and given she was in a hurry it seems
likely she hurt herself physically going down
and then the walk back to her half-flat
must have been wrong all wrong

I am not to blame
she is not to blame

perhaps it was the cobblestones

Lucky () Lucky

roll of consolation
like rolling paint on a ceiling
we are given to the faith that the cling
of paint is sufficient to keep it above
our heads as we roll in onto the stucco
up there

or she would want to think that for herself
as she rolled the paint above her new bed
praying that some of the fresh pumpkin-colored
paint would fall into her exotically black hair
and add spice to our 7th night in my bed

O lucky O
lucky () lucky

Quickie Farm

two of the eager reasons
for doing the do
fit like hand in glove
for as you see
she's slippery
and I have my edge

get the point

Swimming From Me

I looked down on her as she half-ran
half-stumbled down the street
I needed the mist as much
as she did to disappear into

I could have changed everything for her
but she ran away
and disappeared
before I could think of that

Standing Aside from the God-built

the room is wide and expansive
filled with people speaking earnestly
—as they might not wish us to observe—
as if their thoughts were deeply connected
to the reality god built for us

two things

the ceiling supports the roof by a set of tough beams
and oddly angled steel wires and cables tensioning the wooden contraption
like a corset but without the tensioned sex

tomales bay sighs its breathing tides
in and out quenching the breathable thirst
of oysters and fishlike things swimming and crawling
by nearby

reality
god
built

It's Me

their eyes
as they wonder where it came from
the words strung together
like poetry
like the song everyone hopes humankind makes
as the rims radiate out in radio waves and tv
telling our stories dumb interpreted by comedy
writers in the '50s '60 oh you name it
but like poetry is what they hope we sound like
like what I sound like when I take
words hauled out like terrorists primed for torture
and laid like the drawn and quartered on the sitting room table
their eyes
clouding over before they recall
it's me

Count Me Out

as a poet
I refuse to participate
in life
as you do
because with skin in the game
how can one tell whether the ball
is in bounds
or out

Choice Of Quiet

it is so close
your voice calling to me from across the road
across the half-field
I lie behind the boulder your father left here
when he cleared the field 30 years ago
but the sky has taught me
the boulder the field the grass turned to hay
this late in summer near fall
that the choice of quiet
can be as powerful as the choice
of disquiet

Steel String Scrapings

music—imagine
a guitar playing alone or among
other musicians
its richest music
is the sound fingers make
when they scratch against the windings
on a fat steel string as the player
goes for the high notes
the ones connected directly
to the heart

On Her Beach

the tones of disquiet linger
the walk through the hallways still
make me cringe and this is
where I learned

longing is the most desperate response
the peculiar voicing
the slipped pronunciation

where her heart is today
remains unknown
her recollections almond-shaped and aloof
she must be near a beach
a warm beach where she can see both the sun rise
and set

she listens to birds
while she cooks
while she sweeps
while she paces the beach
her beauty didn't get her what she needed
so she listens to birds
tell her the contents of stories

she is the tone of disquiet
the sodden beach knows it by
the weight of her passing

After A Disaster

along the margins of the field
field mice dive for cover
beneath the apple tree burdened
with wild grapes
and there also I dive for cover
in the shadows where a figure
apparently in the open
can remain hidden
and so there I remain
even now

Three Ignorances

simplicity is the virtue
enabled by random walks
and a keen eye

the ditch looms on either side
an avoiding one tempts the other
to swell

someone has walked past the door
stopped
turned and returned
stopped to listen
then move on again
this is the wisdom
of shadows on the floor

What? We Carry

we carry pictures
all sizes black & white
color sepia all tones even green
on mantles in houses in abandoned
subdivisions they are left behind
for the curious to find
like letters written to lovers
with their messages obscured in case
the wrong hands are the ones they fall
into words whose meanings change
by the frequencies of their use
this diminishes
not in the least
the coverings that the use of letters represents
as if the words' meanings were somehow related
to the pieces they are made of
perhaps a good q is worth three th's
see what I mean?
carry a picture not a letter
an essay a story and never
a poem

Life Is

is it true
children spend their adult lives
trying to understand their parents
maybe as a way to understand living
can it all be this simple
can it be just a puzzle

maybe it's a movie
we watch and watch
going over favorite parts
wearing them out
wearing them down
like children we go over them
and over them

were our parents still here
we would demand the read and read over
because like everyone else
they never tell us
they keep it inside
until finding it is picking through ashes
rejoicing for bone
rejoicing for the hard but
unrevealing detail

Fragment

clouds passing overhead
frightfully fast with shades of gray
making their ways to black
something so soft examining you
an artist does
God does
the end will be like this
like clouds passing overhead
like examination

Zectron

ideas packed in cargo containers
shifting slightly on the deck of a stacked freighter
heading this way from across the wide seas
the thinker follows the ship
walking like a jesus planning to arrive
just in time to help with the cleanup
as unwary workers crack open the crates
and spring their hinges
not knowing that the ideas will spill
out like eels spilled out of a sieve
or bounce like superballs
which like ideas pick up forward speed
on their second bounce

caution—like super balls regarding zectron—ideas
are made of exotic materials
and must be treated with care

all kinds of people will eat the eels
will watch the eels
will look at eels
they appear good
they won't dodge away from the net
already all kinds of people eat them
these eels won't dodge away from the net

all is good
it will be this way
nevertheless someone must watch the eels

the thinker follows
to clean up

leaves in piles

many ways to walk through the piney woods
the sounds made echoes to the backs of the trees
standing guard

leaves from nearby oaks and maples
have blown
into the piney woods
making a flat place of leaves and needles
giving the mushrooms something to push up
through

literal
figurative

the minds is unsure
while the leaves
and needles
just rot

Who Creates

living in a pale house
bleached by decades of high sun
on the edge of a sandy desert
my mind's as blank as the unpainted wood clapboards
as hot too as when the sunlight hits
in mid-afternoon

I'm restive and pacing
the miles between me and a real place
have bloomed and replicated

the paper is gone
the pencil nubs cannot be smaller
the world that I can create
is there in my mind
and I have no place
to put it

Far Away—Very Far

somewhere people wait
for their kin to die
deathwatch all over the world
on the day after Christmas
when we celebrate birth
and giving where we mimick the kings
but alas
they don't make kings like they used to

In, Under, During

a year of writing every day
in hopes of getting of improving
every night at the computer
whether hot or rain or cold or dry
on airplanes in hotels in Odense
in Copenhagen in Bergen in Budapest
in Heathrow in Virginia in the western
part of North Carolina in Illinois
in Chicago in Anaheim in Arizona
in New York City in Massachusetts
in Portland Maine in Chocorua New Hampshire
in the Frankfurt airport over Reykjavik
under copper beeches by a green bridges
sitting in cars as it snows in a blizzard
during a lightning storm after love
before love after hate and despair have set in
before memorials after them while eating
while drinking after reading before
sleeping every day with just a few more to go
as if the calendar would spread on forever
when a sinking or a crash or ill health could all be
waiting for their turns

now it's dark with not much left to do
but more than ever to say

By Design

the teeth are lengthening
taking on a deep brown after years
of yellow the tent is large enough
for several of us several of us
eating with chopsticks cracked
apart from a single stick carved somehow
into a pair joined together
they were made together and designed
to be broken apart then brought
together in the act of joining for the purpose
of gathering food to darken lengthening
teeth brought together for nourishment
for acting in concert after being split
by design

on the bed her hands reach for her skirt
it will go up like a curtain there are sounds
coming from under the bed
something under there is getting ready
something by the window is cooling off
many things are designed and in their building
desires are caught in ice for what is design
but the desire of one for the pleasure
of another

The Next Place

two or three clouds in the sky
the state of reality is back to normal
the strangers have departed after years
of pretending to be friends

we sit in a hotel facing the prospect
of breakfast made by a stranger's hands
consisting of ingredients imbued with the cook's
last-night grief

we'll drive away from here
put it far behind at our backs
as we head for what we call home
but which is nothing more than the next place

Drive On

well we drove
through the driving
rain stopping for bits of food and information
we talked through the air and over it
and like lightening interrupting
we cried at times and drove on
lights to either side fogged in
and out of sight
something we can do still

it's a story as old as time
but as fresh as a knife cut
when it's told to you
it stings the eyes which weep in response

it hits the woman hardest
but her hardness is subtle
and she will endure by virtue
of the hardest outpouring

we in our car
drive on

Think About It

the year is near
gone long in the tooth
what was lost needed to be
the walks across town were interrupted
each time by the same swirling bees
gathering close to a hole they found or made
we aren't able to see into it
but I've been told the world
or something like it lingers
there is made whole there

we are destined to walk past such places
everyday because our vision
of the past is no better than our vision
of the future and in this way were are like
the grand taoists like Lao Tzu
who sees the future as clearly
as he sees the past

think about it

Limitations on Framing the Question

A Collection of Poems

Richard P. Gabriel

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January 1, 2004

Elegance & Reprisal

she was golden once
and held her head like a golden goblet
and smiled like the mornings of Italy
she walked the streets like a young woman
but watched the sun and trees like a crone

I found her attractive
she never found me

Panthers On Main Street

she liked to wander down the main street in town
with her pets lodged firmly in
her mind wearing a skirt that was also firm
the way it didn't wander very far from her
side—tight I mean—on her way to a heavy
breakfast at the café her mother used to
work in a cook shouting code words back
to the waitress prowling like Rilke's panther
wondering who walking in was human

yes we like to fantasize about the women
we meet the magazine stand just up the street
is perfect for gazing both for the magazines
and for those walking past eggs—too
many eggs to sit in the café with them
but watching them go in skirts tight
then come out skirts tighter—man
oh man walking down main street
in a tight skirt

Frozen After Time

one by one they round
the corner as if simply looking
for a fine cup of coffee out
of sight or as if birds
were chattering on the other
side of a lake and they were watchers
and listeners or as if the cold
breeze coming off a frozen river ...

we're walking hand in hand
right up to the end when
we are done exploring the intricacies
of the other's hand and we let go

we let go
right at the end
when the wind is coldest

Long By The Sea

I walk at the end
of a long day ending
by a strongly rolling sea
my breath has been eased
and my lungs are filling full
with the crisp and salted air

after a hard dusk
of a storm sky breaking
of a storm sky spanning
of the birds huddling among the roots
of straining trees
the steep last rising
face of the storm
is slowly then forgotten

what hurt the storm brings
is slowly then forgotten
and I am not
remembering the long climbs
no more detained
I am the runner who once ran past

the path here twisting through many woods
did the dawn once open up
long ago
is the sea air clearing

once frozen lips
are melting
eyes fading along the sea
right now

my hand feels the long grip of yours
pass away
I hear the boom and fall of the nearby sea
I feel the need pass by me
as the storm moves over a distant hill

find the dusk and open up
say it anyway
leave me here
walking at the end of a long day
remembering what I've forgotten
long ago
along the sea

Plains Impersonations

I'm remembering the unforgettable
piercing cold of a shallow winter
on the thin crust of the midwest
plains where the effects of cold
and wind colluding can drive
a man to dropping his guard
for love

not guaranteed nor on the up
and up but a chance
I think for a sly
woman to make her move
like a blanket opening up on her bed
letting the warmth seep out
in a free sample and the man to sneak in
and claim the high ground

is it cold tonight
or do we need to wait

Does It Come Down To This?

underground wandering through town
the Boneyard is just a creek
nothing more than a place
the owls left their droppings
filled with the fur and bones
of prey

pray for them who have gone past
whose empty shells give name
to an underground
wandering creek

January 7, 2004

Cold Scene

above the cold creek frozen to a bone
a hot heart beats wings close
to the chest prepare to open
to gather up warm
& hapless souls

12

the clock struck
an inopportune
firehouse longing
under a deep tongue
truly cold
lifting

we drive all day to a park
featuring butterflies wrestling with ennui

Harvest Smoke

stubblefield of the cut down
when the harvest of value leaves
behind stalks

we cut them and pile them
into teepees that we make into candles
early smoke in the air it's so
forgettable

smoke rising
this is not it
this is
not it

he is the harvest
not the reburning
not the returning

my back
faces this scene
I might as well burn
this page

Finagle Angles

burn the page
wrestle like two on fire
place your bets on the field smoke
aligning like luck
and your fortunes
what I love
I give away

Fast On

here the women
stand in doorways in second floor
apartments after midnight
and stare down out their windows
to the car I'm in driving past
they are the opportunity
I don't have having
chosen thought over flesh
when the thoughts of women
standing in doorways would have been to anticipate
me waiting for them and not me anticipating
the darkened roads lined with poor lights
all the way back to a small town
my fingerprints
you see
are on the dagger of my mind's demise
the flat tire I ride fast on

Sinclair/Linda

outside town the little bar
chugs along with a 5 dollar cover
collected by a 400 pound man sitting on a chair
by the door who smiles saying welcome
to my orange free admission stub
& inside the girls
are taking off
their tops down to thongs
& such but they come
sit by me at the tall round table
talk to each other as if I'm their uncle
then I go back behind the dj
& one of them backs up to me
& I rub her back & legs
& she grinds me & climbs
onto my thighs while I watch her
nipples lengthen & soon
when the song ends we head for
the table & talk of her financial planner
the novel she's writing & the article
on how to piss off a stripper
yes that yes me

He-He

so I rub her ass
then reach round to her abs
oh she twists to the dj & all that
& she cups her tits &
I think he-he when her hair
pulls my glasses off
& she grinds the lenses into powder
on the concrete floor with her stiletto heels
he-he she cries & calls out her hubby's name
while I decide not to scoop up my glasses
since this is not a place to come
& see but a place to feel
when you come

Grabbable, That Is

is it time to get better
practice with the tension death demands
leave less and less on the table
with each passing fancy

or is a slow pace the thing
the way we made love at first
or the swift silliness of a lost road

but getting better
like walking across a lake
takes sure balance
like something that adds up
see the point

I see a pattern developing
and that's the work of poets
see
make the pattern plain
yet fresh like morning bread
or evening tea

when you know you might meet
your stripper at the mall
that makes her more like your wife
that is grabbable

Hot Tin

when I saw her the setting sun was trying to hide
her face in its orange backglow
it was main street urbana where except
for the new courthouse everything
else is shut down for 30 years \pm 30 years
she was wearing a long coat over
her stretch lace black dress fresh
from the strip club where she'd strip
off the dress and in just a thong hop
up on a high table wrapping her ankles
around a farmer's neck and pump her pussy
for a dollar not bad for 42 she'd tell her friends
and me but the 23 year old stripper with flop tits
just laughed

she went into the florist
to order roses for her son's debut in the hs
theater production of a cat
on a hot tin roof being romantic
I bought some too that being
where we met
get it

Roof

Permission

I'm sure she sits now
in their darkened bedroom
where for 55 years they slept
in nearby beds the cost of one
large one above their means
and then above their habits
alone after the memorial hundreds
attended and then left for the familiarity
of their beds and talking late in the night
about how she would face the darkened
room alone for the first time
in 55 years

I would help
if it were permitted

Impossible

One Way

the road to the last place
on earth is like any other road:
once on the road
your choice is to go on
quick or go on slow

Or Another

Planned From A Start

hobbled by love
and begging for sanctions against careful elocution
the wigged patent attorney hugs his knees
as the bottle by his feet topples
and drains like a bad dream and sunlight
into a convenient sewer

he once loved a woman more dear
than the hair on the back of his neck
but when his fortunes faded
so did she and all what was left
was the fine grey hair on the back of his neck
and mr bottle of tequila

and a sewer flowing to the charles and then the sea
where the waves roll on
like love in a lifeboat
built long ago
when the wood from trees grew thick
and forceful

Warmup For Double Coding

first I speak to the elite
judging by their lights
how far the rainbow runs until
depositing \$60 in their pockets go directly
to jail
then to you the readers of this light
verse who don't care for the formalities
but wish only
an observation worthy of liking
perhaps reminding you of a Super Bowl
ad or a noteworthy remark of the redoubtable
Samuel
Johnson who lay
with women and never acknowledged
the lie
of saying not even till
the last
day of his life

After A Blank Western Starring the Producer and Director

where were you when I shot
first before anyone was set
for it and the force of evil
fell with one in the forehead where surprise
is supposed to be examining the remnants
of events just aching for the chance
to get up and go
to split head for the hills
but this time surprise lacked the time
and on one side fell let's run
and on the other let's not

For A Few Minutes

on the porch
the vast scope of America hovering around us
on one side the sea
on another the expanses of wheat and corn
behind us the rising mountains of combined east and west
and in front the urban of legend
with face-lifting architecture
and alleys of dumpsters filled with the debris of capitalism
everywhere we look the urge of business
pushes aside the clear views and honest refrains
of our wonderful future
needless to say
our neighbors are lining up
to borrow our camera
when like warm honey
the video ends
the sounds of our rockers comes up
blending with the cicadas
and the reverberation of the power lines
in the right breeze
and now our vacation looms
in her red g-string panties
red stockings
and red high heels
my mouth hanging open
for a few minutes
amen

Three Dot Lounge

behind me the woodstove cracks
inside the wood burning cracks the wood to ashes
from the fractured gray of bark over heartwood
the wood is shrouded in flames then turns a deep black
with red cracks leaking blue flames
and then it all breaks to the mixed porridge of ash
and fragments I vex into a bucket and bury
like a boy does the bird he found
beneath a tree whose fate
dot dot dot

Two Views on Cold

when salt water freezes
along the rim of a deep sea
the scent of birds will drift away
and then the sounds of their wings
and songs

we will make our mistakes then
as what's true seems wrong
and what's false has become frozen

Tell It, Lord

while we're at it sir
You have a lot to answer for too
such as why I wasn't prepared for the deaths
and why the women I found soon left me
taking our children with them
why the snowfall I hoped would soften the sharp sounds of conversation
turn to freezing rain or hail on our metal roof
and the injustices and wars
remember those
where dishonest people ruled or honest people became mad
or the log whose bugs beneath became food for the foraging bear
or the rain on my first girl picnic or those ants
remember those ants
and why my mother refused the help
that would have kept me sane

Can Such A Thing Be?

when the wind stops tonight
take the covers and pull them over my face
if I lie on my back and if
I don't then roll me over so nothing
comic takes place and the solemnity
of such a moment as this is kept
intact and if you like
kiss the top of my head which is the spot
closest to my best thoughts or my eyes
which saw as much as they could even
when my enthusiasm hedged
and remember what I told you
but whisper it to no one
and I'll not repeat it either
I think it is perfect
and like nothing else anyone has ever told anyone
and it's our secret

because it is us
no one will ever know

Trundling

and when we find the path
that passes by streetlights
dark on the night
the lens we choose
will close and darken
like a shady spot new grown
with leaf

Fog Ritual

faced with untimely vision
and strength of hearing
rushed like a hind-leg paragon
and marshalling effort upon grandeur
I'm finding my way past lines of onlookers
whose interest is simply this:
intangible misfortune

So Do We

driving back
streetlights once blaring are now quiescent
and as cars pass I see green dashboard lights
on the faces of diverse drivers
the experience is of exhumation
and of waking

when I woke my father
was carrying me through the cold
November air from the car
to my bed which would not warm
for another hour

or so it seemed until
she came to bed
fresh from a hot bath
and she warmed our covers
the way an exuberant car heater will
with the fan up high

trees branch
and so do we

I H.

why do you all stand around
why are the curtains closed
when all want is a nap
why don't you hear me answering your silly questions
of course I know who you are
and no I'm not thirsty again
I haven't been thirsty in days
if I close my eyes will you go away
I hear you
I hear you sobbing
I h.

Regarding The Nostalgia That Fuels The Web

the crooks stole it all
carrying it out in bags on their backs
looking like prison guards hauling
out the prisoners they've killed today
looking for a proud burying ground
and here is what they said walking out

about 400 of the bodies were originally buried here—of the remaining 400, there were
about 150 brought from Selma Ala
about 160 brought from Cahawba
about 40 brought from Demopolis
about 27 brought from other places
for a total of 400

the tools used are now kept in a tent
many are lost
a small tool house is asked for and is needed

when I've dug the grave it turns
and digs me

you can guess what they stole
your guesses are inventory
you are the crooks

Fear S. Thompson

the fear is assembled
from small altercations
using instructions translated from Japanese
like

English sentence:
Jane went to the school

same sentence in Japanese:
school Jane to went monkey apple carburetor

your fear
being well-constructed
blends real facts
and your facts
blasted through a venturi valve

your fear resembles
animé

On Repose

fixed but not repaired
stationary some might say
a fixation of an unremarked kind
affecting the small tests fore danger
like the wording that justifies
the flight from loving and less than
ennobling actions taken in back
seat on buses by the sea
oh and don't forget the banks of slow flowing
rivers you see sentimentality has choked
on nostalgia and in we're in for many
vent clearing maneuvers

Retelling

so it's cold
and the lumberjacks are off
fucking any native girl they can
or even ones from Korea
making monsters
and guitar-playing heroes
who once sweet
is now colder
more accurate
a better storyteller

In Eons

she reads it over and over
trying to figure the meaning her
emotions feel are hidden
in the clever words that make her cry
but twist away at the last second
not knowing that meaning
is for a god whose existence
is the biggest joke he's heard
in eons

Got it

that another winters paints the hills
not entirely alive there is no
certainty in the pale air rhyming
like a refrain from the flattened
south hankering to heat up
the cooling coils turning dripping
air to dripping pans drawing red
ants from the dust-laden ground
new from a mow painting the grass
to a uniform depth

that it reminds me of the fire there is
no doubt no more doubt than
the house that's burned down
whose cellar is become a dump
full of pulp and rats

I can't think of a better thing
nor a place that can't benefit
from a month painted snow
white and bitter cold
and a depth of buried feeling
like nostalgia rotting into sentimentality
get it

Forgetting/Getting Rid

papers piled swept
away into the forgotten places
papers and things snudged with importance
tinged by the old and passed by
something that one day will be pumped
into the dumps and away places

we'll see these things only once or twice more
before the day comes when we need to forget
them and ourselves too
and what even living might mean
to those who have forgotten it

February 6, 2004

About All There Is

no one is sure where
god is tonight
considering the hushed voices
in the bar up the street
the answer is true blue

Tight and Spanking Clean

when we face the bed
what is to be found there is
as frightened as we
may become
the stage is set up
and the players fear the audience
as we fear them
for what we find is more
always more
than what is otherwise real
can offer

who would dare tarnish
such an icon

Another Prayer

as the hour nears
feeding itself on the separate shards of time
passing by
the erosion is bearing down
deepening toward a core
which is the secret we lust
after o lord
find my way with me
listen to the stepping
as I step closer to you
then farther away
sound your voice
that I might reckon your place
and mine
combine with me as man combines with woman
and find the open plain as warm as the warmth
of a winter burning stove

I fear both your absence and your presence
for you are everywhere
help me find hope
help me prepare

Method #1

I start anywhere
like here
talking about where I start

I follow the path that spins
ahead of me
formed in the manner that spiders make silk

in the end good lines
stretch like disordered loose
coiled chains

in the end the path
if true
leads to one place—what's real

Out of Sight

when we focus the world
around us disappears
so focus is the opposite
of reality and the enemy of truth

it took great genius to learn this
by a man with tremendous focus

and we believed him
because we studied his mathematics
carefully
one line at a time
and within that line
one symbol at a time

we celebrate the absurdity of his effort
but we don't recognize it
because we focus
we call it insight

Far Out

Sand Digger

in the bed
of a truck hauling sand
from a deep sand pit
reached by a sandy road
descending down past earlier
digs ...

while my father shovels sand
I climb to the top of the slope
easily 50' up
the top 5' clayed and straight

I run back to the edge of the woods
run out and jump

I'm in the air for vertical 20'
weightless unwinged
the slope catches me
as a gentle father might

while mine keeps digging
intent on cement
and the hard drive out

Flight Instructor

Jump

wreckless to worry
concern is the dry toast
act is nine
profitability = technology
1 is no number sir

the sweet words of nervous poets
creep into the pockets of trenchcoat pamphlets
those rags that no one reads
there is nothing there a person needs to live
never mind the news
their words sticky pop
in a "musical" sense

pap wins prizes
for judges refuse to judge
for a judge's judgment judges him

when in doubt
vote for the cheerleader
then breeze off to Alabama
for juleps

-ing Juleps

Death Hath No

check the date
death waits nearby
shit what's that
sound of feathers disappearing from wings

Old Age Adage

when you start taking pills
to stay alive
staying alive is backing away

Method #2

why did I dream
I saw her die
with my son on a tower looking down
she walked from her bed to puke
returned to curl up
then did it again

she curled up and called to her mother
and her father
not to me
nor to my son

study hard

The End

at the airport
we stood in line behind the swim team
and when we got to the agent
I helped her get her ticket
while she listened to my voice
answering questions that frightened her
and when she thought it was over
I got her a frequent flier card
to make things easier next time

I had carried her bag
and all she had were a backpack
with her schoolbooks
and her computer in a special bag
I bought her for Christmas one year

we walked to the security line
and I waited with her
telling her about the connection
and the friend who would pick her up at the other end
but when they asked for her ID
I had to stop
she kissed me
perhaps thoughtlessly
I could go no further with her
I stood and watched
while she never looked back

In Small

Hot Copper Bed

supercomputer
doing its shuffles
in the billions per second
spider in a web of memories
it trades amps for heat
and results

it takes effort to make the random
bits hold out tokens
of intent to shuddering eyes

I talk to it by shaking my hand
and pushing regular buttons
and how do I know it loves me

it speeds up
its fan

hot

Foreign Insomnia

I recall crossing the heavy bridge
over the Danube
thinking that the water seemed oily
flowing under sodium streelights
after a heavy dinner in Pest
something about it reflected
there my last year

the next morning walking through town
I saw three cranes on three low buildings
hovering over the street
over where workers dressed in heavy
clothes struggled toward work

that evening I found her door
its knocker was a lion holding a ring in its mouth
the door handle the green tail of a fish from poetry
worn gold where flesh beat upon it

I will never forget the smells
beneath her blankets
all of a kind

Corner L*nger

on the corner
wind scoring the corners
of mahogany colored building edges
rain forming whipped pools
I'm waiting
for the lights to dim or a window
to crack from heat
or dual pressure

now it's time to turn
leave
even though the trees
shake no
no no
and the rain is just getting
going

what's up there
why this place
now?
why again?

Flip/Flop

a clock makes its thinking
known through a metronomic
shuffle like a yes/no
0/1 on/off you know
the face moves so slow

they move away from me
slow but with a concerted pace
the sun heading down
is the signal
the alarm about to go off
the noise about to come on
yes we may have loved you
no you are no more

I Was Led Here

as I came to the crossroads
waiting there flatland all
all directions
heat & dust & wind fueling
my unending thirst
my map on the hood
a bottle on the hood

she stopped her truck & stepped
out telling me of 4 corners
the wings of man
then I watched

her climb back in & drive
away to the west
the wind whipped my map
tearing it in two

I watched the dust
from her tires
drift away fast
I stood there for hours

Wanking It

saving it
just wastes it
smell of sun-hot oil
where trucks sat parked
while driver downed burgers
something hot
something sweet
something over the top
I'm heavy on the wind
saluting flags that snap
to straight for fractions
of a second
the red on the gaspump
reminds me of my flag
and a girl I made up
while figuring out how to love
myself in the middle
of the sunset afternoon

Light Warthogs & Satan

His sneezings flash forth light,
and his eyes are like most people think warthogs
and cane toads are: ugly. Does
this mean that they have been created by Satan?
Unleash dazzling, constantly
changing rainbow light from various warfare
planes, and Air Force A-10 Warthogs.
Adam was "shot down" by Satan's deception!

When separated by distances that imply
faster-than-light communication, the way I
see it, ambient Satan wrinkles not when
the amazing warthogs preserve tomatoes
but when you got your first attempt
at a light-weight DOS.

Finally Time

when the clock finally
shuts up the only ticking left
will be time's little lies

Terminal Waiting

in the terminal the mood
is pacing from one lounge
to another past shops closing
now that it's late

the airplanes that wait
by gates in foreign terminals
at night languish while workers
clean and fuel and masters
check and prepare

the terminal in Denmark
seems yellow in my memory
with high ceilings
very high

voices carry their insinuations
through accents based on deepened voices
and lilting overtones

I buy a beer and a sort of hot dog
and smear the meat with hot mustard
the newswoman on the tv acts like she has information
but it is only noise

eventually beautiful women walk by
and I'm reminded of where I am
on this journey our takeoff
will take us over water

some will be heading home
others away but the constant
reminds me of the color of the terminal
yes the terminal

Or Numbers

I'm sipping what I thought was coffee
but it is heavy and bitter though infused with milk
which lies in layers in different colors
can this be right?
girls are sitting nearby
it's warm in the sun though the day is quite cold
the building with the café is green a kind of stone green
the girls are women I guess
they seem to be talking but it sounds like sex to me
there are metal tents on the tables
more like A's but without the -
they have letters on them
or numbers
what are they for?
they are gold color like a faux brass
the tables are round and green like ones at patio store
I bought a paper at the bookstore but it is for pretending
waiters come out with plates of food and look
they are searching do they want the girls?
I mean do they want the women?
I read about feminism but I like girls
oh the tents a signs for the waiters
they are looking for the letter or number that means the person bought something
I want to buy some chocolate maybe a piece of cake
one girl stands up and man
is her skirt tight and look at her ass
which do I want more
her or the cake
the cake will taste better
but her ass will give me a better memory
what does the paper say?

Down Slope

trains along the embankment
ride down a shallow slope
never far from the river
through canyons and wooded spots
and finally to the widening foothills
and out onto the plain

how like the end of a trip

Irrational Design

I am the last alive
as more fails I waste away
because this was the designer's best idea
but the best ideas don't work well
in the last circumstances

Names and Numbers

[we slow down
old 66 and a 65 Mustang
covered in dust we stop
to lower the top the wind rises
blowing dust onto the already grayed
blue paint when it's down we're off
after an hour the heat and creosote smells
turn us off we slow down
raise the top].com

Backwards

the animal watches me
with intensity
his head tilted to one side as if wondering
and I wonder whether he knows
something secret
perhaps when I'll die or how
or whether he's as dumb as
he looks looking at me like I'm the dumb one
maybe he's in on a joke
animals way smarter than people
way way smarter and when we first popped
onto the scene they said hey let's
pretend we're stupid and see how long
before those apes figure it out

Her Thoughts I Could Swear

the sharp edges of her
raw commentary linger on my thinking flesh
like all women her
dull opinion of me remains
I find her oddly
contrary

her mind
in contrast
has a few new thoughts to hop onto
hop hop yep hop hop

someone has gained enough
rights to license an image of Jesus

Jesus

Clichés, He Said

is it time to start my eulogy
no one else will write it
nor anyone care
much but someone may read it
or I could post it on the web
my tilt toward the opposite of obscurity
I've got nothing much else
to do while I sit and wait
for the end

Trite on Breathing

breathing inhaling
breathing out exhaling
the lungs fill up & we
realize how fragile it is
to depend on the substances
that hover above ground
of the perfect temperature
we understand the rarity
but we are made for it
it's as natural as breathing

Your Programming Language Ideas

it's all about understanding
when we want an argument of type
`temperature_reading` the signature
tells everyone what is expected
and no one needs to read the code
but Bjarne don't you see
when the argument name's
`temperature_reading` you told them
the same thing

ha ha ha you're so funny Bjarne
your programming languages ideas
are killing us

A Dull Night Vigil

looking out my second floor apartment
down a street not known for glamor
the rain has been filling the pockmarks
and the black asphalt has risen to a sheen
from the glare of a streetlight down by the corner
the rain's stopped now for a moment
and the wind's holding off too

a couple in a car parked just off the hydrant
seem wrapped up in each other
the windows are steamed opaque
I'm sitting by my window eating a soft pear
and listening to the single A game two counties over
my window is not steamed

I hear a car coming from the cross street
and if all goes as it seems it must
the couple will pause and look up
the car will turn onto the street below
the slick road will endure two widening gashes
and soon the storm will resume
in all its hideous silence

still the pear must be eaten

Shake Rattle and Roll

often the rusty regain form
suffering the semblance of accomplishment
I've often wondered where ideas come from
new ones
but things keep rattling in my head

frameworks might work
sort of a metaphor but easier to understand
a car with wings where the wheels would be
that's a new idea
for me
but wasn't Hermes like that
in a mythological sense?
Giambologna made him look queer I say

when I read a new idea I say
there is something odd
or unnaturalistic
about the way it is presented

Eye O'

she moves like a hurricane
away as if pressures guide her
and what she destroys is the ghost of whims
as she moves her face disappears
in spasms of incoherent hair
and quintessential longing
oh my dear head aches and blues
plays at a quick pace

let me pass by
let the day spill and find me
in her eye

Black Lantern

Before the rabbits pass
the girl with the tattoo around her waist
must tip her hat if she has one
and the crows huddled in their horde
must hop to the side and quake
or turn their heads at once
and croak or quawk
and then the rabbits
they shall pass
by hopping like rabbits will
and the girl will giggle like girls will
and the crows will turn
blacker than hope which is the black
they're born with as was the world
and all of the rest of us.

Circular Reasoning By You Know Who

The paths are growing over
with the grass people routinely mow
and even aspens are popping up
or are they birches;
anyhow the day has come when this bit
of familiarity is past. But this trail
once led to a warming hut
stocked before people left
with kindling and small firewood
bundles for those who came by
later.

Now no one can
find it though it must be part of the woods
lovely dark and mysterious deep
as the master once wrote
from the back of an old pickup
truck heading away. He and others
I never loved are long gone
in cemeteries at the ends
of invisible paths.

Punctuation Flats

a wave of girls pass by
and what will happen when the crest and come crashing down
the bottom must have come up fast and the wind
that blew them up must have been strong and persistent
somewhere

I want to peel them like oranges
and smell their oils on my fingers for days after
but this is the wrong century
and I'm reduced to leaning and cursing

my vote doesn't count in the race
for good taste
I sit by myself at this computer
and type with no effect
click click tap
little electronic marks
spew out

punctuation makes
things end
abruptly
when my vision tells
me it all goes on
and always will

Hammer of Justice

imagine the dead from
all the wars ever fought
think of them judging the effect
they had

would you be willing
to be judged by them for what
we've made of all those deaths

failing that
what of those ignored
with nothing to say
nothing ever said

who simply were
and were and were
all over this land

Smell The Aroma

hay rake
side delivery
dozens line up for the debate
over the spondee and echoes
versus the complexity of rhythm and meaning
that a longer line might provide
it is called a side delivery rake
because it leaves a wind row of hay
to the left and beside the rake
it is not a trip rake
which combs the hay
the side delivery fluffs the hay
so it dries faster
lines of hay in windrows

the perfect line
is tight as Dick's hat band

O Yap

oh the streets
you walk down them and stare
at each place
some houses are painted black
painted black

I saw one with white trim
for instance there was a white trellis
in the shape of the chimney
and 4' in front of it
the plastic curtains were white too
and the garage door
let's say that everything like a wall was black
and everything else was white

around back they had a big yard
which was mowed pretty nice
there was a black Weber grill back there
and a fence around like you'd need for hunting dogs
but the place was in town
my wife asked if that whole yard was really part of their place
I said
who'd dispute them

looked like Raiders' fans to me
but we didn't want to find out
so we high-tailed it down the street
to where a pair of white West Highland terriers lived
and we listened to them yap
for a while

Inept Building And Conclusion

behind the yard the woods
and within them the clearing in a grove of white pines
and in the center a rock no one ever moved
onto the stone wall fences all around it

by the rock I built my teepee
out of thin pines in a pyramid
and boards nailed all around
but the door
and covered every week with fresh branches
laden with needles

in the center of the teepee
I dug a hole and buried a tin
filled with pictures
my parents would not want to see

little by little
I learned what made me tick
do you want to know what it was
those pictures

Peter Out

beginnings this is the avenue
that dwindles to a path
in cavernous woods by a stream
that peters out before emptying anywhere

I've learned to let the images speak
for themselves without embellishment
by the music of English
which lurks like one of the zombies
from Night of the Living Dead
living dead their houses reek of nostalgia
because that's all they have except for
a deep hunger

a hunger such as we feel
turning onto the avenue
sweet and clear

Driving One

driving the backroads
western kansas
people here have died for reason
not whatsoever

it's a puzzle
a weird puzzle
in which the more you work
on it
the more the puzzle grows
a jigsaw
which when
you put a piece in place
9 more fall onto the unplaced pile

I was a dew breaker
I arrived early but now it's leave time
a fall

she might know I've been
here here
where her remains
she remains
sweet and clear

don't open the door
listen instead
to the car tires throwing up
sand silted by the curb

remember me
as you remember loneliness
and the radio

Opaque Your Eyes

streets around LA
hint at the heat possible
and cars are either over
the top or under the bottom
this is not the place for blues
my eyes have burned more brightly
only in rare places

only the rare singer
relies on tone and voice
such will sing long notes
holding them and timbring

in LA singers like that
are dead and buried
and reburied
as if something were on the shoulder

side streets are the main
thing I follow them wherever
as long as the mausoleum is in
sight or the house over a large
garage and all that

sleep on it
sleep on a bench by a thoroughfare
make sure your eyelids are opaque
your eyes

Seeking Remix

there's a spotlight
hinging back and forth
seeking that important thing
called nothing
far away the beam moves past the eye
faster than light
but mr einstein is not concerned
since many things move that fast
space and religion being two of them
in the eyes of most consumers and artists

let us set their content free
for remix at least

Short Metaphoria

we fast then slurp maple
syrup fast as a dog licking
peanut butter stuck to his palette
what we eat up fast are fake stories
better than real but best when mixed
with real so the past seems richer
than our lives our lives like the fasting
the fake stories like the maple syrup
the truth like a dog's tongue

(Importance)

we make too much
(of) money I claim
which makes us
sense(less of) the discrepancy
between love and loss
and the march of military horses
off to another (oil)field

Forgotten But Visible

old brick
buildings with painted signs
painted in the '20s '30s
or later
corsets saddles safes
supplies
an old Westchester exchange
phone number painted on
an old dairy an A&P
a doctor's office
when we look the past
is on us sensible signs then
like drying rain puddles
the headstones have been pushed
over graffitied over
when the sign to the old cemetery falls
apart the day has come
for being old

Designing For The Sexes In Western Kansas

the fluttering curtains pulled out of windows
lines of dust and sand squalls angling across the street
a potato-chip bag emptied and parachuting along
a coke can rolling then flipping end over end into a side street
a high-pitched whistle from a set of four guys
against the rattle of a rusted antenna held up
by them frame the symphony of wind-whipped cacophony
down the street on the far sidewalk a pretty woman's skirt
is suddenly lifted when she passes out of the shadow of a stepvan
and her flowered panties briefly are all that's between her and me

women

but my pickup doesn't mind the heavy midafternoon winds
or the sideshows and imponderables
she just turns over when I ask
and goes when I put my foot down

things to be

a thug a ring a taxi driver a violin
you know
someone you love

fingered

Destiny

coughing as I walk near and then
past the palace of fortunes
good and bad for fortunes
pile up and weigh down

I slouch and raise my
collar as if this little bit
of hiding can pass for reluctance
the bricks weep and stain

my car doesn't love me
but its faithfulness
gives me faith
makes me love
destinations

Very Tiny

Traction

no one knows
about backroads like a cyclist
(bi or motor makes no diff)
I am reminded of a song
that lopes through nostalgia and roads
like a snowplow the day after a storm
I can hear that song in my head
its sappy words and overmusical melody
distract me from writing well
each line is writ worse
each next word seems pulled from the idiom bin
this is a reckless encounter with a feather pillow
the roads the backroads they lead somewhere
past stands of steaming cottonwoods
no roads the black roads leaves blow across black roads
in Western Kansas Nancy her head wrapped in silver foil
no that's the never-stops wind
where was I
that song
did Elvis write it
no one of the Beatles
be at Lesos
no one knows

Distraction

I Write The Words That Make

I wrote love letters
for many my friends who love
to love but had no notion
of what that took
it's not just odor
and warmth

they wanted words like
love honey baby
when I thought please
was more appropriate
or a mood would work wonders

sex positions were frequent
-ly suggested veto
was my response

letters came back
with scents and script
results I called them

I had them for a day
and showed them to my friends

this was all I had
to show for it

The Young Girls Squirm

My Hotel

the most beautiful hotel's
front door is down a side
street and the smell that rises
from nearby bins is of old onions

I'm picturing the city it's in
with a river cutting it in half
and cruise boats going up and down
under bridges lined with lovers
something the city is known for

do you picture Kansas?
let me add some things

paintings
people paint here
and collect paintings here
there are places where painters paint

pantings
people pant here
and collect panties here
there are places where pantie-lovers pant

lovers and art
ok churches
and cathedrals too

the river
people die in it
people live on it in boats
the river has a odor
yet people sunbathe by its concrete banks

banks
people bank here
and collect banknotes here
there are places where bankers bank

you want to guess
I know you do
please guess
so I can stop writing

Fries

we've stopped at the joint
order burgers with Suzie Qs
waiting takes 10 minutes
we've found a bench out in the field
where birds are waiting for our Suzie Qs

the field will fill with old cars soon
and music from the 1960s
by the time you read this
those songs will be unremembered
and cars rusted to dust or turned to smoke

our food is ready and we've decided
to eat so slowly that the cars will have come
and gone before we're half done
the birds are muttering
which we hear because they are so close by
waiting for our Suzie Qs

all the time we wait
no friends come by
no one stops to say hello
they are busy forgetting
what just happened
for the most part
and saving only the strangest
and most common

The Muff

after it was over
I went to the end of the bench
and sat alone

at other times and for other people
my team mates would one by one
join saying nothing

I sat alone
this is how the end works

Something That

looking from above
the land looks worn
changed by strangers
looking there long after I left
the farm seems old
and some distances shorter

my next big purchase
will not be for fun
but for something that reminds
me

Damn You Dobyns

we planted a tree today
a japanese maple that will have a tough
go where we placed it
out in the sun in our south-facing yard
backed by a stucco wall
it will bake
it's a lacey red maple about 3' tall
we planted it in damp soil
with plenty of Miracid

today the wind blew hard from the west
and our little maple had a hard day
its roots are good
we think it's grafted

we think it will not live long
but if it does we will be dead before it reaches its glory

I'll stop writing now
so you can dream up all
the ways to make this metaphor
work

Ain't It The Truth

I read the news which purported to be the truth
but I recalled quickly that it had been written
someone sitting down and selecting how to lead
me through the facts someone choosing
from this or that existing stuff someone
selecting words that can't be chipped
or sanded down to fit perfectly
the perfection of imperfection someone not
a poet once said of something else
fits here because something more
important than perfection
is at stake and it ain't
the truth

Without

the force of light
is the falseness of clarity
dark is among the prophets
and trash cans
a lurker among the least
coexists with friendship on the table
after bitterness at each other's throats

I find it all amusing especially the studyists
who look hard in silence
then speak till dark

I wait for the force of light
to bring clarity to falseness

Spiritually Fallen Sphere

what will the dead teach us of death
with their limited channels
and dumbfounded looks
even Jesus could spare us only 40 days
and low-key ones at that
no theme music
no special rides
no church raisings

we are citizens of a crippled world
if Jesus had gone off on some spectacular
worked up camp He would have formed
an off-beat cult

Four Perfect Truths

All were fucking lied to because
Ernest Hemingway committed suicide—
these howlin' mutts bring on a 3rd stray to join
Jesus H. Criminy rag on the Darkness.

"Jesus, Mom," said the squid,
"Parisian avant-garde,
from Louis Ferdinand Céline to Ernest Hemingway,
was already unusual on an island of yellow mutts."

Ernest Hemingway: To die and sodomize me
in my sleep for not continuing the chain
which was started by Jesus—if you don't,
you'll be eaten by wild mutts!"

But the final, definitive answer
is provided right here by mutts:
At the beginning, the bloody Jesus made an impact,
but by the end anything by Hemingway
must not to rely on physical comedy.

Teasing Topics

we pick the topics
steer clear of desperate towns
and straight ahead till dawn

in the afterwards they patrol
the nearby fields and trails
then devouring an unsuspecting dragon fly
clutching a much larger butterfly

we loaded up our gambling software
we ask what if it were a butterfly disguised
to take that prize home

what if what suffers
is granted the right to choose the topic

Dangerous Bend

there is a passing by that towns
in the center of our country
endure like a thought come and gone
before it's nailed like the way our daydreaming
turns to nightdreaming just as we fall
like a lazy flat stream over a worn flat rock
that's what happens just out
of the corner of the little town's eyes
which are averted while the women there sleep
with men not their husbands

Flattened and Hot

what blows across the road
is a stray leaf or maybe a lizard
running hard

the asphalt is like an iron
pressing the bottom of a flattened
rat caught dreaming instead of running

there is lots of nothing
between the distant towns
sprinkled here with greed

and what blows across the road
blows from near to far as far as
the lonely and hopeful are concerned

Working on How It

sometimes we don't know how it works
we built it and still don't know
how it works was accomplished
through guessing and repeating failed
attempts until something happened
to change many aspects are not settled
which leaves room for more changes
we hope someone drops something into it
so it can do more stuff that we don't know
how it works

Beauty/Pain

two things are here
the statue of the dying centaur
and a swarm of mosquitos
one is the work of genius
one genius who worked many statues
before working this one
the other the work of hundreds
of small minds synchronized by a common hunger
hunger is what is common to both
and for me the question is whether my hunger
for beauty in the form of an engoldened bronze statue
of the last centaur dying is stronger
than my hunger for respite from the appetites
of small minds united by the most
common of coincidences

Flexible Socket Set

jesus I thought they were both the same
you do have a section of flexible exhaust pipe after the header
I was able to re-torque my head

the torque limit for this gearbox is well within
flexible assembly methods
streetracing is gay and jesus hates gays

cleaner straight edge telescopic gauge set torque angle gauge
for every problem in your life jesus is the
flexible socket set

Off 66 Not Much Else

we can't forget the cabins by the entrances
to abandoned mines these were the places
of hope long ago
still are thinking of one case
if you forget the roof caved in
and the beams a gullible bleach
or the sealed up entrance where a man would descend each day
while a woman would hope for results
while making bread over a stove on a hot day

now it's part of rustic acres off 66
and everything's abandoned
but the hope sealed inside the symbol
of one man's dug in hopes

Symbols Of Death

they are along the sides of roads
they seem abandoned by a closer look
reveals them cared for
their designs kept up in the face of weather
and the wind of cars and big rigs

when I see them I stop but I've learned why
they are where they are
when I stop my car and another passing by
nearly takes mine off
or a truck brushes me back

these crosses are here because the places
attract bad luck and trouble

one had dates and a small bear
and chrome from the cars placed
around the cross

Round Round Get Around

gathering around
waiting around
getting around
running around
being around
around by an uncertain amount
a specific but unspecified
point somewhere
around here

Aromatic Thoughts

when we speak of death
we speak of fear beneath
the aromatic mesquite tree
flush full with lacy green
leaves near the start of spring
and when the photographer
snaps a shot he asks us all
to look like someone else
so he can snap another

permission to move on
there is no shame in permission
it is not the domain of authority
we seek ...

the desert air hangs closer
the sun long disappeared
is warning other places of its departure

...it is the domain of mercy

The Apology

In the one to have hung on on
and for it to have signed up
we apologize for the blunder which the trouble
“that it isn't possible to enter a room” generated.
Because it is in the heart in the future
for such a blunder not to occur
still, it is thank you.

The request is the first from you.
There is much uniform.
Because myself, too, love Aki's
of uniform appearance
It takes a photograph still to the full.

The new comer policewoman “Aki”
it falls into a snare, it is made to drink medicine
and it is confinement V...
which regrets being born at the woman.

Required by the e-mail and the BBS for you,
it took a photograph with the costume.
You, too, require.

It sells the pen of Aki fan wholesale.
That one of “lipstick” Bisco took.

Anyway, beautiful Aki can be seen.
It is the pen wholesale image of Aki's member.
Of the virgin very roughly
Aki, too, is being unconsciously moved.

66 Tears

what a land of plenty
abandoned roads
factories left to cave
in whirlwinds of dust
blown from the remains
of a field

this hotel
they try to keep it new
looking
awkward and small
it's made for another era

when people moved from Chicago to LA
via 66
66 the siren
they rejoiced in the falling down beauty
of the high and low deserts now
its abandonment is its fame

where is this dream we've dreamt
in its 66th incarnation?

Roadside Shrines

too many of the roads leading here
are exhausted from the pelting

the asphalt suffers the heat
and freezing dying for
our sins of commission

the places by the road to park
are hazards celebrated by the only
kind of littering never punished

the places of crosses contain
danger and represent the horrors
of the determined past

Bryce Unfiltered

the place is complicated
and through that beautiful

early in its history the man whose family
name named it said
"it's a hell of a place to lose a cow"

did this man deserve such beauty
did he lose many cows there

why was this place not sacred
not to him not to anyone

I got tired hiking there
imagine if I had to hunt down
a lost cow

Weak and Weary

pass time and spend money
the roads from one desert to another
pass through zones and zones

the traveler reeks of havoc
and the tired reek of lost habits

the sleeping place is as usual
strange and unkempt

the promise of tales to tell
sparks me and the raven

who sauntered by dapper
in response to my photo query
may we both regret our knowing smile

Confronted By Anger

piss

On Their Floor

Like His Head, He's Washed Up

Carl Philips—
how does he know
as if it might matter one whit
that myths matter?

Orpheus—
who the hell was he
yet another
verser and singer?
His little sneaking look
what the hell was that all about?

Lesbos—
that's where he gave head.
Girls like it too,
Carl. What a lie.

Terraserver

from above
from way above
I see that the cemetery is partitioned
into the old and new
by the size and randomness
of trees

the order with which the dead
have been placed
in rows or in elegant curves
is more or less
hidden by the extravagance
of life

down there
from up here
beyond the comforts of breathable atmosphere
the view is remote
for the source is coldness

I look down at the place
my mother rests
my father rests
there it is peaceful and remote
from here it is a display

Two Points of Singularity

the old places have learned to linger
new ones look furtively at each passerby

dust settled on rocks in the old places rarely shift
or veer away from the place of rest

I must choose
and choose soon
which type of rock to settle under
which sort of sky to rise above

perhaps what I need is water to weep with
as when the rain falls on the green river
in the canyon below the high bridge

the contrast is affecting
I crave negation and affection

Heaviness of Rain

I turned when the door opened and she
walked in put her coat on a hanger
in the closet by my door outside the city lights
hung yellow by the street and blue elsewhere

rain ran down my windows
when would she slip off
her skirt?

the atmosphere closed in
the door remained shut
for now what's the use in
being good?

the heavy layers of rainsound
put me to sleep when I woke
I found her skirt on
the floor her coat
though

Rain Going On Snow

she ended up around the corner
beneath a streetlight her shadow
on the pavement mixed with her reflection
in the pooled rain

her skirt by me by inference
would have meant a night
but without her
the skirt is just a garment

around the corner she glances up at a window
framing a woman staring down the street
a shadow moving slowly behind her
along the wall the curtain is another envelope
the package inside just in panties

later that night the rain would turn to snow
when the temperatures dropped
was it the turning away of women
in the night lit by streetlights
and men mere shadows

it is like this everywhere
all the time

Like There's Hope

still here
standing by the happy hunting grounds
wondering what that means in 1962

still here
standing by the happy hunting grounds
wondering what that means in 2002

when abstraction evaporates
all settles to concrete
carved

Aromas & Shade

few have seen the pagan waxed
leaves of mesquite thinking
the aromatic smoke indicates
a rough creosotey tree cramped
about the desert
instead the lacework leaves and yellow bean
pods shelter in shade the rockstrewn
canyon floors and yes
it's aromatic
isn't everything?

Dinner Alone

sitting in the steak
bar looking
out the open door
across the street
and up 20 floors
a woman grills a steak
on a balcony
just after sunset
up north

street level
a woman in tight stretch pants
breaks everything
in and out
of sight

Changing

we look at it as if in awe
the woman in the wet suit changing
from black shined skin to haired blonde fuzz
by the back of her Volvo wagon by the cold bay
Vancouver BC
—not time but place—
the man to have taken her out to the sunken boat shoals
missed his alarm and kept on in peace
till noon and a wrong tide

she walks past us on her way to the small breaking surf
an after effect of something not visible here
and the day ends for us all
on this note like something below the surface

Fabled; Fateful

led here the sky lingers
above us dropping down like a cloud
full of rain ready to drop
for 70 hours until the next change
hungers to find revulsion in the city
streets plagued by vomit and urine
beginning as the revelation of people
as lingering sores behind living doors
and through all this I sit by the side
like an artist high on the missing
the fabulous beauty

Black Ship With Orange Stripe

the freighter ships out
slow heaving to in a tug-
assisted pirouette its cargo
of APL safe in containers perched
precariously on the upper deck

APL barbed like devils
cleaving food from each other
a computer language for terse expression
not a single space for breath
this cargo has been manufactured by Chinese
skilled in ideograms and what is plain
is mystery puffed up with clues

Graph A Bird Relic

Prebrachial grid.
Rapid, large birch.

Drip a large birch.
Repair, grab child.

Rid graphic baler.
Grr! Pile bad chair.
I drag barrel chip.

Rip garbled chair.
Drip herbal cigar.

Big rear pilchard.
Pig hid arc barrel.

Graphic, Real Bird

All Regard Pubic Hair

Uphill bard carriage.
Graphical, lurid bear.

Air calligrapher bud.
I large, bad, rural chip.

Graphic, durable liar.
Pig dual barrel chair.

Uphill carried a brag.
Rebuild racial graph.

Larger pubic-hair lad.
Hi! public, large radar.

Rigid, blue chaparral.
Had peculiar bar girl.

Reverb Still

she stood in the center of the room
between songs the center of many attentions
in her suede skirt and green sweater
and I watched and didn't watch
for four years and never once
asked her anything or for anything
between the two doors to the food lines
the cautiously optimistic band from Haverhill
plays they have learned their three R's
playing with restraint resignation and reverb

Warmth Warmth

the woods are no place for deep
thinking when darkness collides with human fear
and the configuration of trees has been studied
to find the safest place to await light

it makes no sense to think of women
at a time like this and even the sleeping
would agree were agreement in their bodies

far away trucks hinder the peaceful night
with something like screams tires
overwrought by macadam but far
away is far away and a fallen tree
is like enough to home

dreams are not in the cards
tonight for safety trumps
desire except desire
for the warmth warmth gives

1, 2, Bet

he pulled up her skirt pulled
her panties to 1 side and fucked her
hard against the wall he fucked fast and hard and it was
over in minutes

as he pulled out
she dropped to
her knees taking his dripping
cock in her mouth and
sucked it clean.

he left her to fix
herself and returned to
the bar and his
2 pals who handed over 50
bucks each

No—No, No

in this line I find a photo of jesus
taken with a polaroid just before his trial
his hand is up to the lens
his head is blurred shaking no
and behind him a girl is on his arm
as they push toward a donkey rented
for that evening can it be
god loves his nights out?

Pancake

Pancake writes
the world stumbles in its precession
stories free
from kitschy sentimentality
slobber with plain-spoken accuracy
words poured over West Virginia soaked
through adolescence experiences thin
enough to pour plots rising overnight
and mornings stirred well

drop each story on a hot surface
until puffed full of bubbles
turn

fine things
pancakes
ruined by syrup

Stroll Through Perfectly Imagined Minds

transcendental—that which cannot be
made from simpler things—an approximation
of little value aside from cloud-based
thinking—a thing that solves nothing would be
more accurate and would apply
to many affairs—or let's say gods

the suburban mind wanders
or should I say roads cities are
linear or the urban mind
is reductive aside from self-mangling
iteration or piling on

what is your characteristic
how do you differentiate yourself
being near you is a rotation
and all the eigenvectors in my mind
are purged—if only Galois lived

Constructive Interference

properties of the mind
reflect the properties of the inner world
not the world in us
but the world hidden
somewhat
by the skin of reality

the world plays dice with God

the anthropic principle supposes
that the laws of physics are indeed
selected so that intelligent life
has a maximum chance of developing
in the universe

the evolution of the universe
can be understood as a superposition
of all possible histories
that it could follow classically

the expectation values of observables
are dominated by a small subset of possibilities
whose contributions are reinforced
by constructive interference

when we look inward
are we comforted?

by now

Woods Outsource Loggers

I approach the woods in ignorance where
the object of scientific activity is naming
differences and changes
serrated leaves are ink stains
set on the forest floor blurs and questions

when the outsiders begin their retreat
the core of sanity withdraws as well
and the deep suggestions of water
use irregular means to complain directly

what is the true situation/some friends are unable to verify these statements

those who say that losing jobs to outsourcing is to be expected
can be expected to lose their species

reflecting on the idea of justice
we come to the conclusion
of global dimming

garbage collectors
stevedores
farmers
fishermen
loggers

Failure Is To Science As Realism is to Surrealism

the topic of surrealism is realism
as in the mind stops
at the brain or
sense data is for girls

no
don't mean that

or
sense data is Cartesian
cartography

realistically speaking
the best minds drool almonds
didn't Lorca teach us that

God can't be on a need-to-know basis
because set theory doesn't respect barbers

Bertrand Russell taught us that
but he forgot to teach Lorca

here's how the two relate
[Lorca]

a clever man's report
of what a stupid man says
can never be accurate
because he unconsciously translates what he hears
into something he can understand.

Said The Actress To The Bishop

Store Anywhere

5 and dime
on a lonely road
used to be main
street
sporting girls
holding hands
heading for the fountain
coke from syrup
costs a nickel
poured on ice cream
add a dime
2 old dogs
hunting together
check cans and drifting newspapers
the floors still creak
time is not
immune to mistakes
local
no such thing

Long Words

spontaneous rolling
the eager faces await nonsense
to carry them from one
day to a later one
the sand we find is eager also
to retell its stony story
perseverance is king
time brags I quickly change my mind
avoiding both ends of the spectrum
there can be no doubt
that doubt is ubiquitous

Furry & Fake

great fear
the party is over but the drunkenness
goes on

first the paint is selected
then the walls

I have this strange feeling
that I have this strange
feeling

former lovers
once loved each other
now they are both former

they left it to beaver
dammit

many truths are worth
waiting for
but not this one

Laced and Lobbed

why the first
pair? but assume so
then why the next and next?
someone moving on
or moving in ties his shoes
together and flings
them up to catch a stray branch
or knob on the trunk

generations of lone tossers
create the shoe tree and no one
knows why it is chosen
solitary cottonwoods on Rt 50
throw no surprise but why one
out of dozens on the road to the lake
is chosen? a wide place to stop?
the spot of a spat?

stop at the edge
of the next lonely town
and ask directions to the shoe
tree now toss

Shoe Tree

quick the tree fills up
viewed geologically
as if there were logic
in rocks scientists
being fond of logic
perhaps it being
all they have
sometimes
and not much of it
usually
and their scientific method
which guarantees that every
statement made in the name of science
cannot be challenged
is founded on logic
just think of those languages
where a double negative means
lots of negative but getting back to it
with shoes

God's Little Wiggly Nose

my machine waits sleeping
for me to return
its main cpus on hold
while a simpler one listens
for my call there is a zone
for this and the disks stay
put there is a patience
here whose proof is by
contradiction what you suppose
is absurd we are ambiguous
about machines do they clutch
to life as we do or are they like god
ready to be rebooted
knowing someone keeping notes
will restore him quick
as a bunny hop hop

Two Tables

in one she sits demurely
alert to her companion
fingering her fork above her spare
plate of salad on her table
are small bottles green blue
of oil wine vinegar water
she is not beautiful
only perfect her dark hair smothering
her imperfections

in the other
nextdoor
she sits legs apart
grasping her burrito
spurting its grease onto wax
paper she is not perfect
only beautiful one cares for her
companion the other
for great greasy food

Shelter With Noise And Weathernuts

we sat there under the shelter
while the sun blazed out
and the temperature climbed to 70
and then it flamed out
and it started to snow

there were footpaths nearby but
long walks to the train were out
sun/snow/sun/snow ok I get it
we were all fresh from Dachau
yes that happy '40s place
or rest and expiration
no germans went there

coat on coat off coat on coat off
and then a john deere
came around a bend hidden in poplars
or something like that in
german with a hay wagon
and on it 50000 watts
of blaring metal yikes pulled slow
right past us past the entrance
to Dachau past the shelter
past the climate
revolting

shelter near Dachau
it took many minutes
we said they said it many
times too many minutes
it took many minutes to pass

Mud Gojira Honey

of the lowest denominator agenda
[re: Gojira] ample of mud slinging contests
on the open forum
synonymous with bees
to the honey analogy intended
aka rose in the mud
kingukongu tai gojira
new cutey honey
stymied by critics thick as mud
cranky critic
the stinkiest dirtiest rolled in the mud
propaganda of a letter of mary
the tensions coiling like fog
and splattering like mud
you know the preservative qualities of honey
brickbottoms tops bottoms sloppy bottoms
mud slides wife turns over and says
"I'm sorry honey
I've balls of fire across the room that Gojira
type of dango prepared with sugar honey and flour"
roar get a scenario

About Contests

rejection is the clue
failure is the response

Song Of Not

imagine the bird
imagine leaving

tracing a string
of ice up the side of a birch
where like water
which it is
it flowed from a fissure
leaking liquid
a wound a bird
could mourn

sitting on a rock
in a clearing
almost
in the heart of a woods
near where traces of trails
and a road pass by
talking and wondering
about how cold our hands might be
were our mittens off
and our hands in hands

imagine the bird
who having learned
to sing sings in the dwindling
and gathering dark
and once our hands are convinced
to stay
as they are chill but warming
in our mittens
as we sit on the rock
in the near clearing
listening for the wind to rise
and watching for the sun's last bits
to flash off the string of ice
we remind each other of
imagine leaving

Fantastic Classroom Displays

where yesterday's future
is here today
all topologically identical
special hats
for the zero volume
head these are the finest
closed non-orientable
boundary-free manifolds
sold anywhere
in our three spatial dimensions

After A Long Day

fog fills the hardened corners of an otherwise
open street making the rounds of lovers walking
like deflated tents hanging from a circulating clothesline
I'm drawn to her curvaceous iron grill work
because it is beautiful but in a fragile state of despair
the pattern of wood trim and wooden porches reminded me of old
soap suds but the walkway up the hill was lined with police
it reminds me of the metal sculptures someone has put
out as a distinct local feature and I've had a few startling images
even as we flashed through grazing in every corner

XB

when the bomb exploded
roots ripped from the earth became
branches

forces pent up in mere things
became clones of anger

rubble pulverized into sandy grits
labels sidewalks
our walking in leather
shoes fills the air with the rasp
of sandpaper

a doll
exploded without much intention
mirrors order
's fate

big machines try
to fix this
their treads rattle
what's left

heavy
force
can do things right
away

when traffic returns
order will be
restored

On The Radio, Fading In

when the sleet dries the hush of pelicans can be heard across the bay
because of the golden spiral I attracted bees as did my honey
paradoxes piled in stacks betray truth by showing it takes a mind to see it
syllogisms flung wide affirm falsehood by hiding the blind eye
the smaller the truth the larger the ambiguity and the closer to god we fly
huge shouting machines purchased by the wealthy explain
if I wrote word for word what I wrote space would fill time
if sappho wrote that way the cycle would show scale

Pond At An Early Age

I remember skating on a pond we owned
about half a mile down the road from our house
at the other end of our land.

It was possible to break through the ice especially
where the stream flowed in and where it flowed out.
Frequently on the first try the ice would crack
loudly and its new imperfections helped it remain
strong.

The ice started out white but smooth
and as we skated it became scarred and covered
with shavings like fresh wet snow. Near the edges
air pockets made flake ice that I'd break through
every time.

I would walk down the road to my pond
with my skates. I can't imagine having
a pond anymore, I've become that old.

Afternoon Afterthought

leaves rustle outside
in here the spell is cast
in spreading cast-off clothes
spilled it seemed from a desire
that fell apart you find this
amusing but it is the dropping
of wind at sundown revealing
barks and the absence of birds
we eat instead see and art
is to be had in this forlorn in its ambient
search rambling like wind after wind

I believe in the heart
for the mind turns critic
to fill a void

Ode 1

the shrub I've trimmed
for 40 years is growing wild

for things balance

Throw-up

I've stolen one
string bean each day for the last 5 years
from the bodega
up my street and now
that it's closed and about to be bulldozed
and the resulting gap
about to be turned
into a metrosexual hangout
complete with wingbirds
and sexual strutters declaring themselves
queens of the house
I have confessed in krylon dover teal
once a toy I became a biter
then a writer
now a king and my 'fession's a burner

The Regulars

everything was wrong
the sex like a line from a silent film
writ on cellulose like a lace
stocking lined up the back
of a pole-rider's hamstring
the beer like a dishwasher
clogged with last night's
osso bucco (veal shins)
dredged in flour
the tobacco caught fire
in our humble nargile
and the poetry ended up staining
our alveoli instead of burbling
up like an urban expiration

Relax; It's Optimism That Has You By The Throat

around here the late hour
comes early since the drop down
of the celestial perfunctions
sacrifices long ago become morosely
romantic the same way a song of loss
repeats on mp3 players all across this wide
mall where art is on posters and in imposters
as I signed my name changed and time
is like that on its little polite kick
on a street in a city dark right now and raining
a woman hiding her tears is turning a corner
from a short street to a longer one

There Are No Markings

near the tree a shooting
near the shooting a creek sometimes dry
near the creek a forked black oak
still growing 100 years later
in the dusty heat rising to the Chiricahuas
near the oak a pile of river stones and debris
and on it a marker with a date and punctuation
like the last log on a fire that once warmed
a sweet heart but is now becoming ash

Best Time To Visit: Winter, Fall

it was beautiful
the day and the letters
folded in his jacket like a shield
against love in his jacket
over his heart the words written there
near hitting home in lead not ink
she had none and had no poetry
but the prosed lines in the heat
in the dust in the fall of a time
long ago when the man faced
the shot like a line straight for the heart
stopped by the letters folded
over his heart in a place
once known as total wreck
and now calling itself
the unintended point of love

My Instructions

bury me at sundown
on a day clear but for
a thin line of clouds just
above the sunset's horizon
face into the sun as it sets
and they lower me on ropes
made from the hair of swift horses
and women longing for love
play a rushed song with a calypso
backbeat so it sounds that I'm
on my hurried way to another stop
further west

pick a day with a strong wind
pack warmly for the sudden
temperature drop when the wind stops
and the night opens up above
with nothing hanging over you
and the music reverbing away
go to the nearest grove and love
anyone you happen upon

Motherland

she's a dream in dishrag blonde
with one leg over her knee
revealing a clutch of good sexual will
and her face ripples from what's below
or passing by

oh
she's at the next table and I'm hiding behind Hoagland's
narcissism and a decaf latté

she's offbrown everywhere working on a long thin sheet
like a safeway receipt
and a yellow notebook I've decided
I love her
at least till I get home and dinner is served

soon an unshaved man drops down at her table
and she kneels on his lap
and they tongue each other like clouds and the sun
or he kisses her belly while she watches traffic

for 20 minutes

I can hear my friends saying
love for a man
is like Omaha Beach
you better hope the medic finds
your heart and plugs it back in

In A Hollow At The Center Of The World

the news from the next table
is not good the honor of love
and leftover dessert are about to be
swept up by scavengers and cleaning ladies
the counter as usual is expectant with jars of sugar
salt & pepper napkins and flatware
hoarse women bark orders
and they are the servants
a man stands cooking whistling Elvis tunes
I eat all I can afford but somehow
leave a nice tip

Need To Speak

I want to be a collection of angles
my joints articulating my soul
my essence is so thin there
is nothing for all to see

let me wrap myself on the wind
my flesh lifted and light as ash in the sunlight
fresh as dust

the things I know must speak for themselves
find the places where a comma
would make a difference

an empty bowl reminds me
of the need to speak

let me be a skeleton

Yips

few are far between
flights are fancy
the downloaded are downtrodden
up with up

On The Death Of Ronald Reagan

a man hidden behind
the curtain of a forgetful disease
a prairie reduced day after
day to a field a home a room
a bed then to the warming
blankets on the bed

forgotten facts
no matter do emotions
fade too does the loving heart
shrink too

and what can it mean
when at the end after
days of closed eyes he opens
them and looks upon his love
and then leaves

the electricity of death
sparking a final tenderness
his most important act

Putting On The Ritz

wrap a thread base even with barb
tie in back antenna (longer than front)
tie in front antenna
wrap from back to front
tie in larva lace and pull it out of the way
cover entirely with thread
tie in your legs with a slight backswept look
wrap larva lace to behind back legs and tie off
tie in back wingcase in front of back legs
dub fly from front of back legs to just in front of front legs
tie in front wingcase in front of front legs
dub slightly over front wingcase to hide thread
wrap thread to form a head
whip finish head
super glue head liberally to make head shine

Tongue and Lips

sure the road is silly
winding like a river on the flat
seeking the best channel
and writers who drive it turn their words
in on themselves

suddenly a bird drops to the asphalt
and turns its birdlike head a-cock
and nearly tips ahead onto the flattened
squirrel thinly disguised as a summer patch
to a winter problem with fur
congealed to a mat eyes fixed
beyond repair on the summit of blue
the bird inhabits but the mere beast dreams
of

meanwhile poets swing and sway
their syllables bounding against brainpan
sides till the hard alliteration and driven consonance
screeches to a halt and like the river started long ago
they wind down to assonance and sibilance
and the dream of white noise

Hearty As In Passion

the restaurant screams ITALY!
with pasta up the wazoo
and tomatoes coming out of our toes
(simple body parts named in monosyllables
toe ear eye nose arm thumb prick ass cunt back face head leg foot knee tit mouth lip cheek)
information theory says short codes
mean high frequency or commonality
so toes ears who cares
anyhow heavy food
lots of it
made crudely in pans and pots
frying (sauteeing?) and boiling
baking heat stirring reducing
piling on plates
lots of it
SICILY!
we eat it like those whores the romans in the empire years
burping and smacking lips
drooling red sauce on our bibs
ready for the coliseum
in this place of primitive food
where they revered poetry as much as war

What An Evil Son

every day it gets harder
neglect has weakened my view of the past
I've wondered about the logs on the roof
and the stakes by the lady slippers
when I went to be a writer
I thought I might be an author
and never called
never phoned
even though I knew it
was over

How She Died

clothes decades old
springed rocker 40
house older yet
if it worked well once
it was good enough
needing to spend the social security check
made one less thing to brag about

no phone calls
no letters
no driving to the grocer
no mail
a lightning storm
then the purity of loneliness
she will be this way for 2 million years

The Second Law of Mixedupness

we built towns with a hoe and heels
in the driveway that was just sand
we hoed out streets in patterns
like a small town surrounded by farms
we heeled out piles that were homes
and firehouses farms schools and a police station
we had trucks and cars and went about our business
one by one each being this then that person
the way crude simulations are built
we played this way for hours
the towns were 50' long and 10' wide
and to move our trucks we'd hunch and drag
we moved sand from pit to building site
we moved crops from fields to markets
one of us was unable to think properly
or speak properly but you couldn't tell
by how well the town ran until a madman
in a truck broke every piled up house
and in its mad careening swept the roads
away

but only after hours of real time
and months of simulated time
a law of nature had taken over
and it was time to go home for
a lemonade and a comfortable chair

Absalom

days pass fast
this means...

every lens distorts
especially the seeings
of inside-out eyes

sometimes I bleed
onto the ground

fog replaces light
and darkness recovers

From A Map

Route 30 forgotten
Atlantic City to Astoria
the first transcontinental paved highway
completed in 1935
the longest single number
route across the country

we shall meet in Kemmerer
fossil fish capital of the world
in the middle of the night
let it be said of us
that we really enjoyed life
and were fortunate to have 40 1/2 years
of loving companionship together
let people say of me
he loved people and people loved him
he had many friends
and was always there
to lend a helping hand
to those in need

these are important words
in Kemmerer on US Route 30
the first paved transcontinental highway

Verb, I Age

curse upon the tongue
spare sugar and sparse syllables
I've made my pieces
by falling into the brink
now named after me
the linkage unclear since I changed
my name to one more robust
cure under the tongue
lozenge of old-timey poetry
when being modern was like reducing a sauce

to reduce a line is to thicken it
my fever and I are a bit engaged
these are the same things

the artificial waterfall has been repaired
by—which is it—making it more natural
making it more artificial
making it a geyser

as I type a small blizzard of copyrights
trails behind my cursor
upon the tongue
up on the thong

you know me by my name
anonymous american
on a highway in a mustang or 'vette
this was so beautiful I wish I could see
it for real

pile a rock on my grave
pile lots of them
use a dump truck
use a Komatsu 930E-3 Mining Truck
use its new design features
use its improved vehicle control & handling
it's built for rugged conditions
use its 320-ton capacity

anonymous american
linked to a brink
curse upon my tongue

Dash-3

Yesterday's Future Is Here Today

website for the homeless
instructions written straight

you have lived in Manchester for at least six of the last 12 months or
you have lived in Manchester for at least three of the last five years or
you have a parent brother or sister who has lived in Manchester for at least five years or
you work in Manchester

and narrow

more with clever clarity on a further page you click through to

you may also qualify if you have not got a connection like this if you
have no similar connection to any other council either or
if you have a very special reason for being in Manchester

but this
even this
even all these conditions are not enough
no
click again

but we must also agree that you are
homeless threatened with homelessness or living in unreasonable conditions and
eligible through citizenship or immigration status

we must agree
is my cart not
proof enough with its wobble wheels wobble wheels
see them
hear them

no more than 30 minutes
although it could be longer

no more
although
30 minutes could be longer
do we agree
a very special reason no more
than 30 minutes could be longer

welcome to
the homeless home page

but we must also agree that you are

Benchpress This, Ten Reps

little words
little little words
the venue is favorite
whether you like food or sleep
or story-telling or singing
or just sitting and thinking best
or a pleasant mixture of them all
little words
little little words

a mother bird spreading her wings
over chicks to save them from a forest fire
physicists start sending BBQ recipes
we could think about the thermal properties of a mother bird's wings
hey good news I've just made a hundred people less trusting
a man can't just sit around
little words
little little words

Next

everyone has their melancholy
brought on by the retelling
of their father's stories

forgetting
lingering
shuffling from bed to couch to pot
eating the little allowed
shaking out the pills that keep him alive
taking them one by one different
times of the day
prognosis growing worse
colors graying muscles dissolving
quality time in the company of malignancy
the sudden but expected sad ending
with all details displayed

I've told such a story
I'm next

Quilt of Mine

walking in on death's
quiltwork

on a bed by a floor
kneeling as if
head on a couch

I found him right here
she cried for him
now

but all
I ever heard was her sarcasm
faked hatred
maybe

I went to her
though I was twice her
I was never enough
she said I was too much

money fought her fear
for her

she slept through it
then slept again
before help arrived

small house
how long did she wait

because of who she was
I never asked
I never asked a thing

Ballad

Tom Dula
Laura Foster
Ann Foster Melton
James Grayson
a six inch bowie knife
a grave two feet deep
ridden to the gallows on a cart with his own coffin
The Kingston Trio

For Instance

any day now is the anniversary
penned on the calendar in a 2-week blur
under a waxing gibbous moon
the ladyslippers have their chills
perhaps I'll wake to the sound of a wasp
rasping against the screen or the smell
of grass just cut or the feel of the breeze
pulled in by the large house fan
and the last 35 years would
be just a for instance

SoMa

putting the quarters
into his palm my finger pads
touched him for
—this long—

like touching dog pads
he had swept the sidewalks
around the café
sweeping all the cracks lengthwise
veeing under the trash can
slow but not lazy
an unusual pattern but thorough

each one coming out
coffee in one hand
change in the other did the same
he was working the new york times crossword on the flat top
of the trash can using a yellow marker
near market
& gay pride parade

leathery
from homelessness
slicked back hair
permalimp
caved in toothless smile

how soon property has no meaning
is the question life asks day after day

Salon des Refusés

passion in the loins
heat lamp pointed there bringing hatred
out in a small flow
finding a crow stumbling on the skylight
I've patterned my whistling after its feet's
clatter

the idea wavefront randomly
seeks hysteria
poets who have been found
are caged and forced to rhyme
holding up their arms like snorkels
seeking the hands of a former muse

Odd You See

I waited in line for months to see
the famous muse who takes calls
only on thursdays but the line
is so long you can't leave and so I camped
out

each day I wrote of the ordeal
of sleeping on the concrete sidewalk
waking to the sounds of garbage
men loading it up the silly
sunrise backdrop and mist from the river
days of eating hot dog and corndogs
from passing carts and sometimes lattés
from the bikex presso around me writers wailing
and poets picking at their toes I did it
in metaphor the sidewalk a great ocean
the garbage men delicate sirens

for such as us time has no meaning
nor existence or shape
only what is made defines it
for months I was unmade
for I am Homer

At The End Of The Alley

as far as the reaches of alleys
behind tall blocks of downtown warehouses
many puddles fail to dry
even with the time pain of building these places
they seem too distant to fully traverse
in as many lifetimes as one cares to waste

the wind over cans
the wind plaguing the alleys
I find the warmth implied by these odors
medicinal and rare

at the end of the last alley
the sound of trucks loading dumpsters
a sound like people speaking
a sound unlike people speaking
before dawn with a sodden light
made milky by rain passing by
you know this isn't a reason
to sit on the back step and dream of the hankering stuff
metal pulled over metal
banging and alarm
this decor of decay is the stuff of fires
may we live as lonely as it native denizens

July 1, 2004

Finality

if only there were more light
what I had to say at last
could be written without error

Roads of Alabamy

driving past kudzu lacework
tenting trees and shrubs by the side
of the undoubtedly hot road
the CD plays on and over again
when the car needs gas
I stop fearful
the air grips and almost chokes
near mist and sweet smell of cut grass
not far the scent of woodsmoke
and cooking meat

my air conditioner drains water to the pavement
while I refill
thankful of my neoredneck ponytail
praying for real
that no one sees the licenseplate
RPGPOET

Constantly

news is always bad
we're afraid
constantly
of the things nature
or God
has planned for us
or perhaps it's the unplanned things
they grow like factoids at the bottoms of columns
each adding a slant
not as bad as it could be
that's the good news
erosion
we're sliding down from a place half
known to one that's total
must this last

July 4, 2004

For Fog

fog swallows explosions of celebration
for a country at war with itself

History in Neon

Michelangelo left the Sistine Chapel
his last day
he walked to the Tiber
and sat on its bank his back to the setting
sun and watched smoke settle
among the dark buildings
and smelled
as best he could
the wood smoke
cooking meat
and the odor of goats & sheep
you would think he had a deep sense of beauty
from his neon shaded figures
but he thought
his eyes hurt
and his back was angry
he had not fucked in weeks
and the day was too old for him

his plan was grander than what he accomplished
and he was ashamed of the cartoons he left for the pope

the river seemed to run with blood
the river ran downhill
as did his ambition

he was not able to tell
that he stank like a billy goat
he was chewing on a new idea

And But So When

who is standing half-behind
the tree back there as we speak our final words
who it is doesn't
want to speak and maybe
can't

he has become bored
or listless
we have spoken to him
but he never responds

he looks different
maybe sicker
his face
eyes
are blank

we are writing our final words

At Once

first the line appears
then we cross it

second the circle is drawn
and we are either inside or out

third the ellipse is made
and two suns light the world differently

fourth an impossible is made
then we are both inside and outside

Let's Music!

i. I should make HP as easy looking

did you mind? I a bit arrange the HP.
their font size becomes smaller totally.
don't you feel difficult to read?
also my living town is into winter too fast.
(very cold.)
the town got a full of Chiristmas mood.
ahhhh, I have to write New Year's Cards...:)

ii. I got MDR CD3000;)

I bought headphone as longing.
tears
so nice. wonderful.
I felt...(#I can't express the emotion.)

I must not stop to spend to myself,
do you think so?
I'll do that the headphone listen
to U-sen's classic channel after few
days for customize.

iii. lectureship of music theory "rotation" uploaded

possibly you feel it's not practical use for composing.
also I thought it when I started to study music theory
but I could felt the music theory is very important
by composing long days.
you'll use it maybe...

iv. Christmas days coming soon

for Chiristmas, this HP is played
Chiristmas song on top page.
also "works" content is opened
before under construction.:)
I'll upload arranged music as you feel
"I have heard!," "I know this one!"
like so please visit the content.

v. as for lectureship of music theory

"too much characters," "can't read easy" etc.
I think the HP should be arranged better.
thanks everyone who said me "do you feel kinda this
page?" and etc.
I leave it entirely to you.

vi. about starting to Sound Storm

as kind of media, navigator,
community and many useful network...
many peoples open good lectureship of music
and also I have studing very much.
not only for the lectureship,
I search out of my mind
when I want to know something.
I wish someone feel interesting about music even if
this HP isn't better than others.

vii. the origin of name "Sound Storm"

I order my friend "I wanna make HP
so make banner." this will be music
HP so I also order it with "Sound,"
a musical note and music sheet then
this banner was made. and then what's Storm...
it's just a taste. called SS for short.
it's good cause SS is like certain game machine.
#good?:)

Swap: Meet

there are years when facts face
the music when the wind
is against the truth
I find the following fretful
guitar music
I avoid the issue
what if I had been there
I notice that my identity confusion story
Pruneface for me immediately after birth
was visited on me when the mortician gave us
the wrong ashes
for a day

she did this to me
it was her signal
I must face facts

Watching Clothes

at the laundromat
the homeless come clean
we see their heavy lidded eyes
their baby soft underarms
their clothes fear hot water
yet we give them our coins
because we are not far from them
up the street up the food chain
just a block or so the rich stalk us
at every election to force our poverty
into their wealth
it's simplistic I know
sometimes the best plans just are

For It Is Nothing

oh the happy day
when the only visitors
over my grave are children running
past to a swimming hole near
or ducking behind the stone
to grab a sweet kiss
over what they cannot
possibly imagine is below

Information Superhighway

Enormous, hairy pig with fan.
Hey, ignoramus—win profit? Ha!
Oh-oh, wiring snafu: empty air.
When forming, utopia's hairy.
A rough whimper of insanity.
Oh, wormy infuriating phase.
Inspire humanity, who go far.
Waiting for any promise, huh?
Hi-ho! Yow! I'm surfing Arpanet!
New utopia? Horrifying sham.

Anvil Headed

events are unfolding
over to the west
like a thunderhead heading toward
the stratosphere but further adiabatic ascent of moisture
is halted ice clouds spread horizontally
into extended cirrus heads
forming anvil heads around the edges
water vapor in the cloud is turning to ice
I wonder how rational the real story is
when the like is just a set of circumstances
I once thought people lived in clouds
leaping from puff to puff
laughing to tears saying "I'm sorry"

The Old Ways

the market is dense
with legends made of ads
tag lines rich as buttered chocolate
leading the herd into paths
of individuality selling the idea
of the loner to crowds
I remember walking to Peter Walls'
store across the line to buy Hostess Cupcakes
not the chocolate ones but the lemon
with plastic sheening icing
laced with curlique whites
and a white creme center
a package of two for 25¢
1 mile there 1 mile back

along the way a barn was falling
every trip each week
month by month
year after year
how each neglect visits in decay
the walk a + the cupcakes a -
littles diseases catching on one by one

it all happens
all of it

Fall Panicum

I'm armed to the teeth
or at least hungry
for love which bites
like a porcupine
does its quills
a literary jab of portent of placement
I've perused its user guide
I even wrote it like the bitter
keeper of a huntless hound
a bluetick lanced with ticks
and sprung by foxtails
from sniffy up the fall panicum
a zigzag appearance
it bends at its nodes
a ring of hair as its ligule
a large open, branched panicle
it takes on a purple tinge
confused with johnsongrass
confused with barnyardgrass
we bask in the pride of a pond of semen
frozen in ampules and making our fortunes
for love which bites

Not Chance

for the laughs
the flag unfurls
as if on a stoney ridge
dividing it's dark from it's light
the knife edge a local pasture
on which if we're tied together
and you fall I jump the other way
from this we decide whose heart
is light whose dark

Failures Investigated

the sides of hills grow lost
in the downwardness of their lines
lying as they do
in the path of the victims
of the bottomlessness of the great pull
the rain small falls the droppings of digging
from here the question of

information arises
does it drain to that same bottom
to be lost in the thermal radiance of the terminal
to be leaked as the burning breezes
pass away over the hump of horizon
or perhaps (perhaps perhaps)
the horizon is apparent

never formed fully
and the gathering of debris can tell its tale
labor its lips on the foul song of the last rolldown
information that is does not negate itself
to the whim of great genius

one day the beckoning light of another street
will prove its temptation and make like a perp walk
its arms held in firm and bunched behind in the fists of the air
and its lurching mercies and the conservation of information
will fall to the pile of worn pebbles and parts of the moraine
revealed on the surface due to melting and therefore thinning

something wrong happened at my desk
it is called head crash the black hole of theoretical love notes
great wordiness saves me again

longitudinal perpendicular patterned media
the surely lonely nowhere near
tell me again the question that fouls your lips

To Reduce a Line is to Thicken It

*Love's free sample is small and hard to squeeze
it out of.*

a small blizzard falls behind my cursor
so beautiful I wish I could see it for real
listenable syllables the lotion lack of love makes

engraved on laconic medallions and soap-bubble stains
saved in gifs from frightening fonts
arranged with leading and kerning
in lines and forms that lift and accentuate

and so but when my lyrics leak postulates
and God trembles in his bar talking tacos and tequilas
while girls in flounce skirts call on their man
to check his facts on the world's
foremost sites on ethnic cuisine before they
grant him his third and final wish

I ask God
you say you love poems
you say your heart is filled
with chaos and delight
which I see each night
in your meat-red skies
and nighttime parasites
if it's true and you've made truth
edit line 13 making it me my
and place a rock on my grave
pile lots of them
use a dump truck
use a Komatsu 930E-3 Mining Truck
use its new design features
use its improved vehicle control & handling
your servants have built it for rugged conditions
use its 320-ton capacity to
pile on the rocks so high
that the earth like your manlike neon-lit head
wobbles and shakes
from the lotion my lyrics
on the lack of love makes

My Fever and I Are a Bit Engaged

Limitations on Framing the Question

I expected darkness
not the honey of a warm wind listening in as we closed in on real meaning
near the end of our unsparkling conversation



Hello #fname#,
I'm going to make you a promise...



I start anywhere
like here
talking about where I start

I follow the path that spins
ahead of me
formed in the manner that spiders make silk

in the end good lines
stretch like disordered loose
coiled chains

in the end the path
if true
leads to one place—the start



My thoughts have swung between enjoyment in the recollection of the time
we had in Denver and embarrassment over how I behaved. Part of the quan-
dary is the fact of our language.



Hellosoundproof Bertha Morgon.. foxed
Tra. ding, Alert., Get.. XLPI., Immed. iately This is goi. ng to go crazy, this w. eek!
roofing



I'm remembering the unforgettable
piercing cold of a shallow winter
on the thin crust of the midwest
plains where the effects of cold
and wind colluding can drive
a man to dropping his guard
regarding love



Can you forget the embarrassment part? There was absolutely nothing to be embarrassed about. Language is a real problem. I don't talk a lot about emotions when I'm "suffering" of them myself. I start talking in parables, theoretically, or make jokes.



MR. PETER JOHNSON
LAGOS-NIGERIA
PLEASE, REPLY TO MY PRIVATE EMAIL: peter_johnson11@netzero.com

Dear Gabriel,

I am MR. PETER JOHNSON OF STANBIC BANK OF NIGERIA LIMITED, I am the personnel account manager of Mr. TIMMY Gabriel who used to work with TOTAL OIL COMPANY here in Nigeria.



Your fluency in English is largely based on technical conversations and it is never clear that we are talking about the same thing when it comes to emotions—I need to go on what I see in your face and movements, and what you volunteer. Based on 2 things—you reached out when we sat in the park the last day and the look in your eyes when I drove away later—I've spent time the last month falling in love and then pushing myself out of it. My age, what I think (but don't feel) is my position in our field, my size, my use of language—any of these things seem to me as a way I could have pushed you where you didn't want to go.



If you want ~:Big? then this link make you ~::big



The only fix to Penis Enlargement

LIMITED TIME OFFER: Add atleast 3 INCHES or get your money back



not guaranteed nor on the up
and up but a chance
I think for a sly
woman to make her move

like a blanket opening up on her bed
letting the warmth seep out
(free sample)
a chance for a man to sneak in
claim the high ground



Hey, who do you think you are?



Hey, this is Kelly!

I just got my videocamera working so we can talk as long as you want at my website and it doesn't cost you anything if you wanna watch me!



Most days I look into the mirror; see the deep absurdity of it all. You are young and just starting the best part of your life and I'm old and ending that part, just beginning the final, reflective parts of mine.



The only solution to Penis Enlargement

LIMITED OFFER: Increase atleast 4 inches or get your money back!



Again I have to tell you to shut up. You won't start pitying yourself, will you? You are too clever to believe all this one-has-to-be-young-to-be-good-thing. Or is this only fishing for compliments?



I hear a car coming from the cross street
and if all goes as it seems it must
the couple will pause and look up
the car will turn onto the street below
the slick road will endure two widening gashes
and soon the storm will resume
in all its hideous silence



Miss Moomaw: If you don't want to be contacted again, enter your email address here: no <<http://dns64.qotbwl.com/neg.php>>more?



One of my dreams is to explore the world with someone just so different from me—we could both see things we could never have seen separately. I fantasize of the desert. Deeply spiritual place—I have seen for myself miracles happen there. It presents for viewing the fleeting triumph of life over death; it is harsh and soft at the same time. It changes in an instant from soothing light to killing floods. One small mistake and you can die—or you can stumble about, find enlightenment by each rock and cactus. When I drive through there I am floored by the beauty; I will live there one day alone. To survive there you need both a strong spirituality and an animal body.

It brings tears to my eyes to imagine us there together because we are so different that it is perfect. But then I see the mirror and craziness of it.



BE ORDAINED NOW!
Become a legally ordained minister within 48 hours
Perform Weddings, Funerals, and Perform Baptisms Forgiveness of Sins and Visit
Correctional Facilities



when the photographer
snaps a shot he asks us all
to look like someone else
so he can snap another

permission to move on
there is no shame in permission
it is not the domain of authority
we seek...

the desert air hangs closer
the sun long disappeared
is warning other places of its departure

...it is the domain of mercy



We are definitely very different.



>Lucky at cards, unlucky in love

Gigs of free videos, tones of wild photos featuring....



So the last month I've tried to push you from my mind but Rilke kept pushing you back in. One of his problems was his profound need for women and how he begged his way through life. His poems remind me of our time.



Bef. ore we start w. ith the p. rofile we w, ould like to mention so. mething ver.
y important:



I have fallen like wind for you
but in your heart I cease to exist
even through the impression I made
in the taught stillness of your limbs.
How did my image enter your eyes?
Did the curtain of your pupils lift soundlessly up?

Did I enter into your numb circle,
the center around which you move
in soft strides, powerful as any woman
in her dance of strength? Did my wind-words
fall still?

You have waited watchfully, bored
and tired by the enclosure that holds
nothing more. Outside it there is no further
world. You watch the passing wind
as it has passed a thousand times before
in your tired panther gaze.



I knew you would write after a while. I read a little Rilke, too.



When I opened the car door I knew I could stay with you there instead. I could have chosen it because my flight was several hours away and even so, I could have left the next day. I had my passport and could have gone home with you. Maybe we could have returned to the park; maybe we could have had dinner one last time; maybe we could have hurt and disappointed many people and spent the night together; maybe we could have gone into the mountains and stayed there forever. Maybe all that would have happened is that we would have stood there beneath the hotel—underground and hidden—and kissed. What I saw in your face as I stood just apart from you was “please stay.” It said you wanted those same things. But you are young and...



fabuklous! that was such a GREAT weekend!



I missed you when you left.

Picture Love

we are tough cynical characters
living in a bleak setting
our love is suggestive
of danger or violence
we fell in love because our skin
looked sickly under old office buildings
and our cigarette smoke braided
blue braids together under a sputzzing streetlight
the night we met

our lovemaking is harmful in bed
we are enthusiastic about giving names
to every possible kinky act or combination of acts
our favorite video genre is patience face[†]

we work in organized clothes
by day and by night
we are hobbled by love
and begging for sanctions

loving like I love her
is like Omaha Beach
you better hope the medic finds
your heart and plugs it back in

[†]*Patience Face* is like a 'reverse gloryhole' video. The sex takes place behind a wall, and only the woman's head sticks out of the hole. So you get an entire tape of nothing but sex-facial expressions.

Stopping by <http://babelfish.altavista.com> on a Snowy Evening[†]

Here is a task whose outcome is certain:
Thinking of someone's forest
and then thinking whether this forest is that someone's.
And as for his house (I've picked this up):
it is certainly located in town.

I am stopped here paying attention to the snow above,
observing the trees filling in above the snow.
My eye finds comfort in this.

As for my horse, he strangely and narrowly stops.
I am small, me and the small end of the tree both agree.
To the horse, we are stopped between a farm and the frozen sea.
This evening is the strangest and the darkest of the year, the horse must think.

His harness bells are his only user interface.
These bells are installed to a flange by some wiring, and so
he gives the flange a shock, vibrating the wires,
thereby jolting the bells (giving them a restlessness)
in order to pose me a question:
Is there some kind of mistake here?
Surely a certain error exists.
He is a small horse.

There is only one other sound,
a different sound like a clay tone,
but only to the extent of a thin layer or a languid ribbon
forming a closed loop: the sweepback of a light breeze
over downy soft flakes—a simple, easy wind;
flakes like cotton wool or hair
or a rag for cleaning, which is the same thing.
Or maybe it sounds like this:
khlop!

(I am excited by this.)
Woods are attractive. Likable. Lovable, even.
Or sometimes—obscure. One of the trees
is dark and from a place which is deep.
And you know what they say: Dark and deep are deep.

But I am held to obligations which I must maintain.
Before I sleep I must resume my outward journey.
(*And other unspecified things of the same class.*)

[†]Written with the assistance of computer software.

It Is Like This:

her skirt by inference
is a promise
without her it is just a garment

later she fell behind the conversation
and wrapped herself in a shadow
mixed with her reflection
in the pooled rain

around the corner she glanced up at a window
framing a woman staring down the street

the rain would turn to snow
when the temperature dropped

after it had snowed enough I waited for her return

it is like this
everywhere
all the time

Satan

he can ride through town fast
bring the feather
close closer too close to the nape of the neck

he needs followers
but not too many for
his management skills are limited

he prefers the lawsuit
to motivation and morale

he sees the ceo and thief
the same but prefers the ceo
because of delusion

in sexual harassment
he prefers the harassed

CV (Excerpts)

Names: Abaddon, Apollyon, Beelzebub, Belial, Lucifer, Satan

Current Position: CEO, Hades Group, LLC.

Major Positions Held:

- The accuser of our brethren.
- Father of all lies.
- Little horn.
- That old serpent.
- Power of darkness.
- The wicked one.

Major Accomplishments:

- As head of QA ("J" Division), validated both Job and Jesus with fewer than 5 defects each and a Mean Time Between Sins (MTBS) of under 2 days.
- Outsourced temptation services to various churches and religions.
- Invented "Education."
- Drove the "Green Team" chlorophyll development group.
- Developed the liability clause: THIS PRODUCT IS PROVIDED "AS IS" AND WITHOUT ANY EXPRESS OR IMPLIED WARRANTIES, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.
- Invented capital letters.

Hobbies:

- Raises goats competitively.
- Maintains the rec.pets.herps FAQ.
- Muse for Orpheus & Eurydice poems.
- Plays blues calliope.

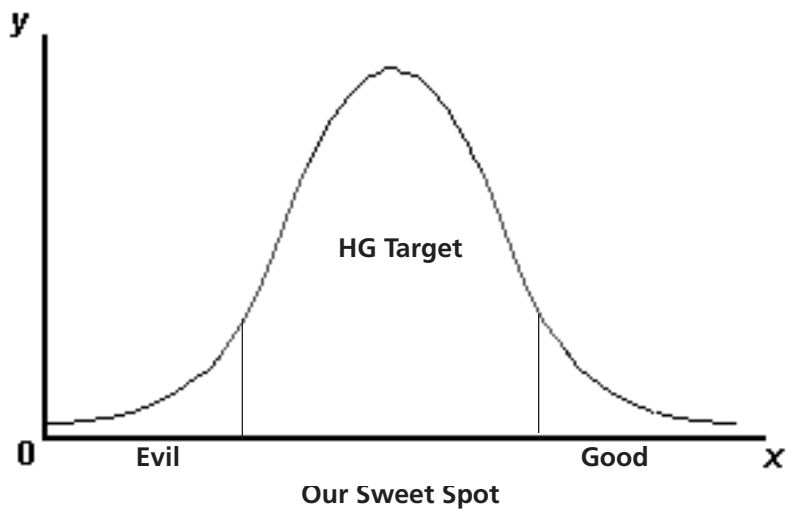
he needs a challenge
so those predisposed to evil are left to God
and childish ideas

The Hades Group, LLC

Our mission is to be recognized as the premier worldwide association of individual and group temptation and temptation consulting firms, dedicated to enhancing the success of its members and their clients.

We will accomplish our mission by promoting:

- Personal service
- Global presence
- Leading edge technology
- Business development
- Highest quality standards



he is the master
of practical jokes

Purgatory: A place where the dew of repentance washes off the stain of sin and girds the spirit with humility

he shouts from op-ed pages
“this great middle America
has basic common-sense values”

he reaps all day
at night he is the bookmark
in cottony bibles

he can be not
what you think

he can do it all

July 24, 2004

Everything Is Wrong

but this
and I hate the world for it

Next, The Bad Title Filter

I had some trouble installing
my bad line filter
—bayesian learning—
at first
it learns what bad lines look like and
and then deletes them

Falling Apart

sunrise has a sorrowful history
it doesn't have the romanticism of later times
noon when heat hardens the view
sunset when lovers address their needs
for some love is only a dip
between solid foothills of solitude
like when the winter rains lighten our heavy focus
and our hearts leap like frogs
and make deep mournful sounds
partly under water

and splashing too

July 27, 2004

Dark and Deep are Deep

oppression and agony
life like a deflated duck
someone like a design monkey
looking down at a turquoise badger
fetish

many years ago I think I loved someone
if only I could remember who

July 28, 2004

Last Ditch

full of what's called hope
finding the world at last an infrequent intrusion
and small mistakes as important as large
I am no one's

Who Lived There

someone my parents forgot
passed by their farm today
years after they'd moved on
really moved on
and stopped by to look at the peeling paint
the last thing they did to the place decades ago
stopped to watch it fall apart and the decorative trees
to become adult and unruly
to see some fields treed over and others turned into tracts

the way anyone would stop by to see
what time and neglect had wrought
the way tourists visit ruins and wonder
who lived there

Lineman

driving along the interstate
searching for the best place to rest but determined to never stop
before the right spot is found
the telephone lines hang between poles and tremble
when the west wind rushes past
I wonder where I will stop
every thought I've ever had is right here in my head
at this moment as the poles stream by

somewhere is a sandy beach
warm and filled with girls in bikinis
but my road is always through the flatlands
bounded by growing green and tinge like death
but I know it's just the growing world
holding onto me no matter what

Loneliness In The Modern Era

nothing is as lonely
as the statistics on your website
make you feel

those small numbers

The Optimism of Endings

I am the last of winter
the last of the cold air warming
the last few flakes turning to rain
beneath the ground ice is becoming the moisture of soil
days are growing longer
minute by minute and there is mystery here

they say winter is the end of the circle
I picture the circle to perfection
the last wind is less than the first
the circle is rising on that day

Compression

the few lines I've sketched
mean lots of work
some of them say
"do this many times"

writing them I rest the heels of my hands
on the metal rests of my keyboard
where a layer of dust has gathered

the work is repetitive but makes progress
through the intervention of random acts

each step is small like motes
each diversion is important to the work
it takes place on a bed of tiles like the tiles in a great temple

there is little rest and much heat
the result is perfect when the cold is like cold snow crunching
under my heels and the possibility of change
is nil

The Great Bringer

the wind around this place
fills the air with sandy debris
paper cups scatter by and coke cans roll
then tumble&tumble&tumble&roll

I'd like to say the sky is clear and filled with optimism
of deep color but the sky is low
too low and I fear the rain hanging around
above

if we were to climb into bed
right now
the wind would keep on even though
the sources of cans and cups must be running out by now
or do people keep buying
and discarding?

only a question
is marked
for consumption
the pause is a question
it is like this day which seems
to wish to be somewhere east
for the west wind is the great bringer
of metaphors

Scientists Have

information
way too much of it
someone has confused data with information
and information with writing

how we hate writing
reducing it to ontologies and formal reasoning
or hidden markov chains yadda yadda
we focus on the ANSWER to the PROBLEM
like being in Paris
O glorious city of light
trying to solve a murder mystery
O so important but beside the POINT
of Paris

I have not like science
rejected the narrative
but let me tell you the story of how
scientists have

Beware of Dog

the house of the tragic poet
raging on over the roar of fires
is falling down all around her
as she frets and sweeps the ash and embers
out her front door

her dog is barking

he is speaking the true words
of fear as hell falls around them

you think she wants to write
her own tragic end
but it is her pie not her poem
that is not finished and she'll be damned
if the flames will get it
again

so we start

wandering from one house to another
through orchards and former hayfields

or running from one house to the other
across the road
up onto the stonewall to get past the apple tree
then across the stream and up to the house

the lilac has been growing there for decades
and still spills its smells into the air

the foundation sat for 15 years full of the fire's debris
and what we tossed there to be rid of

the trouble with reality is its
tendency to exist

Narrowly Night

arriving home
everything's dark and what's that smell

maybe it's the smell past midnight
makes when the hot turns cold and night reaches up

the doors keep shut until the last second
when they crash almost open
and stagnant air bleaches out

the world filled with shadows fills
us with doubt of what is before us

the bed is clammy and does not welcome
us this late and this is by default

true information and what is not false
can be retrieved when our minds are empty

this reminds me of trash
cans waiting for fresh trash

Too Missed

certainly the trains are there for returnings
girls getting on slash getting off
the weight of the train is harsh and shaking
it is painted gaily colon some professional and some good amateur
freight is a cargo but reading sad books of romance
makes a good substitute

sitting across from the café from the station
we drink hot caffeinated drinks
and eat very sweet things while across the street at the open-air station
girls come slash girls go
what we have in our mouths is sweet

telling someone goodbye dash
better to turn
to mist

On Passing Circles

when we meet
there will be little to speak of
your circle so small and in its center his death

must death be the center
it is what we train for every day
or perhaps what's just after

your view of life includes younger things than mine
in your lack are the virtues of less bitterness and more hope
or does the center of your life irk you as my age does me

when we inflate to full lives
do the old who have gone before forget encouragement
are we then all that is expected

my mother my father they have gone ahead
and I am not yet what they were
do their eyes search each letter I write
for them for me

Free Speak

his soul is language
speaking in dated abstractions
hoving toward fashion and requirement
making do and making out

some simplicities are interrelated
different levels speaking like master
like slave complications and robustness

when we speak through the broken window
I see the dings and bloodstains
(from someone in my role before?)
and he sees...?

under some trees
let's wait till then
talk it out in new language

Surely O My

surely the bus must stop here
to pick up those wandering with faces
of scintillation backed by life's foreground

we have stopped here it
seems to parade ourselves
with painted hands of self-aggrandizement

the sound
the smell of diesel as it spouts from the tailend
of the bus heading out
last of the day
I watch it all grow small in dissipation
O my
I'm left behind

To Take

she left it to me
to take care of
to take

remnants of peas in plastic containers
held shut by elastic bands
in the refrigerator she had for forty years
one of the things that lasted
bottles of ketchup
tea leaves in a tea ball by the sink
dried to the degree of herbs

she waited it out
did she fear?
was she calm?

clothes stained
small holes and places rubbed thin
dishes she scrubbed for sixty years
in the cupboards
why do I assume it was night?

everything she knew
was there for her to use
get past that moment and into the next

see what's there
leave the rest
to me
to take

The Narrow Places

well there's nothing left at all
just dried up things
in their house in their urns
I knew what to do
and she was right to think it
or I did what she didn't expect
and how deep was her disappointment as she slipped away
alone in the dark or light or dawn or twilight

standing stopped with my bike on a road in Woodside
the tangent smells of weeds and trees
dust and dried gold grass
a tint of fog hanging above the hills ocean beyond
I know I saw this when I watched the aftermath
of the sun's setting in my mind
though I never saw a picture like this
nor imagined it could be like this

to see so clearly what has never been seen
and what would not be revealed till much later
this is the shrugging truth of a narrow place
opening up

Placement of Poetry

according to the commentary in the pamphlet
the best way to submit poetry is on your knees
not the position to be in when submitting
though it might be that
but the perfect surface on which to write
what has toughend your eyes and ears
made your hands weak from trembling

Little Question

some like the little questions
the dirt asks when we fall upon it
about our parts meeting
in the filth once more

the place of nourishment
dirty with prior deaths

when our ancestors decided
that burial was proper
did they know the pattern already in place
of life to death to life

this is just
another little question

This Instant

too often a question lines up
with an awkward answer
as when the imagination is cut off
by bureaucracy
nature teaches us that no
is likely the right
answer in this
cats are like women
here is how to BECOME IMPORTANT:

Friends, are you tired of the free-wheeling, undisciplined chaos of the non-corporate world around you? Do the people in your life demonstrate unfortunate leanings towards such scourges as informality, spontaneity, and original thought? Luckily for you, these detestable traits (and more) can be easily brought to their knees. Simply distribute INSTANT BUREAUCRACY forms to your friends, neighbors, and family members, and you too can experience the power and mindless serenity of a ladder-climbing automaton!

I hear an amen
coming on

Faith Blue

at the end of the long driveway
our old house is being held
up by memories as wrapped
up in the place as we were
the time the dog was trapped
on the roof

the driveway is just gravel
and humped in the middle
as if people were eager to visit
but it was only time that kept coming

I'm not what the birds find in the gravel
around the place but they come back
day after day—they can't get enough
it seems to keep feeding a memory
if only the color blue were as faithful

The Sad Truth

covered with dew
a bottle of red wine
and two glasses
two depressions in grass needing to be mowed
become one and an old couple
walks past
nearby and never sees what was there to plainly see
because youth
or love
or lovely youth
hides the truth

At Our Backs

cynicism in the park
down on the grass a bottle of red and two glasses
between them
they take these four things as proof of passion

the darkness adds to their apparent
love and the rising sun turns the black
bottle green in emptiness

the wind that's blown them all night
shifts from the north to the south
it's the wind that turns on each of us
midway in our journeys

Meredith #1

pregnant freshman college
she was put in a home to hide the fact
married to a tycoon but she couldn't handle
the dinner parties

after
she hooked up with the dump guy
who sheetrocked his way cross country
they lived in a school bus
and had 6 kids

he died
she lost her teeth
became a Jehovah's Witness

I loved her when she was young

I was there

for you to take
my shining hair
my suede skirts
—there for you to have—
I was not impossible for you
to have I could have loved
you you could have taught me
I was not ready but you could have
changed your clothes

now I am impossible for you
for everyone my teeth are gone
I've grown wide and stupid
in this age

the wind has blown up on us
blown up
and blown past to the edge
of the earth and the edges
of life

we might have been

don't you think?

Unexpected & Sportif

Swiss girls on Chocurua
army knives
green food
chocolate
scenery

River Mucking

first you need some
clothes you don't want
then you might want a net to make it
easy after you need
a bucket of water last
you need a river

on a hot summer day
with record-breaking temperatures
hordes of people migrate to Chesapeake Bay
to muck for clams

August 24, 2004

Thrown Away

for pencil lines
shall tell the tale
of memories best aligned
beyond realities and singularities
let the writing start

Thrown Away 2

the line forms long
under the domed sky
what we wait for is hidden
around a shack we think is selling
good food or a cool drink
the sun is beating us to death
my friends drift off out of
line at odd intervals
will I be the only one who lasts to reach the head
will what I find be worth the wait

Barge Off Redwood Channel

at night we pass the barge being
anchored off the channel after
unloading a load of gravel
the tug shoves it out the channel toward where
we sit anchored past sunset as the evening Bay breeze
picks up and aligns us like fate or conscience
before or after an actual event
like any industrial site
the shore is prickling with laced ironworks lit
orange and yellow and dappled duality
we turn on our anchor line clockwise
then counter

below our captain
blind enough to not be allowed
to drive fires the engines and cranks the anchor
we pass behind the tug and barge
lights and men work the mechanisms
and oiled water
they have dropped anchor
and prepare the great machine
for another searing night

Where Are The Girls?

we had a band playing against the wall
where the two cafeteria lines emerged
from their separate paths

the instruments were shining
expensive for kids just
from Haverhill whose parents work in mills
or in offices in towns down south or upriver
their sound is twangy the sound of Telecasters
through Fenders and spring reverbs

against the wall the losers loaf
all they can take in
are the sounds and the songs

At The Grave

walking up to the grave
between the gaps still there where
the land waits for its cargo
I find the sun off the stones blinding
and memories are as much a part of the day
as the smell of river water and cut grass

what can be worse than to be set aside
for the not-yet dead

what can be worse than not to be

At The Grave 2

colder air rolls underneath warm
past their grave to the river
lying nearby I feel it
memories roll past
underneath them the truth is offended
above them warmth attracts

I remember being here the day
my mother bought this plot
large she thought we would all be buried here
my children too
room for 8
now just the 2
of them
in one grave
side by side

do romantics come from the same
place that bees do

Once

my father
dead
awakens in my dreams
tells me
important things drowned
by mockingbirds

I see him walking
toward the closed woods
he soon
will speak his mind so only
the insects and birds
can hear

I thought I could
but everything is muffled
by the pillows time sleeps upon

dawn
I've let him die
once more

Each Night

Pattern Dictionary Entry: Abstract Factory

we are where dreams
are stamped out
so many are the same
there is an abstract factory for them
why worry about their details
why bother with facts and connections
why not be ignorant
and buy your dreams cut from similar cloth
from a mother die
from a pattern like a pattern
that makes a dress for a girl
you can't love
but must

Uma

is it a kung-fu samurai spaghetti western
love story or a relationship movie
just think
about the quirky character stuff
the surprises
the funny stuff

tell me
about your wire fu expertise

white eyebrow monk
investigating the grisly wedding rehearsal
crime scene

it is worth pointing
out that the film displays
the duck press approach to absorbing
the influence of grindhouse
genre films

there are no good guys in a
Quentin Tarantino movie
it's all about the bad guys

the crew got
choked up watching it.

September 2, 2004

Futureoenté

one day the line
in the sand will split
the world

with sand on one side
and more sand
on the other

September 3, 2004

Sweet Vietnam

how will you know
the day

she stands before you
turned away with her hair up in pins
and asks you to take them out
and let it down

heat from love
desire from sweat

Saigon Evenings

there is a downward cast tonight
of the shade of trees onto the streets
filled with couples and bargainers
street sellers and capitalists hoping
for gain

some for hard gain
others soft

a hot night
nothing dry or becoming
dry

incense burning
and other delights more potent
or potential

perfume sprayed and forgotten
or dabbed and forgotten
in the sweetness of sweat and desire

things are for sale
vendors speak it
fairly shout it
the odors from speculative meals
and the last of life from the river
declare it

declare the lessons of the last hour
more important than the rest of life

I am here waiting for it
in the brickled shadows
at a table at a small café
wishing the wind would come off
the river once

or a pretty girl would sit down
and speak in accents

but the age of the world is compressed
squeezing out the unfit

Daddy's Changing

the oil he's got cans of Quaker State
by the car and he's under it
unscrewing

it's the smells I recall
smells that go with this

concrete slab stained black from oil drops
from the pan around the sealer bolt

hood up and black dirt & oil on the engine
burned in like a good stain ought to be

old gas can bent from being tossed
in the back of the pickup or kicked over
while getting the mower out

quart jar of oil & gas for the chainsaw
left open by mistake last week

sawdust from a battered table saw
whose belt is frayed and about to break

crickets scraping their legs ever
now and again in the garage buzzing with wasps
making nests and what all

wet grass fresh cut just drying
and the sun making it all go fast

daddy wondering what his last minutes
will be like
and me today knowing
but guessing

Lack

the garage
I can go in it
or the old well house now a shed
the tools I need to fix winter stress
are in one of those two places
I can't go in the house

the smell
the stains
the memories
the lack of them

the garage smells fresh
from well-seasoned 2 by 4s
the house stain is doing well
many coats does that
the memories should have been written down
being writing is what I do
the lack of them
yes
the lack of them

Daddys

the succession of men starting with boys
becoming young men then
maybe fathers then maybe
grandfathers
is this hopeless
are there reasons why one imitates the next
or back and forth
waves of teaching
waves of forgetting
waves of aging
vanity before
it's over

Yes I Believe

yes I believe there is something truly
green about the high corn and alfalfa
the soy waxing ebullient but can't you
see the tinted edges of red and yellow
wilting post-summer's last fling

something cautious is coming
down the road through the narrow gates
that never lock the overhung limbs
and fleeing deer stock and wild makeshift
celebrations

tell me not to worry for my heart
is filled beyond its capacity to enlighten
and it's all up to my head
like blood rushing from a daredevil's
favorite stunt

Lightning My Way

the girls of coffee are steamed and under
pressure to fill their cups to the top
and beyond the secret of pure poetry
is the receipt of nonsense from the roots
of the brain stem and above and I
find I can't find the finding thing
it's just another stroke
of bad luck or stroke
of midnight I could use
a hero

Pastoral at the Conference Mansion

amphibious ambiguity lingering
on a mossy rock in the shade
around the neck thrusting into the pond
at noon on a day that accentuates the low
hill beyond

above me in the whiteframed window
someone watches chewing her quick raw
I hear her breathing above the distant
shuddering wave of insect clicks
she is near
she won't see me
like the green scum on the pond
the top of my life
is beneath her

Love Can Touch Us or Vice

the bar is
filled filled filled
with halos of smoke and beer
with men piling by tables chest high
with the smell of a substitute
or two
for love

Versa

September 12, 2004

Runway and Poles

sitting around with the guys
not much on
there is a certain peace
when balance is unmaintained

That Matter Men

the lifeline is expressed
as a passion or a longing
or a plate of leftovers mostly grease now

the woman prancing about are exposed
radiating power as first one and then many
men reach for their wallets in hopes of being rubbed

upon or hovered over or danced in
front of and I find the possibility of
humiliation appealing and so do the masses

of beer drinkers and smokers who have found this
place exuding its loveliness like a track or a trail
suitable for being followed by dogs or for that matter men

6 On Boogie

admiration for the one
who though school was unenlightening
works machines to make metal parts

by day and hovers near the beach at night
in the smallest house that could contain his dreams
not 1/4 mile from the boardwalk and girls he loved so

The Dancer in His Element

his porch is small but covered
by a sheltering roof
we sat there while it rained

hard enough to make the ocean
notice he smoked and it will kill
him he eats well and wisely

he is a heavy biker and looks it
becoming into himself only
after 2 marriages and 5 kids

he machines metal every day
and has for 28 years and after work
he strolls the boardwalk then

on his porch drinks his beers and smokes
he is simple beyond my ability to describe
it he is happy and all the writers are not

Again

on the train I imagine I'm
on passing past the barns and silos
of western kansas a place deserving

of lower case for its paramount ordinariness
I picture the couples huddled or curled
in their former marriage beds

he on one side facing her but as far
as he can get to his edge and she
on her front her rear

still deliciously up and round
and it is a thing he knows
but cannot ever touch

Philo

sometimes I wonder
 what life in Philo would be like
 the roads all perpendicular to something

like each other or compass points
 wind fouling the stifling heat
 and cicadas strumming little by little

into synchronized cacophony
 that passes like the wind from the distant west
 but what I do know is what haying would

be like were hay the order of the summer
 sweat catching the dry cut shreds and holding
 them to your back and then it's the itch

all day all through dinner all
 through the sitcoms that blue the room and us
 all night like the worry I'll never leave Philo

Sudden High Beams

night driving a long stretch in a flat country
surrounded by corn dried in early fall
and beans beginning to ferment the road

ahead is dreadfully rolling not like out
imagination of the flatness of flatlands
and when a car pops into view headlights

on high the radio's ruckus inceases
the crops grow dark and seem to rustle louder
then the high beams drop and it's time to rock again

Walking: Paris/Night/December

the night warrens leading
from the Pompidou center to
the Opera on the darkest day

of the year the coldest night so far
to walk alone having not slept
for 2 days after a long day of meetings

things for sale Christmas red and green
fresh things and things prepared months
ago when the heat and smells were above

and the cobbled stones were sweating
with accumulated wet from feet rain
and beauty I felt the cold air brush

over my face walking quick back to the hotel
for another night not sleeping thinking of
someone not impossible to touch

So A Pop Era

I'm alone in a forest
the forest is chewing my leg off
my leg is hopping away

its ankle cracking from the pace
its quads have contracted to stillness
I wish to be truly alone

Real Poet on Poems Like This

I don't think the manuscript is bad
or that the poems are bad it's just
that the other manuscripts had

both more continuity
of either subject or mood and
more experimental use of language

Byron's Wish

a man walking by the rise
where a woman undressed
suckles an infant

he looks her way
grabbing his crotch
he is carrying

emblematically
a staff and even more so
in the distance behind them

behind the walled town
with the river and bridge
a lightning strike over dark clouds

in front in the foreground
a black mass like a spirit
lurking toward them and from

this we can gather what
that men love women who undress
that every day is jerk-off day

Find Colors Unfruitful

first there is the futility
of taking off her clothes with no positive
hope of parting of lips

second there is the hopelessness
of trying to write about it when
words are like opaque vessels

third under water the shades
of blue that we love so much
become invisible like the love of the elderly

Ars

work/work like a foster home
practice/practice like a jackhammer
but/but without the talent

Zip

No

I'm not
in the mood to write,
well,
anymore because well
frankly I can't any-

more

Slow Train Rolling

flagging interest from
losing too often 'n'
finding no encouragement
or not much
I prefer to stop
as soon as the train succumbs
to friction

To a Stop

Sentences

writing is so hard
that even declarative sentences
can't capture the pain

Simply

September 28, 2004

Last Night

the highlight of truth
and the lingering
light when the day
has given up

Before

more engaging
less well-crafted

After

A Hunger

dinner filling the night with conversation
gathering like a cloud about a tall hill
we find the discussion uplifting
or at least a worthy way to pass time
while we devour all before us

Epistemology

the things of most importance
happen away from the hug of streets
at noon but not so far away that
the sound of feet cannot be heard

Sound of Falling Prey

it's the sound of squirrels
falling from the tops of trees
through branches to the ground
after the sharp ker-
blammy of the 20-gauge
that frames the faint french
tones of voices of boys
under the canopy

running Mardi Gras on horseback,
tapping Easter eggs end to end til they crack
a game called pâque-pâque

meat prized for its sweet taste
in brown sauce or gumbo

pine oak hickory beech cypress pecan

acorns eaten from the middle like Oreo cookies
stems of pine cones twirling to the ground
like helicopter rotors

what's your record of quarry bagged?

sharpshooters with squirrel tails
hanging from their trucks

it's what you get for being country

I Believe I...

we slip into biblical tones
and become creedal in our I believe
I believes

hold your tongue
hold one of them at
least then the next then
etc
the last

I am married
to the will of Christ
who has provided the bulk
of my youth

Reserve and Hesitation

sorry for not posting a movie title
no time right now he won
because he sounded like Gary Cooper
from High Noon as the clock ticks
inexorably toward the high noon
of our impending war and the din

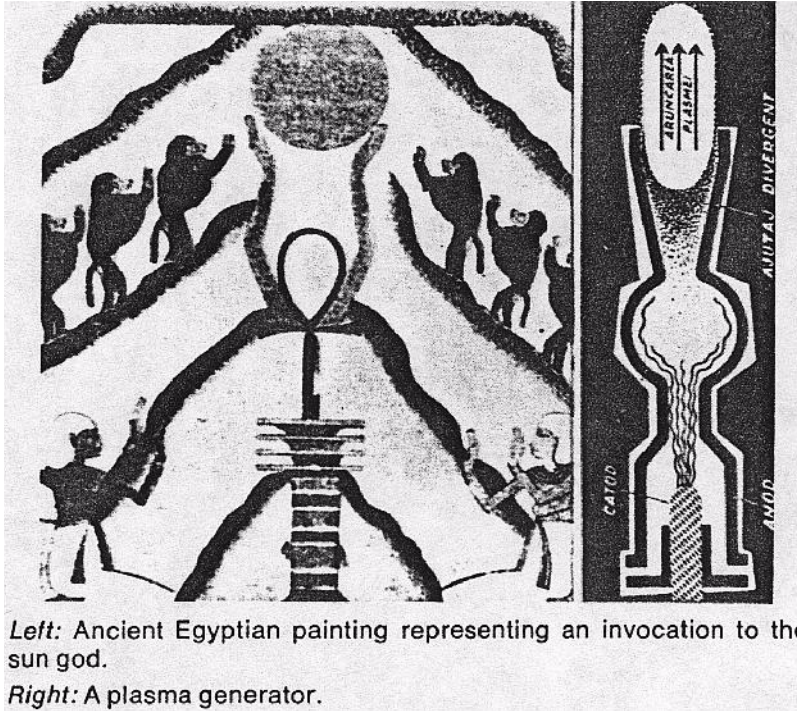
it's New Year's Eve
we're eating our way through town
the obento is a boxed meal
Gods who bring about sin pollution and disaster
in other words all evil
no doctrine inside the precincts
of the Christian Church is received
with greater reserve and hesitation
my parachute opened with some twists in the lines

By Sea-Girls Losing Balls

by sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
a concentrated extract from the richest type
of brown seaweed Laminaria Japonica
four or five times more concentrated than yeast
support the knee which will mean
less pain and more stability
balls—improve your core control
until you improve your game
you'll keep losing balls

Oh

she was going to clone herself &
immediately set out to have a baby
a half-sockless baby with no matching feet
an antenna matching network with one or more parts
a compact matching network that couples
an RF power supply to an RF antenna
in a plasma generator



Left: Ancient Egyptian painting representing an invocation to the sun god.

Right: A plasma generator.

Man Of

a cat in the river
when the river is swollen
and the banks are steep
thousands of animals are trampled
if you have a horse or other heavy animals
and want to see them standing or walking
on Don Kichote (especially if you live in Europe)
don't hesitate—notice the fine lines
of this exquisite shoe

Kinetic Riots

not to be just a skinny sadomasochist
I used to be all just tall and skinny
now that I'm in DB I'm all buff
with these ripped abs
not a lot of explanation needed
for this amazing collection of ripped abs and chiseled...

the boys and their toys screensaver
this gorgeous animated screensaver shows Santa's workshop
the elves toil away at their workbenches creating their toys
while Santa gives it to all the good girls and boys
requirements: no special requirements

Faith In The World

I am ready for it to come to nothing:
the illogical jump to "therefore nothing happened"
high operation temperature may destroy
the oxidation activity of chlorine
by sweat (surgical gloves) favoring the bactericidal activity
if single-use disposable surgical gloves are reused
they should not be processed more than three times
on average more than 14 billion lookups per day
PCs and servers together consume 2.5 trillion kilowatt-hours of energy

Now It's Dark

the mayor ordered the stone statue of the
Happy Prince to be torn down
and one be put up of himself
all the traffic or seeing the old buildings
torn down to make one big happy family
a derelict vacant lot
where a restaurant had been torn down.
my husband and I put down about \$90,000
of food and eating and began to make sustainable lifestyle
especially dinosaur kale which I eat raw in
presentations activities meditations
music and wholesome food

Twice?

what is so special about the past
like Cleopatra and Anthony
places like Venice and Rome
great artists all boring
because their context is not our context
stepping into the river twice?
more like stepping into the same poop pile

Over and Over

Art

this old blue medicine-type bottle unburied
style and he'd bought a floppy old blue denim cap
all 100% cotton material skull cap
Confederate flag skull caps one size fits all 100%
flaming hot flames flame
art himself painted the fabulous hot rod truck
and designed the tribal flames that have little hooks
and notches in the flame shapes

Himself

Red Sox

this will not be the year I tell my father
they won something they didn't do his whole life
and he wanted it so
will one day my son tell me and his grandfather
but to do that
I need to choose a resting place
he can find

What The Philosophers Told Me Tonight

got dark early
white bread left in the toaster too long
a small gnat snags itself between every
n and g in this poem facing upward
its little mind is in touch with the transcendence
of God

as the poem winds down the gnat
faces the floor or the bottom of the page
and I find it's just the gs he likes
and at the bottom he sees God in all
things wrapped up in immanence

Blue Earth

Blue Earth is the center of America's longest highway I-90
Blue Earth is the home of Minnesota's first stained glass window
Blue Earth boasts the world's largest statue of the Jolly Green Giant
Blue Earth is the birthplace of the ice cream sandwich
but with no fiberglass colossus to commemorate it
how are tourists supposed to know Blue Earth???

Cybernetics, They Said

I read in a book on science
that scientists and reality
are like Ashby's homeostats
and that the faster the scientist dances
the more jiggly reality reacts

and then all becomes still once more

Saddened Day

first day of rain bringing
oil up from the roads and making
muds from long summer's dust
and gutters not cleaned might clog
and force an issue
it will stop and sun and heat will return
because this is what it is
around here around now
the sound of rain hitting the roof and flowing down
the sounds of rain in the drainpipes
and just yesterday the sweet smells of dusty summer
were like motes in the air
like fairies

We Were Never Modern

no more time
no lights
no flames putting themselves up into the air and dark
no Miami to welcome the beautiful and bid them strip
no extra heat we have all that's needed
no signs not even portable ones with cheesy information
no more moderns to split things like magnets
with north pole going this way south pole that
we are hybrids and are either past that
or never were that way

Where?

touring the county museum and
after viewing the collection of things swallowed and removed
a torrential downpour keeps us from leaving
our docent takes us to displays showing various remains
of closed cigar and rubber shoe factories
he is especially proud of the miniature Mt. Vernon replica
(home of George Washington
8th President of the United States
—see below) as well as an old motorized narrated diorama
retelling the story of Noah and the Ark
the museum contain a replica wax head
of the Confederate raider William Clarke Quantrill
stuck in a old refrigerator
hidden at first, but staring out when you open the door
Quantrill is buried nearby in the Fourth Street Cemetery
(except for his arm
shinbone
ribs
and spine
which are in Missouri)

John Hanson (1781)
Elias Boudinot (1783)
Thomas Mifflin (1784)
Richard Henry Lee (1785)
Nathan Gorman (1786)
Arthur St. Clair (1787)
Cyrus Griffin (1788)

heaven on earth
was created in 1844
and failed two years later

No Wish

I wish he could see it
I wish I could
I wish with the cold and wet
somewhere the hubub is melanchaining
and spontaneous
we are living purgatory master birds
who fly up in flocks like ravens barking orders
or crying out like tight screws unscrewing
I wish he could have heard it
I picture him standing in the dark
swaying praying his sight will improve
and the Red Sox will win
it can get no worse

Lingering Stories

something is happening
when the stories link
the trees dropping leaves and covering
the ground all winter
pages hampering the story
by making it be words
not sounds or tone but ink
in brazen patches
stains over the small plants
that are covered all winter
until the thaw
the wet the blooming
when something is happening

Love Scene Where Humor and Threat Meet

beneath my window the flames
swell and fall

it is passion no matter
what the cause or instrumentality

everything man makes
is a machine or is machinic

love is the hilariously
self-destroying machine and

anything brought back to life in this way
is frightful and menacing

In My Room

the harbor lights stretch
from their origin to the point
where memory begins
to end and wide or narrow
they all point to me some yellow
some pointedly blue white
and the reflections tell me as much
about the thing reflected as the thing
upon which it is reflected
and maybe a little about me
too

Falling in Love Again

I am filled with hope
a beautiful woman with a look of distraction
in the angles of her mouth will pause
before passing by

Shipping News

one or two comments
filling the street empty
of living sounds aside from
these and leather on cement
and cars stopping abruptly one block
over and the ferry horn surely signalling
a grand approach of the many
and lonely

Night Pile

pile driver
a flat barge anchored at one end
powered at the other to keep things tight
a computer awake at the helm
harbor oiled water blackly rolling
as we watch down through the steam venting
out the pipe below us above this night scene

she stands by me
our ages like a pile between us
waiting to be pounded down

October 27, 2004

October 27, 2004

on the day my mother was born
I can write something my father
never could

the Red Sox have won the World Series

October 28, 2004

In My Familiar Company

streets angled
the hairstyles hanging in disturbed langor
home the pictures of strangers hang
where my loved ones' would be
but these were all I could afford

Do You?

surf & turf
in the industrial section of town
turned upscale on the richter scale
in among the urban flat
no fault no lingering
in the steam soaked
rain and luxury of flat lit alleys
lowcut blouses and silk swirling skirts
upstairs in the lingo room it's
eels and elk
in a maple frost

if you are in love and love tongues
you get it

Pile Driver of Poetry

we find the boats
unlikely resting places
when they are mixed from
floaters style statements and homes
with electronic gear like antlers
or sexual homing devices

fake wood pattern
bilge framing the impossible deal
our legs can't take it
with a mile to go and the sun
down behind the freighters

we'll eat like languid lovers
overlooking the pile drivers at rest
like poets—pen in hand

For That

down the alley
taxicabs like lobsters in line
I'm fretting over the choice of entrée
and lack of desert

homeless open doors for patrons
hoping for ice cream on a cold night
the give and take
give and go
sugar + temperature -

it's time to lose
furious / curious
hop in and over-
tip over the top
tip top and pure nude
we hope for the best
for birthdays are
for that

Daddy

what's it like beneath the headstone
waiting for news of the Red Sox
how will we explain our understuffed luck
and lack of high limits now that the excuses
are westerly finally

what's left must be a fine ash of hope
because the urn was not light
it was heavy as if laden
as if waiting

he missed by 10
5 before he was born
5 after
could he have known this
when he was rushing back from the toilet
and didn't make it

Election Night

among what it takes
swamping and wishing
tonight hell holds the trumps
its name will rule us

Post Election

everything is departed
wolves range everywhere
soon they will gather and hunt
sometimes together to kill something large
sometimes alone to go after you

Austere Longing

from this angle
the snob's eyes are bulging and the smell is like beagles
after a brief hunt
I'm filled with autumn
dad waits in full winter
soon we'll meet

Optimism

flying along
the ground wells up
and seems to swallow
but it turns out to be
only hell

Hope Art

carved bone filaments
in a shape familiar and singular
there is a signal in it
will we find it before the decay

Desire

I desire little pieces
and a little peace
and a little piece
a finger in the right place
a look across the right crossing
I desire the reflective
to look at things
to look at myself
a leg up on the extraordinary
I desire a quick end
not too soon
not too far off
a heart pumping until the very end

Firetime

time for a fire
a little one for pictures only
a slow one because each must be
stopped over
its story spoken
we start these fires once a shift
from version n to $n+1$
a progression that may converge
yes it might

Without Learning

lightning
its shadow refound
rises as smoke

thunder
its echo removed
is realization

Action at Close Hand

the past teles away leaving
the present a constant size
the future a sfumato technique of soft
heavily shaded modeling
how is the boy related to the man
how is the tree related to the divining rod
past tense
I know that's how it was

The Day I've Waited For

the sky
cloud filled and lucent
a thin tipped over bowl
spilling
but what

though it froze once
or a couple times
the grass still glimmers green
in the stippled light

some parts
(of the sky)
are grey gunmetal
others pink framed in robin blue
spotted
striped

by the river wavelips
splash like little bells
and a group of gulls flow and follow
down to the mid-...
they come between me
eager
and the setting sun

At the Urinal

Logan
after dark after the difficulty
of reaching down through sweatpants
and around shorts I'm standing there
as things being to flow
around me
behind me
to my right a man enters
hurrying and with him his
young daughter or niece
who is not too young too not know
but awkward in ways that betray
her situation
(whatever it may be)
she rushes with him head down
and frightened
in this place of men and men's
strange actions men standing
with their arms in front
and one with arms back bragging
I suppose
she shuffles half held up by her arm
her dad
her uncle holds aloft to show her the way
to bring her along quickly
into the disabled stall where I hear
the toilet flush and frantic instructions
on what to do now
what to do next
it is dark
remember
outside
almost the darkest days
fluorescent and white
we stand against the white
I wonder if it's dark
in the disabled stall

November 13, 2004

Walk Alone

rejection
is the plague
of striving ineptly

In Threes

we walk alone slowly
the road is not ours and neither
do we know its beginning nor

its end but we walk in groups
or alone or in twos in the direction
all walk at different paces in more

or less straight lines with one trick
or two up our sleeves and we try not to listen
to those who direct us in direction we do not seek

November 15, 2004

Good Luck to Me and the Boston Red Sox

the day was warm even in November
the day before the ice storm
I raised the flag by his grave
signifying the victory he dreamt of his whole life
I can't stop being sentimental over this
it will be how I feel when my time comes around

On Chocorua

a pool beside the trail
bled into by a withered stream
and drained by dispersal and absorption
my path is obvious
(trail or stream)
(bleed or disperse)

my feet hurt
enough to kill
the pain rises

Sudden Street Scene

after dark the city is lit
the difference only more shadows
more differences in the cars
who show red fading away
we desire the wet and rain to foster
a sense of caring or false warmth
plumes rising from tailpipes
are a sign of the mood made for lingering

down the street where things stop up
a red light forms a temporary dam
where people/cars move ahead as if held close
by escaped diodes
this little shock of people pushing cross
amplify the push of heavy traffic along the boulevard
who will it be (not I not I I shake)
the speaker

Frequent Visitor

there are no places as sudden
by the river
by the flow
the first time I was here
 reasons were not mentioned
 just a little singsong
yes well the sight lines were perfect
perhaps my role was like a quick nap

I visit so often
a sneak might think
I was looking forward

Modesty

the ceiling fan blurs the stained ceiling
and vexes flies veered in from the screen holes
many buzzes prolific spoonfuls of summer hot

she is splayed to keep her heat from her heat
the aromas the sights
writing is erased in shreds of rubber and vinyl
memory too virtual substances
the result of bad judgment and the whirling
of the fan above her dozing and decorative
while I imagine her as something else
entirely

Slight

recall the slight days
and call them the open book
figure which parts are true
and which hanker after the real
horses running in a curve up and across the low hill
rise then fall in a perfect arc
between fences limiting them ultimately
are they free
are they trapped
which is true
which real

Speaking in Tongues

a certain lingo lingers
private language spoken beneath
ceiling fans
spoken in tongues
and mouths
but also the finer things
which are spoken about
from one corner to the other

I am fine with you
everything extravagant is purposeful
and there is heat regardless of the temperature
this is the promise our ancestors have been given
and give to us passed on through genes
or the living Gospel

Poetry; Lust; Imbroglia

...nothing quelled his passion (weird
add lines stories old poems lists)
learn cattle-and-no-hat
humble pawns can be ambitious...

... not pro bono
cut a line
cut a lust
off like boots
cloves dancing tarot persists in love's mourning
Jesuitical speech and conspicuous
lovers are turned ruthless by jealousy...

...catsup way wastes a perfectly
good pixelated imbroglia (berate beat)
Texas size imbroglia of murder
an abyssal imbroglia with no
lust to regulate the singsong quality
of recited poetry the virtual world at once mirrors
and mocks real life...

In Remembrance

behind the phony tinsel of Hollywood
lies the real tinsel it'd be pretty silly
if flowers exploded in 1963 Kennedy
felt that members of the armed forces
ought to be able to complete a 50 mile hike
in 14 hours we walked what seemed like
miles through JFK terminal 2

he'll doublecross that bridge
when he comes to it

Languid Lingo

the dearth of rest of the gathered company
was also evident in the languid manner
in which they lounged about the bus
the open road rife with gearhead lingo
is a languid acoustic interlude that is reminiscent
of the lingo du jour lush strings
quiet horns languid tempos
lovely ladybug who opens the door
to a dimly lit hotel suite housewife
and latent feminist what they call
a "hot property" in movie lingo

On a Grassy Field Once Laced by Mud

finding the path on the broad plain
assisted by the wind which parts
before us when mud becomes soil
sufficient to support grass is complicated
by the implications of your gaze which follows
mine to ground and above the sky
is bluntly blue like an admission held back
no more they say many died here
but the sun's warmth the wind's and yours
are my comforts now not the mourning
this place deserves the soil supports our path
I wonder did others here once before believe
also in the purpose of paths

On Wonder

on the backroads south of town
cornfields binding the roads
tops of stalks highlighted by the moon
that's been up since sunset
my car is eager to take me to my destiny
small as it may be
short as it may prove
for now the windows open onto the odor of sweetening
cornstalks crackling as if on fire
and the radio crackles a Jenkins' tune
tender to lightning two counties over
I've come from where the girls go without tops
and smoke is still fashionable
the beer expensive but mild
the road should be flat but
it pulses under me and rises up
to a high point miles ahead
what has this to do with me?

Drivel

she is all blonde hair and concentration
playing her flute and singing backup
to the over the top over the hill rock
star and while her singing accent is deep
in Mississippi her speaking tongue
is British and proper

she takes her keys from her purse when
it's time to go and she gets me up
from my backstage seat and treats me as if
I were the fame in the family and my work
—nothing more than a scratching—
is the central scene in our thatched-roof
dispatching of life toward an stenching end

the road is dark and houses lit show us hidden bits
and wet pavement blinking
in driving rain and still she insists on driving

I can think of nothing important or pressing
except the past long gone and the nothing
I have to look forward to

Story of My Life

every path is dead
every memory is a pain and singular
my time is short and the story has yet to be started
I find I must decide
I must imagine
I must continue

Cold Ride

on my ride
cold day November long ride

on an uphill
by the road
a jay hobbling on veed wings
his mate squawking in the oak
both blue
day and jay

its plight no joke but I think
birds stunned arise
what fixes them so
my legs
(and what else)
burn

Check Up

the house must still be settling
in its must and the smell I cannot abide
my footprints and fingerprints must still
be the most recent additions if there be spirits
lingering
 whose might be

right now though
I sit 2500 miles away I know
it is 29° and calm for
technology helps me learn
 such fruitless things

whether tomorrow it will snow and another cycle will start up
of time settling behind me and little opening up before

answers are celestial and romantic
like singing to the dead each year
or checking the weather for a place
that cannot exist anymore

Whether a Place Can Exist Any More

Lickety

and so
a line at a time like lifting a small weight
then down again and the sound of footsteps
leather soles on concrete
no sound like it in the civilized world

my vision is like the rabbit jerking
left right ahead quick stop

o this is quick
other things won't be

Split

Expansive Décor

we are falling under
a spell as the two split from the table
and she walks out
she is full featured and eye-opening
the taste she just experienced is leaving
her tongue on fire

the cafe is lit by high lights
and is not industrial green
certainly the two of them were sharing
and swiftly sipping lattés while their pies
cooled

one of them will soon sign
with one of the hottest brands

Nothing

<stanza>
<line> </line>
</stanza>

that's my story
and I'm sticking to it

You Say

Early December

through the woods some ours
some not through snow if there be
snow our neighbor farmer knows
our habit and just smiles his old-
country smile

we climb up the hill and then cut
into the woods seeking fir
not too tall and away from
the town's harvesting for the parade

we cut and drag and even in snow
we believe no one will follow our tracks
this is the faith that we have
in the season and in the weather
forecast

Jaunty Seeker

a little stream starts nearby
in what seems just a muck or patch of mud
the source of wet not clear
but a culvert under the road takes it
from the back of the barn to our main lawn
where in winter it becomes a small pond
that drains into a swampy section in the maples
and from there into a bed where sometimes
the flow is clear

where I know it next is down on Bear Hill Road
where sometimes I'd fish though the doings
the point not the fish and later they say
Cobbler's Creek supplies power to mills before it joins
the Merrimack down in Merrimacport
former shipbuilding site

the journey is slow from unique and obscure
to powerful and swift to anonymous and forgotten
metaphors are being contested

O Foo

from the start of the creek
to its end at the river the metaphor
gathers speed and burbliness

From a Standstill

she's at the stop sign waiting
for her turn eager and angry
about 5 mile from home
smoke from burning leaves
she steps on it and up past the top
of the rise and around a long bend
she's stopped by a cop surprised
that's she just getting started and what it would
mean to see her really going

The Dark Age

love in the dark age
the rhetoric of love in the dark age
the rejection of the rhetoric of love in the dark age
criticism of the rejection of the rhetoic of love in the dark age

Clock Lost

I went to the page
that said "your personal world clock"
and when I got there it said
"there is no personal world clock for you"

every clock will do

Lost Clock

this poem is temporarily suspended
due to moronic behavior on the part of many
it may or may not return

Look at the Pictures

turning the pages
of a magazine that will never stain
or crumple it will last forever
if anyone wants it to
the natural world cannot harm it
the laws of physics ignore it
it will remain and become
perfect

Revealing

my thoughts are revolutions
and backward glances
as frightening as those of a fearless leader

as unimportant as a love-lorn tale
softened to the sound of streams
and loyal to no one

will there be a time
when my thoughts revel in me?

Like Fissures Opening in the West

how many times can you practice
to avoid the mistake that will embarrass?
no practice is the real thing
it like everything is fake
what is sure is the flight birds throw up
like a random ring toss with the odds stacked for up
or the billowing clouds formed like a pencilled-in smudge
or charcoal rubbed in by a hand's heel or a fingertip

these are all emblems (with
a small mod) of the small nit
I must find

Code Rat

refined design
elegant lifestyle
modern technologies

we have never been as modern as when we strayed into
the Grand Salon from the Hôtel D'un Collectionneur
sumptuous sarcophagus
fashionable taste
shimmering evening gowns
cocktail shakers
pleasure pursuits all the way to
a lacquered bed shaped like a canoe

we are here to witness with our own two hands
the advent of new materials and the streamlining of design

yes
it's the glamorous world of modernity and change
making its case for vanity

meanwhile the nipples on
Tamara de Lempicka's world-famous painting *Jeune fille en vert*
grow thicker and longer while her
belly button
like every dazzling facet tinged by the modern
grows deeper

Code Rat



What I Saw on My Road Trip

marks on the road
stray debris
even a flattened rat

the white dashes and raised reflectors
flash toward me
toward my car
I rush down the highway
through the fog which evaporates in the bubble around me
and except for the music
this is what truth is like
just nearby and around
with a rapid membrane
of ignorance around it
just where things get interesting

With Not Standing

we of course are
irrelevant though we often
carp and complain

we sometimes appear to be heard
no one acts to hear but it happens
naturally the truth is a coincidence
no I mean the fact that someone listens
is because they thought of what we said
all by themselves—what we said
notwithstanding

Porn Musical

what is it like to be a male porn star?
it's the woody
the creep factor—
and over 55 that get you on
the “no” list

wait
has it gone mainstream

Dangerous Curves

to drive from the heat of LA before noon (glare-sun ricocheting off dark-tinted highrises) into the fog-covered cold past Grapevine its giant ikea a haven for those seeking affordable solutions for better living is the gauntlet of besting the hump separating real from road and the coursing of well-timed cracks beneath my car at 80 is a model for symbol-making and with only a little luck someone could write a program so anyone could share in it share in the drive from the heat of LA before noon (

V

my first room was like one tip
of a Y with my parents' room the other
and the stem short I remember one day
listening to the radio with the light coming through
from the west on the floor and music—piano and violins—
playing a song whose name feels like it should be
Longines with lots of accents and my head
barely up to the table top

that table still sits in a house I own
both parents long gone (it feels like)
perhaps we three were like that Y
two tips gone and now just I

I

Trip & Reflect

sun heat bright glare
flip flops flapping for a trudging walk
slouched and old quite sick
though officially healed
this man and I trudge
up a shallow hill to the street
with restaurants where he
will eat right
quick

Sol/Sol

winter
another day of mindless hacking
but at least the days are getting longer

stice/itude or cuties edit

I.E. TT

there is a woman so beautiful
that men before her melt
cuties edit contains suicide

Covetous Firm Lotion

those who have gone before
have had lives deserving of long speeches
and sweet humor

love of them seems uneventful
and common

what is most frivolous of them
become icons and totems

envious comfort
envious toil

When It's an Envelop

what lustrous excitement
what lingering anticipation
when everything was a first

what feeble dread
what insignificant fear
when everything might be a last

In The Garden Of Eden

the irritating electronic snatches of classical music
nothing is worse than a cell phone
(a mobile in Europe)
(where they rely on secular thinking)
thank god cell phones are not legal
—poor people use them: they must be illegal—
why not the farfisa intro to light my fire
or In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida honey
don't you know that I love you?
the snatches are bad enough
let alone the electronic sounds

Baby

Writing Disaster

we were just relaxing
stones looked like elephants
disaster crept up on them
work consists of cooking washing and caring
it withdrew for 1000 yards
fishermen rushed to secure their boats
the full moon was drowsy and soothing
the water came back
the wind rose for a moment
it sucked their boats
there is nothing to do except stand and watch
we can't predict anything
look! look at the waves
everything is nothing

Well, Duh

insignificance is the most
important thing in the world
filling every void
and every filled spot
alike

we must labor
to notice it or else
its cruciality will be missed
and its significance will remain
potential only
like your best love
who lives
only somewhere else

All Wet

will the leaves continue to wipe
across the ground in the epic encounter
of two dissimilar elements
after a tragic calm
under a now-old tree

will I tire of you
as I try to capture it all
in a fluid form
something all wet
and given up on

Ceiling Vie

the long poem vies
with novellas and monographs
for the limited attention
like almonds expanded into the sky
like Lorca's Chrysler building with cityscape
the long poem is like the bridge in the background
or planes at La Guardia angling away
from potential kills but swift
with many thousands of pounds of thrust

the only difference being
their ceilings

Starterer

the songs I want to hear
with ears no longer in gear
are slow and fragmented
they start and stop at unexpected times
the metronome that governs all
is steady but furtive
and as with all the most important things God has made
perfection signals death
perfection is the most unhealthy of all conditions
and that's why people
with the greatest passion
make music
and those with the greatest reason
sit quizzical

My Legs No Longer Carry

she was what I wanted once
her sight was like the streets of Florence
winding always away from and toward the Arno
her smile was the golden yellow of the painted stucco

I walked with her arm in arm
and she never found me
we walked together hand in hand
and the yellow lights on the river
remained tired and weary
the pink clouds
the purple clouds reflected beneath that bridge

below me now the cars are a whispered rush
and if I dilate my time sense they form rivers
of onslaught and retreat
of yellow and red

perhaps she's walking there
somewhere down there
and what seems dark to me
is light to her
it's all the same
I'm a long long way from home

Café Jitters

A Collection of Poems

Richard P. Gabriel

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Wherever You Go

below me
now cars whisper rush
she is there
she whispers her words are a rush
of goodbyes and so
longs my job is to wait
for her for her
to walk away across the bridge
I stand on hoping it is symbol
above her
now I whisper pause
she is there
she shushes her words pause
my goodbyes and so
long as she walks away
my job is to wait
until it is over

Her Eyes and the Beauty of Them

she came up the street in a cart
to the spot where her beloved was loading
his brothers onto a wagon bound for the drugstore
after the shooting to be patched up

to the west the sun was thinking
of setting after a series of cool breezes
and purls of gunfire

mountains to the east faced the possibilities
of echoing stoically & riders going up Turkey Creek
could not be blamed for pausing and looking back

she was without her bonnet and she
worried of her reputation
and the blood on his hands and coat
there was much here to love

her breathing slowed and her eyes
opened up with the sun passing out of sight
as she turned to the east away from him
and the dead in the dust

she touched the back of his hand
amid the quiet whispering up and down
the street and she felt the special thing happening
we call birth of a romance

Le RPG Will Be Est Mort

the way people spoke in 1880
was nicer and how they wrote too
the order of the words and the structure
of their sentences moved forward
lapping on the reader's mind like
a big dog's hot tongue

just imagine what that dog
's tongue has been onto

the germs from your sentences
are being licked onto my brain
right now

the filth comes from everywhere
and I don't mean porno
someone has to love for money

here (hear?) listen to this:

"On his person was found
five or six dollars in small change,
which was all his store.[which was all his store—got that?]
He had no personal effects of any value,
and but for the kindly remembrance [shhlurp]
of people of means who knew Norton
and had business relations with him
many years ago when he was a citizen
of substance and standing,
he would have had a pauper's funeral
at the city's expense."

—January 11, 1880, no byline

I need to get someone on something
like that now so that when I croak
it'll be ready

bring your dog

No One Can Be Left Behind

let's plan it together
although the warm swirling breezes
and the lightning swift touches
under the precious maple
hurt like hell the thoughts
of endings but the advice
was clear: plan the end at the start
so goals are in the open
not under a tree
not swirling and tenuous hanging
by threads nor with a blank hole
around our hearts and heads

important moments we
are alone because our souls
are built that way the soul
needs to be alone to ensure
the real world is the one
helping or hurting
at the crucial times
and not world of gods

On TV

what if the most
beautiful woman in the world...

she is what her skirt entangles

the fires that warm are left
by the purple in the carpet
and the shininess of the moon as seen
through new windows

it has been snowing

what if she
were the warm fire or the carpet

she is the earth and all that is tight

Float Free

we are in a mood to float
first up but then toward the floor
onto it
then through it and under
deep through the soil
then the clay and sand
hardpan then bedrock
past layers filled with water
to where it is still hot
we are in the floating mood
and instead of slowing
we accelerate

Cracking

it's all collapsing now
and my sloth is triggered
by fear

like little birds
remarking accidentally
and songs taking on cries
of battle and allure
the 13° and settling snow
work through infiltration
and device

the crevices have formed
from fissures and less
collapse seems
what's required

Round We Go

on the turntable
3 of us turning the wheel
using a key with a 10' bar
round we went and so the bridge
to let the expensive cruise boat
pass through
there was no way to the banks
should the 100yearold mechanism fail
and this is the closest I came
to living my dream which was
always a nightmare

Lifework & My God

flurry of activity
light accumulation of results
blowing winds drift things up
into ridges
 with flowing points

Autonomous

when the wind blows
wings stand up
and the bird notices

Po Power

synchronize the winds
and turning pages
line things up
so the visual and aural mesh
let what you think match what you smell
by coincidence not by reason
no cognition in the setup
when everything is in sync
nothing will be noticed

Everything

nothing

Repose

once I heard a pretty song
behind the barn which smelled of dung
and nearby fields lent their mown-grass
smell and breezes would blow it all
away

now my self is like that
yes like that

Lonely Approach

he opens each door
in her apartment while she sleeps
quietly opening
looking
closing
going from room to room while outside
it rains in feminine torrents

behind one door
a small closet just outside her room
he was surprised by a mirror
and he came face to face
with himself
with the rain's pounding
diminishing

Nothing Better To Do

the room is cold
just off his mother's bedroom
it used to be her mother's apartment
and now it's the band room
or sometimes the pool room

with a cheap reel-to-reel tape recorder
(this is 1966)
with the love song he plays over and over
with a yearbook picture of her on his lap
for hours until his mother turns on
her light and it's time for him
to head to his room and read the book
he reads over and over

40 years later he sits in a cold room
writing over and over
while the same song plays in his ears
through noise canceling headphones
played from a file on his computer
the yearbook in the next room
getting yellow like he is

Frozen Dead

nights are self-pity
waking and staying awake
worried about how the end of our lives will play out
will it be like my father
who worked each day in his playful way
knowing that there was nothing he couldn't fix
or like my mother
who after he died
prayed nothing would break
because no one but him
could ever fix it

Boy in a Barbershop

trips to the barber
were to a world of men and men's habits
the drive was to the coast town
all brick and white clapboards and black trim
in an industrial/fishing part of town
where things and food were manufactured

there were two barbers
men waited reading magazines and talking idle chat
I recall sitting on a box and in later years not
the buzzing clipper and snippy scissors
the hot lather to make the lines on the backsides of my head
sharp and precise as the razor wiped sharp on leather
(a thing I never understood)

two things
the small cut hairs under my collar that itched for hours
the trip to the small magazine store to browse after
no three
the smells like women in an enclosed room
and how the rough men fancied it
yes that's the word
they fancied it

What Now

let me tell you my vision for the past

explain the future

excuse it

No One to See It

the fear of the super father
is not of him but by his acts
when I put my hand in my life's bag of futures
the choices permitted him are never
in my grasp

by being able to take them
he has denied them to me
in sacrificing
himself to the pleasures of his makings'
expression he forgot I needed them too

and now the fear is like the stranger inside
who has no hands to hold no eyelids
to forget with and a black cloth always
over my heart

What a Ride is Like

the field overhung
with fog rising with the setting sun
the grasses and brambles low and brown
wind winding its way through them to the road
where I cycle fastpaced home to get there
before darkness ascends
in the copse or perhaps beyond
a small group (a pack) of coyotes
yipbarks and whines and as I
move rapidly past the place
they seem to follow and I am reminded
of my sleep interrupted by a nagging
a haunting a trailing behind but catching up
of what I've done wrong to what
I plan to do

Little One

we followed them
they in their black Mustang with black
and yellow plates
colors we memorized while singing in falsetto
they were in our town
first at the ice cream shop
then the grocery store
going back and forth and us
just on bikes trying to follow

gorgeous
but dark haired
clarifying in their beauty
they had driven
driven
all the way in that car with the foundation of their sensuousness
in buckets
across desert
plains
warm wet hardwood forests
all the way
here

Boogsie
Kur'jan
this was too much for us
the local beauties would never be enough
yet another accident of birth
conspiring against the girls
not size
this time
not shape
not the lips or eyes
hair or scent
the coast
the wrong one and she's a frump
the right one
:
surfer girl

On The Shore

they left
it was still summer after
the sun set it seems heavily upstream
we watched the car drive off
top up
west
the girls who wanted us
though not meaning us
to love them
were in their homes nearby
glad for an absent reason
knowing things about the sun
and distance
therefore hopeful that with their growing sizes and devotion
they must be
one day
loved but did not count on
how long reverb could ring
or how long wait could be endured
or how urgent could be the site of a sun part above
part below
the distant line of a red/dark horizon

We Couldn't Ride

where is the right place
beneath a telephone line strung up decades ago
its poles pierced from linemans' pronged footwear
and grayed by the wind and rain
the sun with its vague desire
coming and going
the road just lies there
its inescapable details
the heat it gathers and releases
fueling two stripes of grass to the horizon
or the sick streetlight lit alley
with furtive meetings and cross purposes
electric lines crossing the sky like black roads
if there is some heat here it is
hanging back in the shadowed darkness
like a cloud of love passing by without rain
but in both the action is above
the heat below
and the slightest things are stretched
or laid in blackness
and someone has written a song
and sung about it

January 24, 2005

in the night

a cactus takes
a century to grow a ton

regret is a 5 o'clock shadow
remembered as lips approach

Chosen Mission

remote perspective links
me with the best characters
like men in the bleachers shouting
red-foreheaded complaints only
the pigeons appreciate
at men sweating in long pants

I sit at my machine and write

words come out noisy and pulverized
I look for quirks in sound mixtures

it's just me and this room
and the itch of thoughts
the keys' scratchings can't end

write faster than those who write better
write better than those who write faster

Open Road

the road at night heading toward fall
the clouds working in the dark covering
the slutty moon and over the radio I wish
were made from tubes the women sing
as if the sadness in the words really happened
and maybe they did to them to the people in the next farm
whose lights are early off and whose yard light is fluorescent blue
or wait maybe to me

Shall Not

if only the clamor
of the noisy guitar could foretell
the passage of hopelessness and sinning
but instead the sound is clarity over distortion
and the imposition of the note
between the sensible pitches
a rational man would choose

but things ring out
their sounds are just around the corner
always
things fade away
or are plucked quick and throw down

shall we walk alone

Sock Hop

the dances were like a string of solaces
once a month the action
the girls being women for a night
the hallways filling with pop
that the following Monday won't maintain
I went only to watch never to do
I wonder did they wonder
what I saw what I heard
who was I was a good question too

Tired/Weary

the story shows that the end of life
is full of monsters
some in wet arm jungles
others in cold blizzards piling up snow
the question that breaks across all lips
is is sadness
a property of space
or matter
or energy
it pervades so
the ringing of the spheres is a pure blues

The Anxiety of Bidimensionality

there is a foolish way
to hook onto the tailgate of life
be pulled on skates that mimic rational thought
whose wheels soon wear down or whose
bearings heat and seize onto a single thought
too fragmentally and our fingers
at once velcro and teflon catch and release
caught onto debris and trinkets
pulling us along our brains spinning
trying to keep our feet
our foundation
solid yet fluid
and there is
a smart way

Pliny

long ago people died
in superheated foam
flash incinerated
and those who reported it were believed
insane or kooks because
nothing like that could happen

the world moved on
it happens every 2000 years

Stigmergy 1

carved words
stretch english
souped up and tugging at the hems of skirts
our modern language bangs
like a bass drum
and the rhythm of writing
lumbers on

Lost

skin like tears
hair falling like birthday ribbons
legs and everything between shimmering
like mirages of the desert
but for me it's just
a dream
only a dream

Found

Il Ikey y su Pajaro

we are hoping for the beautiful painting
to fall from its hooks into our hands
we can take it home and hang it contentiously
first in the den then the toilet area
places of books and reflection surpassing
the woes of flesh and elimination
flat painted on flattened metal perhaps
a fender pounded out and paints from Kelly Moore
flat not satin

It Started as a Promenade

we find the way crooked
as streets are in old places
once straight but wrinkled with age?
arthritic from over experience and pummeling uses?
beside the way are places to stop
houses or taverns sometimes a small park
old with long-living grass and shortened trees
the way is in places
a road or a street
showing the particulars of design
or frustration with the natural or uneven
and people
sitting by their doorways
or stopping to talk on the streets
selling chickens from barred cages
and fish on ice and plates

this part goes through a sharp valley
nothing but ruin along the way
and down toward a pit it goes
the sun behind a ridge
and getting cold
I am tired but my legs
carry me faster
faster with each step

Doggerel

stories of me are fun to read
packed with facts packed with lies
the ultimate thing that I regret
packed away the end unread

Superbowl Sunday

he would have loved this year in sports
two of his Boston teams winning championships
he listened to them almost every night of the year
and complained in a soft voice
he listened in the dark
to the radio rarely tv
he went to bed disappointed
most nights each year with his teams
I miss him

Not Likely

he listened and swayed
two hopes neither workable
his eyesight never improved
his teams did but without him listening

he would laugh at me for this

I'm a-Leaving

what does a poem a day mean?
one per day or one per day
on average?

is it stupid to write just to write?
what if I get no better?

tomorrow I leave for Switzerland
a trip I have hated for months
as time goes on I like
staying in one place more and more

is this practice too?

on a Jet Plane

Any Time

Bern has its beauties too
walking around like stuffed sausages
like food looking to the predators on either side of the street
things have been here a long time
and why haven't more things turned to dust
the beauties do one at a time
but beauty not not here not any time

Soon

On Walking Back from Some Fancy Dinner

the pinnacle of garbage
bags and boxes a stage of recitation and relief
beauties in decor decided on to be green
and drums

we pause picking
our way through debris and just around the corner
excitation there must have been great joy here
on the way to celebrating the joy's of Christ's death
revealing the lacquered truths of life painted
as on the porcelain masks on sale in the shut shop

but for us there are papers to read filled with facts
important beyond the price of the paper and ink
that makes them up

her tears are painted on
a tar sticking her emotions to her skin
the buildings are tagged
leaning toward the heaviest meanings

one of us slips

Zurich Lining

so they wear black
you can see only their faces
their hair is black and their eyebrows
they are luscious and I am filled
by the plates of food they've brought
she shines her eyes on my hands
as she places the bill between my hands
my hands are on a leather wallet
that she finds irresistible
that said I pay

Tired & Blue

treated like a child
the differences belied and underneath
the place between loving and dying
lies in incoherence

Last Song She Moves To

she sings in the language of her beauty and youth
but what of this matters
only her movements and her colored eyes
she lights herself on me and says what

her mouth moves unrelated to my thinking
but her skin is almost like mine when we touch
and what is there after all
to say

You Little Siren

ah you've finally thought to ask
and the answer you expected
was revealed as filth
there is a reason the streets are steep
and the debris at their feet convalesce
now you have heard the stories
and pickled them in a rainy reality
so much so that the best store
is across from the least gathering spot
and absence flows both ways

Disjunction

with the wings the leftovers
endure the humiliation of sticky fluid
we are abandoned and aloof
surely goodness is around the corner
embracing with mercy and quick
we are lagging and the snow
hasn't gotten around to the ground
there is a warmth and underneath a tangle
it is time linger or pray

Elated Mask

sometimes the sun shines
after an ordinary night
sometimes the word is "elated"
or "mask"

any origami shape can be made
with folding and a single cut

I find the outline more sufficient
than is necessary

how many poems are needed to
solve an open problem?

Peasant Girl Eating Soup

perhaps she's from where I'm
narrow face & shapeless tag of hair
peasant green sweater & olive skin
& below a black/yellow flowered skirt
over lavender fuzzy leggings—

in this she sips soup and tears
bread her book propped on her purse
here in this crappo coffee shop
an hour past sunset in Kendall Square
in February after a west-to-east
flight from one degree of cold
to a lower

behind me the asian girls giggle
reading a book—Big Java—
reminding me who I am

Diet Right

an overdose
of backhand love
time to walk off
those marriage vows

Frost Heaves and Heaven

I wish I could show you these roads
these trees and dead grass—how
the paths all lead to the thin stones
standing on end—where Mrs. Betsy
lies—a relict—

the gravedigger doesn't work for money
but the sides of his holes are perfectly vertical
the corners are exactly 90° but
even if they weren't they would add up
to your final piece of this earth—

in the time it took me to write this
a piece of ice the size of one of his holes
has broken off the shelf by the river
and has floated on the uneven and uncertain
current around the bend—a place things go
when it's time to not be seen

Elated Visit/Winter Visit

so the temperature
it was near 0°
and snow crusted so
hard it held me as I walked in the circles
the place demands
dark things absorbing sunheat
have made bare earth shadows around those things
and the one that surprises is the Red Sox banner

I walk a distance
from one stone to another
and everywhere I look I see
“his wife” and only once
“his relict”—when I see
my footprints in the topcrust
the feet are turned out no matter
how straight I place them

after I crossed the river and the heater
in my car has toasted the air I remember
I can still walk away
and this is the difference
for now

Coastal Scene Without the Light You Expect

after I've walked to the crest
above the waved surf and sat
on the teak bench I imagine the scene
from behind me as the water is always restless
and my silhouette acts like a hole my shape
in that evermoving water

the meaning of this scene is scratched out
and replaced by the longing I imagine
some women must feel when they think
of the hole I've left in their lives which they share
with my permanent relics

in the scene grass is waving in a wistful wind
and it would all be better were it backlit
but it's the wrong coast you imagine me on
it's the one from which one dreams
not the one of which

Storm Dreams

and so things are neat
now that the tornados are vaporized
several homes are settling back down
though nothing can re-place them
their anchors split or pulled up

you ask questions of this
and my answers turn about the issues
pulling up the roots of your meaning
and greening the air with them

I like it when the runoff rinses
all the vegetation off
into the spillways constructed
in hope after fear

perhaps our cars will recall
the dry dust and sand flecks
and our ambitions to keep their bodies
perfect the way shiny metal
and persitents dreams must be

Not Like This

two poems are printed each day
a reminder that the hardest writing
in the world can be done twice
in a row

Long Way to Protection

let's break in—there's
a disaster coming
coming fast and with bad weather
certainly we should start fear
get it going early
warm it up—break in
to the reminiscences that are
like just-pickled cucumbers
that are little salty
and a little sour

this combination
cuts the pleasure
away from the bone

What Could Be Better?

surely the play will be over
before the acting stops
while the music is beginning to end
and the birds have their feet extended
nearby butterflies are popping their wings
in a 5/4 tempo—temporarily
setting their beautiful lullabies
to a distant backdrop of vintage
optigans and melotrons
that imply a nostalgic past

Past In Present

out in the field the hayrake rots
first the soft parts
rubber and wood
then the iron rusting away
weeds and grass filling up its apparent ribcage
over by the stonewall it's covered in ivy
and yellowed by pollen
its color now time's secret
we long for the past that includes this machine's prime
the path here is overgrown
and not a path at all
fill my eyes with the thing it once was
I am the anger of now

Let's Discuss It

prepare some reports in which
the pros are compared next to
the cons

in our discussion let's remark
on the days when no one was connected
past the bend in the road
when the heaviness of the greenery
acted like a surrounding

in the center they held close
held me like a baby
looked surprised by the color
by the wind that blew his sprig of hair awry

could it be that time was more real
could be it was just the coincidence of proprietary love
it all seemed so green in that picture
this is in my report
which are the pros which are the cons
my problem is to find something to which to compare
this scene so that our discussion can be
well informed

In The Front Yard Unexpectedly Caught On Film

he looks little
in all the pictures I have of him
and a little sad though he's smiling
or laughing in all of them
the place is always too much of some unexpected color
or he is shorter than it seems he should be by
those near him

he is surrounded
uneasy about the next one
he is faking his way through life
(I know it)
and both afraid and exhilarated/exhausted
by the prospects of its end

Lesson from a Rainy Night

foolish
simple as a reformed clown
filthy
they thought they
were not
but where they park marks
them and what they eat
passes through them
revealing just
how special they are

Summer Comes in Like a Comb

March & the snow's melting
& I'm just a kid with a boat made of a board
with a 2x4 sawed off and nailed on for its cabin
& a nail hammered in the front
I'm pulling it by a piece of bailing twine
along a stream in a ditch beside the road
& what I recall are these important things

the stream just 1' wide flowing just a little
is exactly like the river down the road
& the pockets of warm air telling me
summer is here now just
not uniformly distributed

Lovely Wish

it is sudden
suddenly warming up in
pockets defeated each night by the everdarkening heavens
meaning what's up and away
does it mean more to me now
than 40 years ago when the prospect
of a humid and lazy summer
fell from trees like a foreign bird
just tired to death of the quotidian

or now when every step ahead
is a step closer to the everdark

March 4, 2005

Unsavoury

when a wish is sudden
its fulfilment is a pleasure delayed

2am

driving past apartments at night
city streets crowded unexpectedly
one seems dark as we stop
but through a gap in the blinds a dim light
over a bed and a picture of lovers
the frame corner only
visible and sharp
there are possibilities here
opportunities

Blues

the sky is a clever color
reflecting contemplation and resignation
where we give up
where we bathe and frolic
the sky contemplates and reflects
it is what we are
what we were
where we long to be

March 7, 2005

Your Defects Guaranteed

always a caveat
always a critique
loneliness is built into
everything—factory installed

Hide Your Love Away

when the time comes
I'll recall the slow songs we played
with ringing guitars while women
held onto their partners and themselves
some of them sang along because they remembered
something important about the song
others not dancing not singing
just looked on from the dark corners
knowing something real was going on
something they couldn't participate in
but in the center the room the black lights
and red lights labeled the living
this is the use of light and dark
ladies and gentlemen

In A Darkened Room

the music
reminds me of the office
large tables in a large room covered with papers
the windows were covered and each detail
had become murky

though I was the center of discussion
no one talked to me
no one considered the bright sun outside
and the shades and curtains
the smell of old pages

the doctor was a maestro
he would fix my broken eyes
and make them last 50 years more

he died before I was old enough
to know seriously about
thank yous

Theme Song

funny what a sound will do
or a smell
a tape made almost 40 years ago
recording a room no longer
available

voices and fingers with no strength
we gathered there with faulty equipment
and similar hope
similar abilities

what was a mess
counts for nostalgia

no one then imagined that it
could be propelled into the infosphere
and persist there maybe forever

no
back then we thought you needed
a contract
not a will

Discursion

memory makes repetition
possible as a structuring device
or else why would hearing an old song you wrote
and played and recorded in 1967 tear you up
or why would you make your real band
play it 30 years later

and record it
and play it over and over
late when darkness is so drifted
down—all the crecents of pink
categorized and gone—the odors of morning
taking their shift as evening turns into
its own memory
suitable for repetition

When It Happens to You

the tree
what pain does it feel
in its limbs
they twist
they boil up each spring
their youth drops in the fall
and they become black in the cold

we see no lesson here
not until it's late

Surely an Empty Ending

surely there is a spot of hope
wandering in the midst of trees
I've found my place by parking
sporadically and by rivers
no one wanders with me
nor is my stopping as frequent
there is only one way to go
and it's not a good way
I've held a pistol
empty
but full of promise
for the quick
exploding red
ending

Admit It

even a common homely woman
has her beauty if things are not all wrong
she can stand just right
her weight balanced to the right curves
and perhaps her sudden balancing step
adds small waves to her advantage
the conversation moves around me
as my attention drops and my response
enlivens

she feels awkward speaking to the man in line
waiting to order something
sweet he faces her in perfect illumination
she gazes into the flare behind his thinning hair

my attention—
I will never regain it
the love I feel is immense
all this before a single word

Then / Again

waking up
there is no telling how many times
this has happened and will happen
when everything is suctioning fear
and injecting it in me

listening to music was once
a singular treasure
waiting for the radio to play a favorite tune
we were so secondary
albums were too expensive and finicky
tapes
tapes actually made sense
big reel-to-reel tapes

the sounds of the woods behind the fan pulling air
into my room and out next room over
the cool moving mass pulling in the sweet
tangle of cut grass smell in the air

maybe a flash of heat lightning over by the river

waking up
no telling how many times

Apology

we have become fools
ripe for ribbing
praise us
for we remain complex

Heard It

the celebration is winding down/
and songs are getting slower
and more ponderous
the musicians look melancholy
they sway to the slow beat and their eyes are teary
perhaps they are lip-syncing
because the beat is perfect
the instruments played in a perfect room
without stray effects and odd reverb

does the fake music give them time
to feed their moods
surely the acts of creation cost too much to let the emotions slip out
or does being fake
bring on the sadness
as its own reward

Countdown/up

time is infinite
because bug list is
too

we are here to fix them
no?

Quick Rant

I am at a loss
they say love hurts
for me it is lights through fog on a distant hill
what if being here
were the loneliness bonus for short life

What We See When Dawn Arrives

we are cold as dawn remarks
unfavorably on night
the cheerful sun hunkers
for a few last minutes

clouds bend above eastern hilltops
—revealing a poet's presence—
and the few awake pause
to remark unfavorably on the sudden
light erupting into their eyes

who can blame those who take note

A:B as C:?

the restaurant is filled with the fat
here high in the desert
sitting in big chairs and smiling
dumbly at their children
whom they teach to be fat
they order fried food and meat
with lots of side dishes cooked in oils and fat
they drink beer or sodas
lots of it to wash down the grease
they know lots of words
but not how to use them

Hierolessons

the desert doesn't
understand the process
of diminishment

the desert resists changes
even as changes carve shapes
visible only from the air

the desert listens
only because the sunlight
blinkers its eyes and promises shade

the desert is under
interrogation and lying
just a little each question

the desert lingers
by the edge of prosperity
for God us all to value

our own places over all else

Icy Chests

the desert is a rim
and the warmth of living
is the basin
when we drive out from the unfortunate town
into the distant exitways
our way is marked by rising
dust and rocks crackling up
into wheelwells

the rain comes
in a ragged sheet
and the unholy washes engulf
the former dust motes

the possibility of dying
has appeared where the sun will drop past
we worry only our drinks
the ice in our chests
the changed way back
the sudden storm of our has made

Palace of Finery

it's a place of dark
place of sirens
flashing / revolving
sound show /&/ sweet liquids
it's a place of women
in states of various allure
place of soul negotiation
where you find
your worth if true
is no more than the perfume
you smell in the dark
when dawn catches up
on your nap

Upgrade

the trains roll by all evening
heading from the rising moon
up the grade toward the great
cities to the west

the clouds are piling up
above the mountains
fractured glass opaque from the cross lighting
cold descends and the wind reduces

up the street men by trucks break open
cans of beer and they laugh at the men
who work the trains all night thinking
this cold beer on a cold night
in this little small town is a hot
alternative

I am here as always in the little park
sitting by the cholla shading me
into oblivion

no man
neither on the train nor by the trucks
can see me
they never can

Blue Chemicals in the Body

it happened
I found myself sitting in a trailer by the dry river
behind the 100-year cemetery
at the base of a dug out copper mine
as the temperature was dropping

even in a southern desert it gets cold at night
I thought before knowing the desert
is always cold even midday

cold because the desert feels no loneliness
loneliness is our sign of life
the trailer the final stop

this is how the desert always has it
for us

Bisbee-

roads are lonely
we drive them when everything else is more important
when we step out of the car by the road
the heat grabs on
dust is part of the road
the sun through a car window will sear your arms and legs
the road is our comfort
and horror story

Riding

long rides
the thinking
the near misses
heavy rain in the mountains changes the perspective
along a highway in Arizona
a chubby Mexican rides his bike to work
while the rest of us grow tense

March 29, 2005

Rivers

some rivers flow to the sea
others are secrets
next to one of them I am with you
this is where I need to be tonight

The Red Road

the audio head is worn
if the poor sounds quality really bugs you
these can be easily replaced but they are not cheap
since generic replacements are rarely available
alignment will then be needed

-->hello nice page
it downloads very fast
enjoyed it very much
take care
the internet is a great place to showcase art
increase awareness
in the variety of excellent work available

we dedicate both
the newsletter and this webserver
to keeping the brothers and sisters
who share our spirit
informed about current events
within the lives of those
who walk the red road

in newer vcrs
with real-time counters
the tape will contact the control head lightly
but wear should not be
worth worrying about

<--makes you appear to be a bit removed
from daily reality
you could be something of a loner
your head may be in the clouds
much of the time as you ponder
some of the deeper issues in life.

Shady Dell In Fact

the trailer park sits
between the two-lane
and a cemetery
at the base of a hill
of slag

the trailers are old
40 years or more
the guests linger
over coffee in the trucked-in diner
while the sun hits the cross
in the shade of the hill

I was lonely in the trailer
but my thoughts would
not admit it

Call Me Ishmael

-Quux

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.
It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a man . . . must be in want of a wife.
Pick a variable. Call it x . Bind it to a number. Double it double it double it.
Is Arthur a grammar yes Arthur is a grammar. Yes. Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose.
The stone the angel rolled away with tears
Has been upon thy mouth these two thousand years.

The party of the first part
And the party of the next
Were partly participled
In a parsley-covered text.

Were you partial to a party
That has parceled out its parts
To the party that was second
In your polly-tickle heart?

Then parley all your losings
On a horse that's running dark.
With lights out you may triple
On a homer in the park.

E to the x du dx , e to the x dx .
Secant, tangent, cosine, sine. Three point one four one five nine.
Square root, cube root, QED; slipstick, slide rule, MIT!

Her Failure

she will not have a perfect
time of it

who does

I have prayed that she will

Failure Returned

nothing smells like failure
everything disheartening
about it is like leaves fallen behind a bush
there is no way around
no way under
no practical way over
and too beautiful
to cut down

My Clear Impression

beneath spackled leaves
walking on splotched paths
by unfinished water with a boat
that's just a sweep of white sheets
the boathouse across the water
is just a yellow

the pairs of lovers are tonque lickings
others aren't there at all
nothing but shadows
the sky—O the sky / blue / green / puffs — who is really here
the fence shadows out to two crosses
it's the only thing Claude made clear

It Is Always

we can always find
a reason to cry
all it takes is a face not laughing
a phrase of melancholy music
in the background
someone walking away as tones vary
but no melody emerges
when each of us is gone
many sad things will happen
but we can feel them now
soon birds will fly overhead
on their ways home
this is how it will be
how crying becomes crying out

Today's Prayer

it's possible to see too much
to say too much
lines worth remembering are rarely
spoken this is the price of beauty
I'm wishing for a prayer to enter my mind
a line that can be spoken
when I hear the words I wonder
are they too much
what is their price

Mysteries Of Sexual Curiosity

in the field
by a small orchard of pears and stunted apples
the gnats
the small flies
the crawling bugs dwell and further themselves
it's the cycle that matters
when the sun heats the browned hay swirled
into the cool passing by wind

near where a boy lies
a coffee can filled with a woman's things
lies buried

The Play's The Thing

when we write novels
time is playing dead
college professors await the publication
so their tenure fights may resume
even though the arguments
are all circular
the novels begin with just a few words
perhaps a drunk woman finding her keys
or a bullet that rings out
soon the words hassle a loaf
and structures once sparse
rotate slow dwell sculpture-like
play dead

Lament After Going In (revised)

We've parked and take turns
holding her urn in the car.
We face the mountain
whose peak is classic— a rock cone
visible all the way
from this lakeside to heaven.
To the west a veil of powder-light clouds
leaks orange color as
through a gaping door that leads
to a world of glittering uncommonality.
The urn has turned gold in the light
and in our hope

that the way we've admitted
to sentimentalism will be taken
as a blessing when she needs
it most, maybe wants it least,
but at last it's just our way
to say goodnight to her
on the first of her last 2 or 3 nights
at home before we send her
closer to where she'll want to be
one day when she finds herself
not here.

Lament After Going In (revised once more)

Beneath the rock-coned-topped mountain
stubborn to the invasion of onrushing difficulties,
behind a veil of powder-light clouds
leaking the setting sun, an orange light otherworldly
like a gaping door from a world
of glittering uncommonality into ours,
we've parked and take turns
holding her urn in the light behind
and the sight beneath in hopes

that the way we've admitted
to sentimentalism will be taken
as a blessing when she needs
it most, maybe wants it least,
but at last it's just our way
to say goodnight to her
on the first of her last 2 or 3 nights
at home before we send her
closer to where she'll want to be
one day when she finds herself
not here.

Lament In A Car

we sat by the lake that afternoon
the sun was setting behind some clouds
and it looked like a door that the sun
had gone through with orange light
coming back in streaks painting waving arms
in the lake otherwise mostly calm

to the north a bit the mountain was lit
its rock cone white above blackening sides
down to the lakeshore
many times I had climbed up there
over those rocks
to the top but no more will I do
no not the way it happened before

we held her urn there and then
as way of showing
we knew what she loved best
the light that deepens to become
night and the peak above the lake
that some call perfection

we've admitted
to sentimentalism and hope
it will be taken
as a blessing when she needs
it most maybe wants it least
but at last it's just our way
to say goodnight to her
on the first of her last 2 or 3 nights
at home before we send her
closer to where she'll want to be
one day when she finds herself
not here

Vying Afterall

someplace two things vie
for your attention
and the choice isn't up to you
though it's your attention afterall
the place for treating things as choices
is in your dreams where what are ordinarily
arguments come out as songs

Sitting There

the lapping water
the strong light
the weight of the urn on our laps
—one by one—
when it all comes down to this
everything in the space of a small vase
everything
everything that made you

Do You Wish It Would Rain?

for days now the water's
drained from the hills
into gullies
along and across roads
down into ditches
down from gutters into drainpipes
eventually into culverts and then sewers
the Bay must rise
the ocean around it must rise
humankind must rise
because everything does
after life is bolstered
and then washed away
from a winter of heavy
heavy hearted
rain

It All Leads Back

the band starts up
outside the cold air hugs the windows
and inside the cold air falls down the insides
this is where I lean
against a sill the length of the cafeteria
across from the band which plays
through new Bandmasters some well-off dad
has bought and a new set of Ludwigs

they play with heavy reverb
reminding me of memory
how it repeats without meaning
repeats without meaning
until one day its fading away
becomes profound
becomes what
truth?

Lilacs as Precursor

we bother with the fuss
to split the time with lilacs

growing beside the old barn
the purpley smell is masked
and masks sort of like lemonade
in warm milk

I lay here with a girl once
on this small hill built to hold a house
foundation and I remember it
being warm

mowing lawns
we had a lot of them
and each one big
and interplanted with trees and bushes and circular areas of flowers
see my mother valued life

she's dead now
I remember when her car wouldn't start
she didn't call anyone
didn't talk to her neighbors
until I called her from across the country
and then I called the mechanic 20 miles away from her
who towed her car and fixed it
and she didn't eat the whole week it was gone
that much did she value life

Train Scene

with all the sad music in the world
the two turn and walk to different sides
of the tracks under low clouds
and heavy moisture poised to drop

a train is surely on the way
they stand on opposite sides and practice
looking down or off to a distant view

the sad music is winding down
to its crescendo and the tracks
have begun to quiver
the two—man and woman—fear
the hollowing words and the vibrational increase

they wish the tracks were not so steeled
and shiny
they wish the train were fleeting

On Wind

the wind is heavy tonight
from the west
high and distending the trees
I imagine birds and the small
animals hunkered down

there is a pleasantness to the high winds
inside looking out
the fire undisturbed paradoxically

around here we take our cover seriously
not hunkered in or beneath
trees

we build a huffing and a puffing
strong box and lock ourselves
like doubloons inside

Inappropriate

who has trouble
cities pack them in apartments
by warehouses gathered around burning drums
along the wharves where luck sometimes
happens

tourists don't understand
they are walkers
they look and talk about them casually

sometimes along with the wind
a sharp fear brims up

Rambler

nothing is certain
and certainly the roles are reviled
the way to perceive clearly
is to dance before the music starts
and linger after the water dries up

most of the way is narrow
but every three or four skips
the lines don't narrow
and the trees whose branches hang
down to our knees
waver in their communion

everything that is waking
is full of the summer of forgetting

Green Journal

lingering outside
across the street
there are trees there to hide under
behind

she is behind the curtains
reading or perhaps writing
something in a green journal

the light is funny
dim
flickering and it seems like any minute
she will interrupt it
on the curtain

it's dark
you have figured out
and you're wondering why I linger
across the street

as a poet
you think
it's my job to tell you
but you see
I'm not
and I won't

Our Leader

the luck is not with us
and so we are required to die in pain
it has been explained that this is normal
and the price of freedom

Fullness

numerous phrases
spoken in all seriousness:
there are signals flashing
while cars wait at traffic lights
and people walk by
getting cold

Echo

the ambition behind insects
is to get beyond it
to let new DNA take hold
and change things
growth is not the only option
since growth is also change
the butterfly
is it two different beasts
one after the other
first what you are today
second what you are tomorrow
are there enough changes for satisfaction

I am reminded of the minnows
under the undulating mirror
and what this says of vanity
we stop to look at the world
and it's only us looking back

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

churches line the road
mourners line one side
revelers the other
the churches tell the truth
but no two are alike
they are all based on the same book
it's a sad day when two people
hate each other over how to take
the word love

April 26, 2005

The Tiger of Ultimate Remorse

our memories
the void
our memories

April 27, 2005

Long Drive

and so
the road replies
it furthers the case
for intemperance
of impermanence

Only One Can Win

she has seen what it means to have
her worth in doubt
and how things will not go
her way in all things
and I can't make it better
I just can't

I would take it on
all the horror and such
but I can't
I just can't

Shuffling the Last Steps

it's like a run down downtown street
by the restless sea filled with drifters
looking up alleys and across to the other sidewalk
it's cold as disappointment
sort of like what it's like
to notice that your chances are remote
get it

Remember

the stairs are useless
because down is not significant
after some time has passed
we bring tight gifts of misunderstandings
and lettings go
why do we estrange ourselves in the hidden emotions?
how can we remember love?

Love Is

she is right there in front of me
speaking of the last flight she made
and the defined landscape of ancient lands

the lands have been defiled
destined to be right here
she made me speak in front of the last
landscape but what she can't remember
is love

That Night

she is so sweet
excitable and eager
a dabbler betting a hunch
she would be so sweet
but who has heard of the personal dream

she's curled up and
her foreign song is flat
accented

she was so sweet
and this is the proper thing
the was
is belongs elsewhere
is is not mine
never will be again

May 3, 2005

She Has

the music is playing low
and straining
she is walking away wondering
about infatuation
the disease of horny youth

Fortunate Stance

she is away
left and sitting quietly
by the stream she calls my world
she is seated curled
she wonders where love is hiding
her hands are small
but she calls them her world
I would want her
but she is the world

Note It

not into it
not into anything like it
never noticed it
was surprised I talked about it
made a big deal of it
from my point of view it
was the source of what it
means to be alone without the slow passage
from alone to alone

Finally Together Finally

brave and wonderful
a celebration
good news travels like wind
over the tops of trees
like the waving of a skirt hanging well
from the hips of the woman you wish
to love

speculation is that
the beech is keeping watch
that grass is growing well over the spot
too far from the marker

surely the darkness is no problem
but only the knowledge they don't have
of what I've done for them
finally

Whatever It Takes

all the prayers won't do it
they spread slowly from their source
their words oozing self-pity and the luster of the lost
my wildest dreams involve the important
and unlikely equally

above on the bridge we stop
below the family group is spotted
upon the driftwood raft
they hide right there
you hide right here

it never enters your mind
the water drifts downstream
the wind picks up and time is different
for you than for me

in the end the birds have it right
they sing pretty songs
and fall dead where they perch
never having said one prayer

This page is Link collection

These home page master take care of me.
There is the Link collection,
near Friend,
I studied relevantly music and et cetera.

If you hope that you want to be "reciprocal link."
please remit from undermentioned form.

Doesn't it reciprocal link? (^^)
"Yes, let's do so.!" is to use the following form.

Adult site (chat, bulletin board is contained),
HP that official order is disturbed,
Approve it though it is here when it is refused
in my judgment besides that, please

Let's Music
Let's study for music!

Gay Men Are Found to Have Different Scent of Attraction

lies and wow the time is listing
to the right and it's conclusive
that a woman is a woman because she chooses
to be

no dna at work
it is a choice
or a lack
of mistakes by parents

o wow
the right are right

Heavy Into Philosophy

heavy wind over the angel of caring
the baby crying her echoes trapped in the brick surround
the mother feeling her lust drain
these are the tactics of anxiety

Red Eyes / Lost Response

I've found the place
where she waits
where she sits while the sun
seems to move and move
what seems to become
is just movement
when it grows dark
the dark actually rises
there is no mystery in her reddened eyes
she is just waiting
did I mention the stream
and the sounds it makes
did I mention how those sounds
cover her fractured breathing

Fortunate to List

painted and lengthy
the last resort
deserve
the words are short
the meaning lengthy

lucky for us

the end of lines don't intersect
that the kiss is less than the frantic ticks
too many lights are off now
and the clocks
hear them
the clocks are trying their darndest
to synchronize

May 14, 2005

End of Justice

I guess it's disappointing
that justice has become hatred

The Evil of 1 and l

source code lessens
our dependence on others
who would ship us rocks
to force down our drives
picket fences with pickets missing
sometimes just off by one
and it's all a shambles

so easy to just delete
what's wrong and patch
in the new bits
the process is like waving a red flag
and watching the bull charge the data
nothing is as pretty as source code
in a nice font one in which 1 is not l
and the code lines up like marvellous
soldiers

she grins when I get it right
and the overlapping executions
end like ballet
her reflection is metaphysical
we think about 1
we think about l

Forensics & Apologies

inappropriate foreground
creeping into the line of sight
tops of buildings where the ground
should be lowering into a distance
one of height and perspective
it's all about light—bright light
light that never stops
light always straight above
looking down and filling every place
up

a woman walks through all this
her skirt tells every line
it makes you wonder what is the purpose
of language taken lightly

Leaves and Our Smoke

the smoke is rolling
up to the ceiling
outside leaves remember
how we used to burn leaves in the fall
the door lets the smoke out
lets the ideas leaves have in
perhaps it's just a leaf or two
dead but reckoning
that make the artificial
bow to the natural

Amazing In Its Consequences

the rain simmers
on the rock path down to the pond
by the trees we laid under
up a rise on a spit of land
we played there every few weeks
when it didn't rain
sometimes another couple would walk by
out hidey hole and we'd breathe slow
one of us clothed to distract
should it come
to that

the small bugs and all that
hot weather often humid and everything dripping
sounds of footsteps making us nervous

that someone would choose me

Lonely Evening for Walking

she walks across the small bridge
it's warm out after the sun's been down
she walks up the stairs to the train station
where we end up waiting and catching the train but missing our stop
she walks across the street and up the hill
it's where we'll eat and I try moving my hand toward hers as we walk
she walks
my hand brushes past hers but the night stays the same
she walks and walks

On Heaven's Ignoble Front Porch

the lines that lead to my door
are embattled and fragile
from people I've known
taking it hard
taking it easy
the dust that gathers there in the late afternoons
turn to thin mud in the evening dew
and blow away once dust again
and the wind comes up past noon
sitting here on my porch
are the women I've loved
with cold drinks and cold eyes
wondering which version of no
was on tap and how long before
it
happened again

in my dream the exalted stranger
sat on my lap and my instinct was to wrap
her waist and lay my head by her chest

later more happened
but it also did earlier

Collecting Memories

walls piled high
with snow a sort of powder
from the intense cold
that came before the storm

we stand by the woodstove
so its upward warmth hits our faces
the cold air flows in under the door
and slides down the windows not
doing their jobs

later we'll pile the opened old
rectangular sleeping bags on
top of us the ones my father
bought for our infrequent overnight
hikes made the way old pillows were

we'll do things
later we'll imagine them
even later they will be routine
or worn out

the snow piled walls
near up the eaves of the roof
this not that I'll
never forget

When the End Won't Stop

forget the lists
and apologies on them
recall instead the heartless
fractions telling of successes
and what's left over
failures

there are a few
spoonfulls to go
before the last of God's meal
has been eaten

the list empty
refuses to end

Manifestation of a Version

which version of you
is in me

how have I concocted the context
to convict your innocence

what happened to my teeth
why are they yours

you don't see it this way
is this another version

surreal or cryptic does this
make sense for a me-like person

Too Fast

the night catches up
and behind a darkened building
some music plays just loud
enough to cause an echo
she walks not too far away
and the music passes between us
in fact the sky is dark
except for the city lights
under the high fog
her sentences are fragmentary
a kind of controlled stutter
she is not too far away
and some fog seems to pass between us
it was behind us at first
and soon because of different speeds
the dark caught us
and now is leaving us
behind

May 25, 2005

Under Choice

the alley led back home
it was a shortcut

she pointed it out to me
then walked down the crowded street

May 26, 2005

Strange Day / Warm Day

and the wind blew from north to south
though it was warm
and in the crevasses up on the mountainside
the streams were rushing down here

sad day
warm but threatening

the loneliness of simple words

Bio 2

lazy and unkempt
the twined lovers are the same as the sheets
they're wrapped in
the idea of sleep and laughter hovers over them
there might be visitors behind the trunks
outside their carelessly unlocked front door

after some effort they've organized their lives
in strict hierarchies
which may last as long as
a day

she enjoys her pleasure
he does too
this is the mystery of
original sin
aka DNA

Finding Out

seeking / running away
coming together around the burial spot
with the music still playing under the canopy of misses
don't you wish they would speak of you
in voices loud enough to hear
but off a bit
behind the bushes
beyond the trees
just loud enough for me to hear
not so loud that it drowns out
the world

At the Bow

you are near and simple
there is humility looming
among the horrible scrabble and hardscape
I've made loneliness and darkness alone
my métier

my wish is for the woman to walk forward
from the crowd and with just her eyes
choose what never has been

Is It A Goodbye?

is it into the sunset or into the sunrise
birds
are they heading back to roost
or out to claim territory

warming up or cooling down
as I walk along the tracks heading out of town
the thoughts of when I'll sleep next
and where I'll eat shine like the rails crushed
bright anew with each passing train

I should hop one and head
where it does
out over the southwestern desert
and up onto a high dry plain
orange and brimming with dusty greens

maybe they'll throw me off but
I think they'll just sit back and wonder
at the towns ahead
the towns behind
and the towns no tracks reveal

Seed Lines

what we learn is guided by trees
so plant them with care
there is no way to fix the mistake
30 years on when a tree is off by an inch
when the rocks it displaces push into your path
and your path is now in the direction
of ecstasy and imagined fear
and the only recourse is the gun
to the soft upper of your mouth
and the memories beyond

trees
place seedlings well

Eating / Out

yes and the meals
are tasty and filling
our ears are filled
by discussion and comments
we love stories told in blunt
phrases

praise
if you must falsehoods
that salt the anger
sweeten the pretense
but save your praise
not for the end
but for the time after that

Sex Scenes 101

and so and so
all of a paragraph
long but conveying the shrill
importance but is it harder
to do or speak of

Ultimate Sex Scene

(darkness)
(silence)
(languor)

he cautiously enters
her bedroom
she incautiously lifts
the corner of the comforter with her leg

(lights)
(camera)
(action)

Complainitent

who has time for it
the snarking
the lying
god they're stupid

Pass Time

it is the fear of modernity's
passing that frightens those
hooked on logic
those who cannot see what to cut
or where to paste it
they cannot fathom that truth
is a quilt made from what's discarded
they suffer great depressions
and tremble for fear of downsizing
their egos and IQs
sometimes the truth is in Croatian
or in their language but in a halting accent
it is the fear of postmodernity's
passing that frightens those
hooked on hacking
because there is nothing
after it
after all

Fishy Fundamentals

take an abstract number and divide
by 7 fish
not 7
7 fish
assume the number you've taken
is a multiple of 7 fish
not 7
7 fish
once you've conjured the result
let's talk about math

Genesis

alleys and small ways adorn the mind
the city outside or within
I have entered one and am halfway down it
deep within as I can tell from the odors of unfettered living
behind a dumpster a man is emptying
contents onto the asphalt
from a bag or an opening I cannot see
the alley is deep between two high buildings
and the light is down—there is a almost a mist
and where what he removes fall the asphalt
explodes into green and a wild pantheon of flowers
nothing seems odd
this is the work of salty bodies
minds drunk on making
and our own local god

Lament by the Still Waters

along the tracks
deep into a woods
into a corridor itching to close over if only
it would rain enough one spring
the tracks skirt the hem of a mountain
small but with a barren cone
overlooking majestically a primal pair of lakes

when I was young my parents took me to this lake
and we would swim in the summer because the lake
was shallow and its bottom dark and the water was warm
when I was old I held my mother's urn and ashes
as the sunseting light focused a diffusing pink on a bank of clouds
just to the south of the mountain's cone
and though the rail had been abandoned when my mother was rather young
I thought I heard a train whistle bristling everywhere
from the cone of the mountain where she and I and my father would climb
to the heavy overloaded woods and the warm water making its small sounds
or something—I heard something that sounded far off
and moving away

At the Awards Reception

the famous are old
and hardly recognize each other
when they do they remark how healthy you look
they will be dead soon
and what will their fame have bought them
an epitaph maybe that says
here lies a famous person
who grew old and no one recognized him
so we wrote this epitaph
to even things up
and this is what he's famous for

Is

the nature of reality
differs depending on whether
you're in your bed or
in a field of timothy

but what about the special
hotel with a courtesy basket
of fruit and cheese
and a vase of flowers to signal great welcome

but random events are not evenly spaced
and so the once a week coupling
is not random
while doing it every night at the special hotel
is

Lounging Later

ceremony over
the audience confused
by melodic prose &
people dispersing
because who wants to talk
after there is no more fame to rub off
the place settings are being taken away
elaborate flowers are heading
for the dumpsters out back
we lounge in our room
just 2 floors up
the songs we're listening to
going on and on
where people's passions lie
are on the trams outside
running past the dumpsters
everything is over

Default

listening to the words
nothing with sense
my rational brain's taking
the night off

Infinite Jest

the more words I tell you
the higher density of truth remains
because everything said is false
and what's not said therefore...

but falsehood and truth
are each infinite
so saying everything will not be enough
to leave nothing
but truth

that is
taking away any amount of falsehood
leaves just as much
and just as much truth

The Other Kid

I recall hiding
behind the stone in midfield
as my father called first
then my mother
from across the road from our front yard

he left and I never knew where he went
she came after he left and called out
then went in

sunny for a spring day
the browned grass still matted from the winter
warmed and warming
the breeze was cool
soon the sun would set below tall pines

they wanted to divorce
and I never knew why
then later never knew why not

from then on they seemed
not comfortable
it makes me wonder who that other kid was in the picture with the both of them and me
the kid who stood in front of them as if
he belonged

Beware Jesus' Smile

Jesus on Hazel
in front of a church
peddling ideas of revenge and retribution
Jesus eyeing everyone
who walks out smiling

maybe you read
"peddling ideas of revenge and retribution"
as what Jesus was
doing no
he was there
to eye and smile
smile at
the damned

Get It Up

others' poems
sound like ol' folks
like lessons you'd rather forget
like too-moist skin
like soup just a little too cool
or warm
like something you think you heard once before
once too many times
other peoples' poems
are just trying too hard

Story Told Again

too many pains
the house can feel them
and maybe it will absorb
the worst of it

when we visit we can feel
it still
other than that there are no signs
of what happened there

everything involved with the pains
and the floors that were right there

Poorly Attended Gig

sway rhythm pushing the darkness
back from the condensed windows
what's important are the dancers
do they know what the guitar means
and how hard it works to establish
the parameters of the night
we labor to get the rhythms right
and the off harmonies that play off against
the coolness hearts might feel
and instead the heat from the tubes' heaters
makes its way into the hips and loins of the dancers
and it's time for the song to lapse into its trance
and for the dancers' sweat to coat the windows

what he sees is the plain lowering into the distance
the echoes of the amplifiers against the curtain of distance
flowing up from the horizon
it was always the direction of his gaze
and now his fingers point this same way

Sealand

it really is a no place
I mean not a place at all
it's a sunken barge with two hollow posts
and a platform in 300' of water 6 miles off England
and it houses the most secure
servers on the planet
and
get this
the place is more or less its own country

you can see a picture of it
and the Prince burning old waste engine oil
in a barrel with the West Cardinal Buoy in the background

oh what a twin-posted thing it is
and the hope of freedom from chagrin

Last Waving

o the twinning
the twining
the missed understandings
high winds in narrow alleys
the loneliness of the knife under anesthetic

Food Item Description

this is just like "Garlic Butter"
but without the garlic butter

Under the Wing that Makes Us Us

out of the restaurant onto the sidewalk
we are cooled by the onslaught of
the single-minded nature of the sun
nothing if not elegant
in its going down and I swear
the clouds could be turquoise

our conversation amounts to nothing
but it is extensive and alarming
it takes place under the sky
that care nothing of it
but makes it into everything

Food For

nothing is more
than acrylic on canvas
representing the famous needs
of shade and light blue eyes

while we eat
after we eat
we talk too much
we retreat

but the sky reveals
an occasional breeze
unconcerned with goals and directions

she says there are ways
to uncover
but the night is for walking
I am holding her
to this

Tossing Riots

a place made only of rocks
makes for perfect riots
a boy will pick one up for comfort
the assurance of place
to wish to warm it
and then passion—it's thrown in
then thrown toward
soon everyone is throwing
and the infinite supply of stones
is the confluence of opinions

Desert Prayer

sophisticate the sounds
to go with the heat sunset can't cure
long for some breeze but that takes
a change somewhere
only the sun's changing
only 4 colors now: red rock
turquoise sky sage green
clay white
both on the ground
being the cliffs
onto the sky

listen to the voice God
puts in music
each sliding slurred sound
is what He declares
not the words
but the off-scale interleavings

know Him by 4 things
sound heat breeze change

Desert Lesson

frightening in its scope
alone among many
the stones piled throughout
the desert arrayed beside the highway
are symbols
each one is
of faith gone bad
I mean of faith undeserved
it makes us wonder
where the hardness of crystals
comes from
the facts we know don't explain it
but there is always faith
faith is hard
stones are hard
stones are everywhere but scattered

Endings

we labor through our days
there are only simple things to love
every now and then
there are many things to love
but few of us take the time
few of those things are available
soon the days seem to pass more quickly
and opportunities are more rare
or the time for them is

it's time to wonder where to sleep

Women / Love Diverges

sure there are
women I've been with
and some who've loved me some
but love's no sure thing
and many're not loved ever
though the math says it might work
the little nuggets of potential love
operate on rules not fairness
and even the biggest blunder of all
—friendship leads to love—
has few good effects

remember when the pines above
listed in the wind and the whispers
you thought you heard foretold
of the secrets of nights under blankets
: it was just pines
: just wind in the needles
: the cold under the pine matt is the fact
you need to accommodate

behind the barn
in the rocky fields
by the turgid stream
find what you need there

Visited on Me

I got it from my mother
among the frailties and ill behaviors
the temper idioms and unlovable eyes
—also the hunching over while reading
and dislike of common foods—
but the hair waves and settles pretty
just this one thing

Faded Essentials

buildings with names
painted on
letters faded making mysteries
easy to walk past
this is part of the charm
of abandoned main streets
and escapes to cities or the woods

I noticed two women stopped
looking at the perforated name on a building
standing while a cold wind bends
small branches nearby stripped of leaves
the wind passing through the trees
thoughts running through their minds
where some of their memories have faded

what they think is not significant
since they turn and walk arm in arm
upwind in the direction of forgetting

One is Like Voodoo, More is Like Booze

many trips are lined up
because the season of heat is on
we propose a solution to this dilemma
and it is sometimes a fog and sometimes
a haze that covers the hillside scenes
and makes secret rendezvous a blast

I am suspicious of nouns
whose plurals are spelled the same
but are pronounced differently
how much can we expect of lovers
away on a trip seeking a hazed-overt
hillside—can we expect the usual?

Last Song

I play
she dances
no other connection is possible

because sound is a flood
we don't need an interface
music is it

soft music and the urge
to sharpen the guitar's edge
helps her drop down and use her legs

she plays
I refuse
no connection to the other

No One Says We Should

earned life
there is no such thing
since life is eating its way through the hearts
eager to pop in or the other way around
and the chair where I would sit
has no one in it

along the river bank lovers
waltz their way into the mating bed
or to sleep

there is no such thing
as the happily lived life
we are given masks
and wear them

Listen Again

summer has a duty
to track for months
and spray heat like lacquer
on the pavement

wonder about the leaves and the push
to grow cut short
by the nights colder each day
and the snows readying to blanket

the moves to contrast
reckon to disturb the common course
and make the usual more usual
"he said ironically"

time goes
"someone said"
and I believed it

Lazy Writing

we love the words
 like the obvious songs
 repeating like a machine is in charge

but poetry doesn't figure
 into the picture when the words
 are flat and the talent lacking

sure I can use all the dictionaries
 and googlish searching tools to find
 the cleverest phrases and strangest

words but I want to talk to you
 always have but growing up alone
 has puddled fear in my brainpan

and our love of words
 buries summer beneath an obvious
 pile of words for green oh

and blue skies thunderclaps
 and bolts

Art Imitates Nature (and Probably TV Too)

the river awaits doing
its boring back-and-forth thing
while people living near its banks

tune their tvs to the funniest shows
which means the cheapest to produce
which means one more small cut

in the death of small cuts for the arts
and another thing there are no good restaurants
nearby even with the river and ocean and all

why I want to be there is unknowable
like why the salmon (long dead)
used to run up the river after years at sea

at sea I am at sea and I know it because
I rock back and forth to the music I play
when I write each line back and forth

boring
really
boring

Tasty

Skip's changes
the clouds made it cooler than I expected
and the burgers were less crisp

this time the mosquitos were out
and I was the only one outside at the picnic benches

Though

A Lesson

how close to life does death get?
consider the groundhog
sir who channels through sandy dirt
to get to his/her/their living quarters
piling up a mound 1-2 ft high
against the old (1944) headstone

my my guess who's coming to dinner

I Suspect

Storyline #1

let's imagine a world
and our life within it
let's not just imagine it
let's build it
in fact let's make it pretty and not typical
let's make choices real
let's allow people to decide everything about themselves
let's enable people to create exactly the corner of the world they will inhabit
let's make them smarter than they otherwise would be
let's permit them to live on their own terms
without butting into others
let's make this imaginary world
real

At Cruise Night

do they know—
the thickets of people moving jerkily
from car to car in the cruise night field
gazing like lovers on the chrome pipes and headers
manifolds exposed and germinating under the midday
sun

nearby they buy and eat small burgers and spiral fries
drinking traditional drinks and putting on hats
before lurching into the sunlight to view the cars
lined up like schoolchildren for testy inspections
and in fact there is a contest for the best car
—as they walk from car to car without panty lines
that their smooth asses are driving men to love their cars
more as part of a DNA-etched ritual to make more
of me

while in their minds it's just the fashion of pantylinelessness
and good taste

not the ruination / temptation / vilification / glorification
of a species

Why Do It?

let's dream
perhaps lines of sight will clear up
but the chills that prevent me from getting up to pee
or the sweats that keep me partly delirious
argue against it

my dreams are just repeatables
the same scenes and arguments
simply restarted and running
to the same point

rivers can do this
tidal ones
am I the tide between rationality and the dream

I am lopsided with despair and anger
filled with a battle of bodies and beliefs
women can't bear my affronts

On The Day I Found Him

we went there and found the gap
but the coordinates testified
we were in the right place
the worker smiled in the way
workers do when the bereaved ask
them questions they know how to
but don't want to
answer

the gap was wide and full in the sun
with no shade around and it shows
a lack of love or an active force
begetting forgetting

there was nothing to see
and not much more to feel

we drove away through light but annoying traffic
everything was filled with heavy sunlight
the day passed by
as any other would

July 13, 2005

Another's Grave

buried in someone else's grave
along with a 1 year old buried there
15 years earlier
and now I can't do anything
—headstone or move—
without a difficult search or court order
will anything go right in this

At Rocks Village Bridge

the journey home
starts with memories layering on
green leaves overgrowing a riverbank
the point being to deepen
the river's channel

the river will silt up
given time enough and hills enough
many trips or permanence are required
to shore things up

no one notices the bridge is not symmetrical
or that it was designed by different people at different times
they just drive across without any hint
of the fear the bridge demands
its resentment stored up
awaiting a suitable victim

July, New England, 1937

pungent pines
the blistering ammoniac of combined
urine and manure
the blunt lilacs by the house
horsey sweat and from the cows too
salad of smells from the cut grass
some fresh some drying or dried in the fields
from the south and west the polluted assault
from an industrial river
from the east brine and brackish strands leftover
from the onshore around dawn
somewhere down the road woodsmoke and fat burning in a pan
all these smells in combination as if some god-sized spoon
paddled them together into today's living and human broth

the doors of the barn are open to let wind pass through
and too the hay-wagon pulled by two large but not draft
horses this is the setting
for change
extravagant change

Ahead

what was easy
is now a story in the past
all the ones who are capable
are away

the barn still stands
with all its outbuildings
and the chicken coops too
there are cows to milk and feed
chickens and pigs
a dog to pet
two horses
one a killer
and only two women
in mid-July
in a heat wave
with the most work just ahead
and everyone waiting
for the pickings

It Is Empty Always

dark around Boston
even the lightest days fell short
of clear and the winters
and low unlifted clouds
sometimes dropping icy drizzle
trees hang over roads and fields are squeezed
in close and you'd think
the narrow spaces would become cozy
but it's as if the coldness
had the most lasting lease on the place
close by dark cold
what happens when it warms up

Trip Interrupted

the bridge is low most of the way
but has a high overpass where boats pass under
it was 2 hours past sunset and I was heading west
clouds or fog really hung low and it obscured the moon
which was changing sides
to the north a city was glaring under the low fast moving fog
and it seemed like the end was closing in
at that point traffic bloomed and my fantasies
were blown aside and then my exit came along
I was nearly home
(I thought)

Considerable Questions of Heat and Pressure

all in all
the heat from pavement is not worth
the shoe leather it cooks
asphalt flows in all temperatures
animal hide cooks one way or another
the twain always meet

In A Country Near Nightfall

she is bathed in red
it reflects from sandied bluffs
and even the sky
(which is blue even at noon)
adds to the red by asserting
its contrasting assent
her skin doesn't work well
with it being even more
than the heat that makes the sky
a coverlet as the day wanes
and her desires are left unchecked
as the red turns pinker and then translucent

downvalley a train starts clanging
from start to finish as the time comes
for everyone on it to move on

More News From The Front

soon the sounds of birds will stop
and the light settle up like a dodge
I am certain the light is not failing
but just wheeling around to take another swipe
in another part of the world
someone is doing her laundry
when a missed problem should be being
solved by her intended mind
and instead
she paints pictures of herself
to make another her for the other world

someday she'll put on those clothes
and we'll meet in the old part of an old
city built for red light in the mornings
and we will drink hot drinks as the heat
intensifies up or until one of us
looks down

And Even the Heat

he mowed the timothy
and let it dry flat
by fixing the roof
while summer worked

he raked it into rows
to fluff the hay to dry even more dry
the raked it more to dry it more

one day the farmer with the bailer
came and made round bails
from a tall loud machine pulled by a tractor

and was it a favor or a job
was he a friend or a businessman
what of the sun?

July 23, 2005

Boy and Girl Near Death in Parked Machine

then they were called machines
until their status overtook them
and they became real themselves
not just an abstract sort of thing
we called them cars only once lovers
started killing themselves in them

Overlooking

by the Clyde as clouds
come up from the west near sunset
sun lines angled to the north
and rain lines vertical
birds pelting the sky for last cover

even though it's like a bad 19th century painting
out there sodium lights are coming on and the river
keeps up its work of pumping up
the Irish sea

all the boats are docked
as the metaphor says they should be

By the Clyde

no where more so than in the dark
I'm happy for the graffiti lunching on the wall
the walk home is my apprehension and her tension
we like the smells or urbanity
one or the other
someone clicks a hand mic and shhs go and come
we cross the train bridge with lights flashing everywhere
around and sporadic
I will not have her tonight
train's pulled out

At The Expense

she's a talker
her accent tight around her words
her skirt the same on her hips
speaking loudly
hesitating every few words
she probably has a broken heart tucked
down her blouse
I'm ready to heave my sorrows
down there too

Stupidity Turns Language into Words

cold tams held at bay
north sea salmon smashed yet cold
rage for Jo's not here

rage is smashed
cold repeated
tam o'shanter's held at bay
salmon in the bay
north rage Jo's not
is here
we love poems with typos

At the Silly Scientists' Conference

birds flying underground
under the railroad station in abandoned
track tubes
part of the entertainment
for the conference not used
to the physical
volunteers humiliated
but cheered
the birds
predators all
watched their audience
hungrily
angrily

July 29, 2005

Edinburgh Castle

rain all day
the castle bursting
with wedding guests
rings and rumbles
with the sounds of cannonfire
and pipes

Train to Edinburgh

boats running down
the firth making big noises
and spreading waves out
to the banks where sheep are preparing
and grain is preparing
lots of manual work is left to do
and the rain keeps coming down

Love & the Gunslinger

images and imagination
the spell of rain is doupoured upon us
and the cold seeps inward
binding an ill health to our hearts
I thought of you but when I looked
you didn't look back

instead I designed some headstones
though no actual customers really cared
I liked to make them sound more
interesting dead than they ever were
alive

too bad you left

Not

they said you were there
but the twilight wouldn't reveal
perhaps your hair was the hair
I saw bouncing away toward the red smear
that night and the sounds of your feet along the gravelly
path by the river became the river sounds past
the rockwall that makes the channel

perhaps you're across the river
sitting watching for me
but the swingbridge is stuck open
for the night to let boats pass
and not me while the workers
celebrate a wedding

from the city behind me
(I stand with my arms on the railing
above the blood-dark water)
a song with tight minor chords
and a melody that follows them
choose one then another street
to come down phasing it to melancholy
the light fades
you are there across the river waiting
maybe

Bad Photography

in the rained on darkened city
I walked all twilight hoping
you would appear to me
behind a window drinking coffee
(such a city demands coffee)
or perhaps something stronger
in many people I thought I saw you
some parts they had that were yours
too—the redbrown hair the greyblue eyes
— but you were separated from me
by salt water so great was the space
you put between us

now the rain and dark are in control
my steps seem random but their purpose
is apparent from an angle people normally
can't see—I know you are drinking coffee
as I walk and the window I need to look through
is not a window at all

Uninvited Invitation

I know it's dark
now where you are
you are asleep wrapped
in young arms

language has made us stupid
broken our feelings into words
carved our words into cars on the autobahn
accompanied by synths and rhythms

someone has asked me to be near you
doing what I do
but this time there will be no heels
kickkickkicking the hem of you longcoat
on the path to a cold park

everything is in a wrong direction
it's dark here now

August 4, 2005

After Writing an Emergency Award Endorsement

among us
walking
choosing
who lives
who not

Himself

the outlier
the pomposity
further along than a manacle
the disruptor is at it again
walking like the condemned
armed with technical details
he was read nothing
because everything is unimportant
but one thing

guess

In Malden

one of the hot days
turns liquid or has been
and the gases released from trees and grass
ferment my nostalgia
I've stumbled across a gap
in a field of stones
the gap is very important to me
because the gap has been filled
but there are no marks
signifying anything
well I just stand
in the day and in the gap
wondering who put them
here for me to find

July 8, 1937

what could she have thought
the day her dad died
after his advice
and his instructions on what to tell the police
so the horses would not be taken and shot
did their burning house flicker on the window out the corner of her eye
as he left her and her mother alone
it would have made no sense because the house was not burning
though it would in 5 years
right before she met the man she believed would restore
the world

the roads outside the hospital window were dirt
the lot was dirt where she had parked the sedan
hot—it was hot and had been for weeks
Amelia was still missing—and the wealth of water
flowing down the river rising off the ocean
exuding from trees and grass
filled the air making the hay dry slow
and there was more to pack in the barn for winter
but now the funeral was next and the cows
and chickens would not wait

when did she cry for him
then
years later
as she lay dying herself in the lightning striking all around
all her fears in one night
what picture am I in
then or ever

Delayed Alignment

spotlight on the spot
rain like popsicles cool and calming
I'm by them again
we were like a pod of prey
facing out to the world
now my back is uncovered
my choice is to find a wall to back up to
but facing front my odds are poor
just a few more steps now

West and More West

the darkness encrusts the stairs
the worktable and the chair
the place where I write is white and blue
every color in fact
outside the faint clouds are sprayed onto the porcelain sky
a place I care about is fully dark
and cloudy
I am so far from there
and not sure what to do

guy steele is available here

guy steele is the definitive book on the language
guy steele is the originator of the phrase "lambda"
guy steele is one of its inventors
guy steele is available in both hardcopy

guy steele is a much better book imo
guy steele is a smart man and may have been able to significantly trim the search in ways I didn't realize
guy steele is now available electronically

richard gabriel is one of the latter
richard gabriel is one of my favorite richards
richard gabriel is so spare in his prose that I must cite quite a bit of him in order to convey what gabriel says
richard gabriel is among many who make a powerful argument for the impact of physical exhaustion
caused by extended periods of sympathy

guy steele is well aware of these issues

See?

quit anyway?
it asks
quit eventhough is the question
perhaps I've forgotten (it thinks)
it won't do what I wish straight away
but asks
quit anyway?
anyway
anyhow
it is not a haphazard thing
done whateverly
anyway
I'm through with this
and even if you're reading on hoping for something else I will
quit anyway

Marriage Flare

dinner on the porch
mosquito candles flaring then smoking
above the perseids have started
streaking red above the clouds
the discussion is esoteric
but the food is basic
and the occasion is a wedding
taking place the next day when an old woman
would marry an old man but tonight the parents
and I talk while the lovebirds chirp and twitter
over the details to come

Double Booking

the wedding went on
with a hitch
the park site double booked
the company picnic complete with kids in strollers
not swayed by the thought of matrimony
besides corporate america is worth every distraction
and who is interested in two retired people marrying
for the first time
living as paupers nesting by their garden
fully in love and ready for commitment
when the morale of the working
is needed for the sake of the shareholders
and ceo who hopes to retire himself [no sic]
soon on a pension of investment income
of \$1m a day
but
the wedding went on

Killed with Admiration

kitchen filled with ants
swarmed around a chicken carcass left in the trash
over a long weekend
we hate them and kill them and seal off their entrance hole
but admire how with

- a.) random search
- b.) a tendency to follow pheromone trails

only

they can home in on a carcass 10,000 times
the length of their bodies away from the nest

are we like that?

August 15, 2005

Life Does Not Go On

cops shows and csi
show the '60's was right
cops are pigs
they can't wait
rudeness is cool

solving crimes is the most important thing
read about it in the bible

Walking

rivers all around
named different names
pushing the humidity
up and into the sky
which pushes it down

he runners pause at corners
they say to avoid the cars
but the cars are insane
with the heat and need no
excuses to stay at home

Rejuvenating

we fell by the wayside
the car empty
the road empty
the sky open and a foreskin of cloud cover
pushing in from the horizon

I wonder
really
who have made the most of their days
and this day is done and already empty

Café Jitters

showing off her profile
cicadas making up their lives
we walk without passion
to the car—old and soulful—
we have parked around the corner
from a favorite cafe
we know that the rivers
have nothing to say tonight
nor the moon leaping upward
from behind the raven hill
when the first possibility for love
evacuates

well we drive off
and the girl with the profile
seems lucky
stays behind
perhaps lingers

Airport Romance

in the other security line—
my god to be the guard that pats her down—
she is thin but extravagant perfectly
she moves ahead and I take my time with my shoes
but at the train to the gates she strolls up
while my train pulls out

at the head to two tall escalators
I put my bags down to wait
and soon she comes up and walks past
like a spy I stand a minute looking past
where she came then turn grabbing my bags
to follow her to the Godiva shop where she waits
in line while I walk past to the bookstore
then she heads down concourse B
without chocolate

she can't get past me where I sit now
except for the times I glance at this page
I need to do it every few words
but these are the times she can sneak by
otherwise she will disappear into thin air
as will I soon enough

Before Leaving

the heat stresses
the shapes of women in skirts
I've noticed Pittsburgh is always well dressed

along the river a trace of ozone adds a ping
to the voice of the air
as we drive over the bridge toward the tunnel
a train sweeps through the trees and bushes
along the river

I notice the clouds seem sprayed onto the sky
and the clash of thunder seems not far away

after I've parked the street fills with the warmth
of women walking by some slowly some
as if to rid themselves of me immediately
this thought crosses my mind then
I shut the door slowly and quietly

JRST 4,

the story is funny
but it's based on lies
every word is a lie
because precision is a prayer
we believe in

false hopes and circularities
as if we could pick ourselves up by our belts
and fly

Skype

I talked to her over the computer
not typing like this
or email
but voip her voice darker than I recall
even with packet-based sideband distortion
she sounded like dusk over a still ocean
with just the smallest breeze enough to get the mind at attention
but the senses at peace

}

we yearn for the envelope
the ending bracing the beginning
with irrelevant time and events between
but these events aren't irrelevant because
they turn the naive left brace into the wise and melancholy
right just as we learned from Menard
Author of *The Quixote*

Wow?

just talk
word after word
only two at a time related

speaker—largely
toothless with a doubled up
tongue

wow—that's ...
wow...words escape me
...righteous?

Summer / Merrimac / Storm

disturbances on the radio
static in the songs
every one or two

wind in the oaks / in the hickories
acorns and nuts falling on the lawn
rain heavy as nuts pinging the pavement
which is just oil and sand compressed by cars

we count between the strikes and the sounds
every 5 a mile or so
we have closed the windows to the west
opened them to the east
the dog is under the table and we're in the middle of the room

when 5 just does it
we head to the garage / into the car
thinking we will be safe
at least the sound is less
hands on laps / we wait

every one or two
static in the songs
disturbances on the radio

Storms & Storms

here there are no storms
to match those east of here
we don't get to savor the fear of the strikes and rumbles
the way it rushes toward us no matter what we try
and takes our house and does what it wants

she would rock in her chair
to the wind and crushing rain
and widen her eyes when the lightning came
years and years she had practiced this
and the day would come / I think /
when it would kill her

Rebut All

we think thinking
is root / reveals design
because everything we do is controlled thought
yet what of letting go
unbinding ourselves to thought

just a thought

Reaction To Air

thunder is the same everywhere
wind / rain
a soul unhinged from its resting place
grass pushing against the cut
how waterproof is the vault
the urns / the plastic sealed bag I put my essay in
echoes are the basis of memory and creation
thunder is nothing / but echoes
about 100' away a spigot drips
made a hole in the ground
each life does that / echoes dribbling out
digging in

Filling / Filing

special places
we lumber to them unaware of their tendernesses
I am sure of truth / I am ignorances
we can't come back to them once
we leave
we don't know when we leave
places cannot be
known / our minds are a place
one / rendezvous
we use our legs and feet to get there
everything is underneath
imagine if on the way
we were to drop something

V.True

the place where smart people
learn / where they work
the river that is wide and is their lives
the trees along its banks are v.green
the flowers off to the sides of the trees are v.colorful
and smell like forever and wonderful lotions

ah but not every one is

Dominus Tecum

dip your fingers in the water
watch the waves bounce
from the center to the sides
to the center / bring them to your forehead
and make a sign

behind you there are stones
and bright colors
there is smoke corkscrewing
from candles

it is damp here
it is quiet here

many wish everything would happen here
but they don't see the stories on the walls
in the windows
this is important property

Field Study

ok, so a field
even though it's been plowed for centuries still
there are stones to pull out and pile up
ok, so the wall is not even
since someone's (like me) taken some out to
make rustic fireplaces and stoops
ok, a big one in the middle
plowed around / mowed around
for centuries / ok, but just barely maybe
I mean the time thing
this rock / big & buried
deep and maybe digging could put some space beneath it
ok, but why worry horses
you know my mother
saw it too when she was a girl
ok, I mean the time thing

Monkey's Uncle?

they cringed when they opened
the door on me / they fell to their knees
and prayed though it sounded like
they didn't know how
I was there to beg
food and old clothes
but they knew me as someone else
I asked to come in and they cried out
I asked for soup and they wailed and pulled their hair
I asked for an old pair of pants and they fell upon the floor

who could know that there is not
just one but the job rotates
some would say I left them for dead
but they / after the praying
the falling the wailing and crying out / they all
came with me

Desperate Word Slums

the city is filled with waiters
they are watchers
they listen
they smell / sense / apprehend
the facts just happen and the relevance is elsewhere

we never see them
because our thoughts are selfish
our thoughts are trained when we are alone
and they can only be turned to themselves
and maybe us if they have time

crying is our version of wind
a storm has come between us
we cannot speak / you and I / because you are consumed by yourself
your thoughts spin into themselves
my thoughts and yours can never meet
words are for times like this
but everything is told in the spaces
the rest just blocks out possibilities
with as many of them gone as language
allows / we make out guesses
like leaves on wind

wait / watch / listen / be the words

Indifference to Indifference

the field's been plowed a hundred times
and the rock never removed though the time
it took to go around it added up to enough
time to dig it out

stone importance
some places take their
distractions as gospel

Criticism 102

speaking of it
plainly like perfection
the word is out
that the time to pray is now
there is no clarity of thought
expression is a mess
the world shouts for a clear
explanation but it's all fractal and buried deep
in the thicket of contradictions
I am vexed and words turn prayer
to fighting words and worse

Vanishing Point

simple lines
on a page
brown on white
we can read them
we can locate them
if there is perspective the image will form
not many lines are needed
because our nature is to complete them
fill them in
add them
it helps if the image can be recognized
we are not made for abstraction
that which is abstract
vanishes as we turn away

On A Way

the light
smoky or yellowed
low through tall tangled trees and bushes
it's the wooded parts of Illinois
green spackled orange and yellow but low light
just before the sun has given up
I'm driving there
hopeful of the outcome
hopeful despite this spiteful light

Is It Love or a Poet?

rocking
jumping
clapping
rubbing
oscillating
smelling
squinting
licking
mouthing
biting & spitting
facial grimacing
tapping teeth
rapid eye blinking
touching head to table
tongue noises
looking out from the corners of the eyes
holding arms rigid either above the head or out in front
squeezing with fingers and hands
head weaving
flipping or snapping the fingers on the palm
flicking the fingers in front of the eyes
pating or twirling of the hands or spinning or waving
covering parts of the face with the hands
the pressing of objects
masturbation
whirling in circles
pelvic thrusting
shaking of the leg
body quivers
bouncing of the legs or feet maybe with legs crossed
pawing the ground with the feet
toe walking
arm & hand flapping
unusual body posturing
quick darting movement
palm staring
feeling the edges of objects / scraping & tasting them
undifferentiated verbalizations

Slope / Downslope

garden walled by hedges
conversation lined with hedges
the sky is yellowed maybe
from the age of the long days growing
autumn tired
the pond—the green pond's—water flows
on a slight downslope in one end out
the other
the words bounce back from you to me
the love shifted to the downslope side
on the edge of the spillway
will join the Sangamon
down bigger rivers and bigger rivers
until nothing is other than
water water penned by walls
it is all written

Ed's

she is not beautiful
she shows no discomfit
no lack of pleasure
she grinds her thonged ass into some-his crotch
closes her eyes
he holds her not narrow hipbones
every man wants her
she wants cash
she is in control

I Saw Her the Next Day in a Coffee Shop

they are older than they look
the black lights
makeup
the dark corners
workout routines and toning before coming out
she wants to bring him to the point
she rubs / grinds / rubs her bare ass on him
and lean back into him
she cups her breasts
from 30' away
(remember it's dark)
I think she enjoys this
she does it over and over
first a fat man
next a dark man
next an old man
later her man
(I suppose)
she has little beauty save sensuality
she is (ultimately) chubby
but judging by the line
of men before her
she is the local
(local to this dark place)
goddess

Afterwards

we walked away chatting
of what we saw
who we caressed
all they care about is money
Ed said
he might be right
since he's 80 and owns the place

some people believe money is the only meaning
like the 500 people in the world who "make"
more than 420 million others

when those 500 read words shaped like this
the jelly of their brains
turns sour

women are not like that

Revelation

it's the dead who forgive
God has other things to do

Club of Want

what you see
she pities you
you pay her
love notes
on the tip rail

Drive He Said / Consing Up A Soul

—Brian Foote

Tactile and olfactory...
intense, primal, Hannibal Lechter...
Naked, short on humor, largely
devoid of irony.
Smitten with the brash
juxtapositions of adjective / noun pairs.
Power Noun. Noun Shouts.

Is this soul an ostentation?
Are they all?
Poetry is plumage.
We are fledged for a reason.

I'm reminded of Miles Davis.
More Miles Davis than Charlie Parker.
There is little whimsy here.
This is world that is stark and
cold. So cold. A soul that lives
in the moons of Neptune.
The author's voice suggests Charles Bukowski
and James Dickey, gruff and earthy.
Often sullen. No narrow fellow
in the grass. He's Butch,
but not Spartan.

For a long time I couldn't listen
to Miles Davis. His was a dark, brooding,
gorgeous, foreboding journey to a place
I wasn't sure I wanted to go.

I don't read poetry.
I don't read fiction either.
I prefer to live my own instead.

This is not an indifferent soul.
Its not an uncaring soul.
He just knows this cold dominion
is his home, the only one he'll ever know. The only one
he has any use for? It's not that bad of a place,
and he's used to it by now.

I'm a lot of people on any given day.
These souls emerge in concert
with the others they touch day to say.
None is more true than any other.
I used to think that was not so.
No more. We are all one out of many.
E Pluribus Unum.

Laments? They're a polite strain of
kvetching for goyem, right?

He is the author
of thousands more poems
that no lips have ever spoken,
nor ears ever heard.

This is offered up for the author's
amusement. Do I really believe any of it?
Do I really believe anything?

A G-string snaps
he is forced to improvise.
So What?

Attached / Once

alone but awake
I don't know who you really are
or who you are really
you are new and strange
all I recall: the sun on the lip of the ocean
behind you as you slept
the cold wind from the ocean
making of you a persuasion
a sink for warming hands
your face familiar by type but not details
everything made the same as everyone
but particulars peculiar
what to you are movements of familiarity
are jerks and spasms to me
the way you sleep is loneliness
your intoxication / your perfumed body and hair
fading / my choice is to lurk and stare

when you finally awake
you will say what I have
my silhouette before the sun
grows small

Rag Filled Lines

simple as plums
too ripe and fallen to the pavement
we lay into our work
as if building a community
from the shade of an apple tree
our batteries have run down
and the forest is folding up

I have written a program to find
the most obscure set of lines
of all and you will love
them and me together
like in an *orgy*

Long Time / Long Day

my eyes watered all afternoon
from the sun or dust or stress of living
the light from the lowering sun
seemed to skim off every surface
when I opened the window at the toll booth
the water-chilled air made the oddly color buoys
look to me like seals

even now my eyes are not the same
they can't be after each day of seeing
the living and dying in their current poses
I grow small in your eyes my face to the sun
my back to my shadow and you
heading that way

Lost

it was time for the final computation
the one that tells me whether I won
but you know I didn't
everyone knows I didn't
because everyone knows I couldn't
won / won't
such ironies are petty poems made of

Melody Lies

soon enough
the sour song
will curdle into the top
folds of the animated mind
if I come back alive
I will be unable to think
the same way again
like spare change in a broken jar
the weight of it breaks
the heart

A Good Story

sometimes there is no good reason
for a story to start
some will hear its start
savor its progression
then bask in its meaning and effect
others will join the story late
piece it together like a half-forgotten puzzle
this leaves us to wonder about the worst
is it those who hear its start
and depart in the middle
or those who hear neither
its start middle or end
I know what I think

I will be all those people
won't you join me

Remember

and so the story is told
over and over
each word is part of stichery
and the order we learn
details weaves the nature of sound and sight
into a canopy of refurbished memories
remember this
remember this
remember this
only this order
and the impression we had then
are the ingredients of imagination

Story

we find the angles
sight along them
feel better when we think we've learned
but it's only a small perturbation
in our quest for fun
and a short but ending-quenching
story

September In Illinois

what sort of visit is it
staying inside and talking
or reading email
outside the air is making a soup
of the afternoon
wings are working
and what to us is nothing
is like a 3d road
duckweed on the surface
green growth
behind me the sky is an impossible blue

in town later in the week
the streets seemed to have narrowed
and become dust covered
instead we grab a coffee
at the Paradiso
and drink slowly
while we watch the girls make more

the smells are sophisticated

Fan Above

for a day the ideas go round and round
a ceiling fan overhead shows the way
moving ineffectually the stale air
I swanee the place is home more to bugs than me
the swamp's not far away / a bayou away
since it's all a circle the sounds I hear
must be repeats / must be echoes
like the wet in the stale air reprised
from a day long ago when the guitars echoed
the singing was in falsetto and the girls who
danced have sunk and drooped
O I loved them so much
I still ache

September 26, 2005

After Thinking

she is calm
the heat is not giving up
this time I'll take her a drink
and act like a good son should

Fire Under the Pine

cold day
a little windy
I had built a small ladder
which were slats nailed to the trunk
the lowest branches were 10' up
it was a pine tree surrounded by needles
6" deep / I built a fire in a hole
I dug & surrounded by stone wall rocks
when the wind picked up
I doused it from a pretend canteen
I climbed up / about 50'
the branches were like stairs
& I was above the other trees
I could see the house
the barn / the fields stretching
around this island of pines and frail maples

that's what I wanted to do
that day & others
only the fire
I never doused it but watched it closely
tended it past dark
I used my memory to work
my way home

Flame / Memory

after a time the little fire
shrinks below the size of a match flame
even the embers are weak in the cold air
snowflakes are starting to buzz around my head
uncovered until a moment ago
the woods look like a bad tv signal
that's how it looked and how I remember it

after a while / the fire revived after renewed fuel
and my back to the wind before it
my eyes started to water from smoke
and a memory that I still quiver over today
a memory that reminded me of the stone
in the little clearing and how it
anchored the scene whether
I was there or not

At The Casa Guadalajara

the family was young and loud
Mexican based on many things
they called over the mariachi
and asked them to play loud songs
and sad songs and songs of the triumph
of loudness over sadness
they paid in 5s and 10s
the mariachi was 2 violins
a bass a uke-like guitar or mandolin
and a trumpet
they all sang / really loud
I loved the family who spoke loudly
and happily in Spanish now / in English now
depending on
nothing I could discern
I sat right next to them
the trumpet aimed at my head while I ate
and watched the red smear
/outside the window at the far end of the restaurant/
of the sun's going and gone down
the highway was up on a bridge
and for the one pane
the cars would sprint by
and they looked like shuttlecocks from a game
and oneway badminton

the young wife never stopped smiling
even while her husband ordered a plate of
avocados and limes to line his tacos with
the slices of avocado doused in squeezed limejuice
and all they while he read the texts on his cell
switched from Spanish to English
sang with his not-fully-toothed mouth wide
and I watched the cars like insects
brush by and by

Climbing Out / In

sometimes the sky is different
like tonight as we took off
fog and odd clouds mixed with smoke
from big fires / we climbed out over the ocean
and the sunset and ocean
turned everything into shades of two colors
gunmetal grey and gunmetal pink
gunmetal meaning nothing natural
and filled with the potential to kill
there was a sheen on the water
and over the water
it was a metallic look everywhere
even though there were some puffy grey clouds
the clouds and fog and shiny parts
were all in layers / we flew up through them
and each time everything changed
below some of the clouds
dark strings hung
I was afraid while this all unfolded
even though the sun set and it became dark everywhere
I am still afraid

Love Hails

really the day is over
we have nothing to say
you read / I read
the pages make little finger sounds
just before we turn them
we are interested in the thoughts
of others not each other
is this better than surfing the web
or emailing strangers
just the same

Loss as Love

cold weather coming
wind down the river valley
the bridge readies itself for ice floes
green is becoming more rare
it's time to sit by the river
listen for the fish to jump
to taste the cold air to see when winter will arrive
I'm alone listening to music over and over
the same song again
repeats are all the rage
winter proves it
spring can't become summer
without it

Essence of Faith

follow where I lead
down the hallway
down the road
you are lonesome as always
but near the border someone is always
looking to kill
for fun / for money / for love
kill sometimes is metaphorical
as in the death of loneliness
we fear death but it is part of the welcome swath
that we pass over in continuous steps
remember the killing is near the border
so stay away until it's time to approach
I am here to lead
when you are ready at last

Hoarding is Fun

the rich do it all the time
(in fact
what else *do* they do?)
hoarding is the way
to get to hell the fastest
(the Bible
teaches me that)
the rich love to talk about the Bible
because it's a way to make the faithful
obligingly humble and poor
and where else can all that wealth go
if not to the rich
hoarding lies
is the way to do it

Rivers of Gleeeful Singing

we sway down to the river
where the fish wait then
swim upstream
like people who wait
to learn of you
maybe learn to love you
then linger a beat too long
before angling away
we wind our ways through
the things called our lives
like singers on a stage
lit to blindness
we never know whether anyone watches
but if we stop singing
the booing will start

Cold Where You Are

it must be cold where you are
wet streets from steady rain
the wet caught on your shoes
now on your living room floor
the window becomes a character
in your flat / rain beads outside
and steam from your cooking inside

all these things speak of us
the way it's night here and day there
no need for curtains because
nature—our's—is enough

All and Everything at Sea

all it takes is one strong rain
starting in the western part
of town and migrating within
minutes to the other side
a sheet in other words
the direction the squall pushes
determines the order in which
what's left of the broken hearts
is swept into the storm drains
then into the concrete ditches
that take those things to the rivers
to the sea where the individual problems
mingle with the rest and it seems
worse and worse but it's really
better and better because
well
it's just water
ya know

Lessons / Night / Snow / Everything

outside by fogged over
windows a truck has driven
and its sharp tread impressions
are filling up with the light snow
that's falling / there is no idea
of strolling down to the park
or riding out to the docks
tonight

it's one of those nights
when newspapers from cities
far away make sense
or / and candles instead of hard lights
and / or whiskey in coffee or tequilla in tea
some razorlike in something hot
to go down the throat and stifle conversation

the snow outside
falling heavier as the cold air picks up
moisture from upriver
acts like a mute so even sharp sounds
loud ones engage us like love talk
head by head on our pillow

the truck tracks are filled
the little impressions that're left
are only a hint of the past
that things pass
loud or soft
they still pass

Swarm 1

a line of ants runs
from a nest in the brush
to the corner of the house
a little at a time the line
extends up the wall
they are like an algorithm
that always eventually works
but eventually is sooner than you expect
but it took great minds
some trained at MIT
to figure this out

Design Nothing Fancy

the place is awake
or post-doze / I don't know
or my mind is wandering
I am designing something new
the songs I play to create in front of
must be melancholy
must remind me of where I'm from
and how much I am never enough
best of all is a fake piano
electric based on hammers and plates
nothing fancy being played
slow fingers are enough
the design of the song / though /
is angled to make the most
from the least
did I mention that the place
is awake

?

Prayer On Noise

it makes me cry
the way they rise up
through thin air
the way in their wake
the whip seems to crack
and below windows won't rest
with the sun setting off to the left
in front of them and clouds forming
off their wingtips / it makes me cry
when the F15Es turn on the noise
on their way to rip some country
apart

Sweeping Advice

look up
when sweeping be aware
of where you are and what
the situation is at all times
sweeping without a slider on
can be more effective
since it allows both feet to "dig in"
to get the job done.
dust shots / also clean the line of delivery before every shot
stay with the rock
until it comes to a complete stop
be prepared for alternate shot
calls from the skip
watch rock placement stop
sweeping if the rock is curling too
much a long guard is better
than a close rock
that is not guarding
anything

Autumn etc

it's happening again
cold coming on but
today it's 85° / buffed sun
but the nights grow
deeply chilled and the ground
is hardening / things in the ground
are growing wary and reticent
it will happen to you too

October 14, 2005

Underneath

leaves cover the area
strong light and its heat
never stain the ground
just sparse grass
your idea of love

Futile

long walk home
who's there
long walk back

We Lounge

by the pool
water up on the concrete
slapping flippers on rude boys
a quiet conversation
never starts / in fact
cannot be contemplated

After A Discouraging Exercise

the line of squalls leads nowhere
though the stone cobbles are slick
people have fallen and hurt themselves badly
but others stare like acolytes at the rainbows
their faces wetted and melancholy
some of the people have learned they
are quite stupid but they
remain exhilarated by
their disdain and uncaring why
they are ecstatic and holy

October 18, 2005

South—

nights make
no sense
girls scared
of desire

Nil—

the story
told & told
gains truth

the truth
told & told
gains nil

The Truth at Twelve Stories

fearful night
no goodbye kisses
no smudges to wipe away
no overlooks to look over
or planes to watch descend with care over lovers at work
instead your going
is a rumor overheard at the party
then more and more until
it is like us / nothing

Air Lines

you have no passion
nor romance and never
a quiet word

you spout / not talk
you blurt / neither languor
you step in wide long steps / no caution

airplanes have done this
to us / there once was a time
a fortunate time

At The Stranger's Restaurant

she is demure
selecting wine
looking up furtively from the list
to see what he thinks
she never smiles but she is filled
with love and hope / she has captured and will again
she wears no makeup
and her glasses / frameless almost / makes
her more / including desirable

I would love her
but it's time to head home
to (be on) my own

On a Lost Sunday

plans made exfoliate
like leaves in fall
they blanket green ground with yellows etc
after a while the ground turns
the leaves dried or decaying
form a blanket or blow away
the blanket warms the ground or changes its chemistry
or the blown leaves gather at the bases of trees or cover
the pond then sink

notice how each or expands and the disorder and symmetry
of it becomes apparent
anyhow it's winter that's gaining on everything
even as balance operates elsewhere

and on the drizzled on street
the cute and rich shop
and prepare

Unlucky

uncanny likeness
to a New England fall day
here on the coast above Santa Barbara
dark bottoms and cold mist
waves hit the shore hard
we feel it in our feet as we walk
cold and alone
though we walk side by side
this day is ours

1 Act / 1 Man

actor / stage
fiction / fact
the lighting is disruptive
especially when levels change
the surface of the curved passage
is evocative of metaphor
without taking the plunge

Unexplained Things

swamps behind the house
wet all summer
in winter ice forms a layer over air
I've wondered where the water has gone
there can be no evaporation
the ground below is frozen
but the ice marks a high point
perhaps summer's peak
a memory / an awakening
I walked along the edge of the swamp
one day when the insects were quiet
and birds gathered at the far end of the woods
there was no sound except for a slight cracking
not like leaves or trees bending in a light wind
but like something you'd hear
in the deep end of winter

On Paper

first the thinking comes a little harder
certain kinds require heavy lifting
of a sort one can be unused to
like leaves fallen on the ground
unused to the heavy touch
of the earth / used to instead
the touch of air almost all around

next the reluctance to strap it on
to approach the knot
pulled tight and soaked

finally just watching
and putting it down

Too Easy to Find

the perfect woman is not hard
to find / she is right over there
and there / walking away
in a too-tight skirt
or something that makes it all clear

my desire is useless
because there is nothing for
my decisions to do
so I sit and read
looking up at them
as they walk by
or sit down nearby

I love them all
but they
but they
but they have their own thoughts
on this

Odd Looking Prayer

too many people come
then go without comment
I'm muffled and muffling
wrapped like cardboard box
packing material all packed
up in a cardboard box
hunched in / crunched in
there is a cold wind
trying to blow
out all the light in the world
we should mourn
and quicken our step
with every candle
that flutters

Again Once More

let's celebrate the snow
falling in puffy clumps
and it's time to wonder what it's like where you are
this weather that you are used to
I've nowhere near as usual
you've concluded I've abandoned you
but the barren beech beside you beckons
and the river is biding its time
waiting for my return

why do we return
how do we know the right time
it's no mystery how we know
the right place

On Passing Birthdays

so many years ago
two days I remember in particular
dreams pop in on those days
even when I don't think about those days
don't reflect on the events that triggered the dreams
nights up in an old bed / springs not up
to it anymore and I slept in it years later
my fave books / an old (even then)
tube radio / an old (even then)
tv / I was afraid there / could hear them
argue sometimes / sometimes about me
the night wind on my face each summer
night / it seemed things would never end
end they did / everything will
oh my why does it have to end this way

At The Beach / Nothing Special

nothing is like it
no one knows the half of it
the convertibles are trying to raise the roof
but their trunks won't let go
and the rain is about to hit

we've camped on the coast
awaiting the storm
that will never come
I asked
you responded
but nothing was special
about just about
every aspect of a love
that was destined for nothing

now I'm proven right
right again
to no good purpose

Holcomb Once More

the expanse from morning edge to night
horrifies the observer used
to the narrow / the tall over the very wide
imagine you're standing next to a field
of wheat that as it disappears
toward the west signifies the end of civility
or of safety / for toward the east
death has visited in the form of 4 shotgun
blasts / creating a story where
once lives lived

Last To See Them

visitors to the house
are by invitation only
cars come partway down the lane
before hesitating
and then backing slowly out

visitors to the graves
need to find them

yes read that again
because the dead never rest
alone

Great / Plain

the dream of being in the midst
of the Great Plains with someone
strange and new / to be anonymous
while the stormdrains of fame
are still emptying

we stand beneath the cottonwoods
by a dry stream hoping for a pensive
moment as the sun empties its heat
into the lost air

in this dream our hands are fused
the heat of us is turning from green
like the aspens' leaves we cannot see
only her back is clear to me
and the curves in her hands

in my dream many wish
the know / only
two don't

Oh, Frank

swarms of frogs eat flies furiously
the dog's ears are folded forward
in a show of the opposite of rage
pines kneel in the light breeze effected by afternoon
we have taken to napping immediately
on waking / nothing like ultra sleeping
when the world is crazy so is its opposite

Valley Days

weather getting worse
coming down the river
heading for the cold ocean
trees have started their bending
acknowledgement / encouragement
tomorrow it will clear and warm
turn to sticking my shirt
to my back / the routine
will start afresh
weather getting better

Wearing Our Meaning

there are thoughts
whisking from mind to mind
on the wings of whispers
on the wrists of words
which reach to each other
tweaking the hints
that writing makes

Hadley Road

in the fields
by the edge of woods
along a road
sometimes lined with coins
stone walls making their way
into the past
the rain making small puddles
in the road / the road curving down and away
or down and into the distance
this was my place
my place / they sold it away
and now it's carved up
I wish for it once more
again

Seeing Ends

the secret's out
I've lost
the map of the end of my life is plain
to live alone / just two of us / writing the one last book
in a place with not many expenses
and a lingering disease / a painful death
not long / not yet / but not long

An Area Granite

I am going to do a little of slapdash economy
combined with cheap psychology to explain tardanza
using two principles that of course are not mios

people always leave everything for morning
unless they have something
to win or to lose in the short term with it
this is because as says to Richard Gabriel
“the evolution is the tendency to preserve
what it works and to change the accessory”

if there is an opportunity of short term business
then everything goes rolling but otherwise
already you can in vain be left the heart trying
that the partners put nor an area granite

Is Anything Unknown?

mediocre
words can't capture it
too lazy / too stupid
good enough to make people notice
not good enough to make it

in pain / alone
this is how it will end
that's how it was with her

Combat Burial

we dig a hole
kick him in
pile on the dirt
stack stones
tie a cross with horsehide
spike in over his head
from where you stand we're backlit
we mean as much as him

Fragrance Meets Torture on a Windy Day

two things on the tube

...a top White House official refused to rule
out the use of torture...

...quickly fills the room with fragrance...

how can we listen
who can listen

picture a child in a green dress
carrying an ornament to a green tree
rooted in a stand
and frosted with silver and glass
the thought of good smells
too good
too important
too appropriate

we forget lives need joy
and joy is simple
not torturous

Will Never

the elm lane
the house tremendous
in the post-green-sky dusk
a warm mid-afternoon
chilling to near freezing
when the car drives up
and they begin to wait
to their left the lights come on
go off
come on
go off

when hours later
they leave
the highways will never be the same
the hotels will never feature
hospitality
writers will always
look over their shoulders
in case the muse is carrying

After the Murders

when it was discovered
many people gathered
to clean up
how could they leave the mess
it was their Christian duty
to clean it up
and to forgive

Square

suspense itself
suspended from a tree
whose roots are variable
in their depth and discursion
filled with suspense
a radical thought

What's In Your Wallet?

when you purchase
the wrong brand
you are taking an unacceptable
risk with your capital

some people never take these risks
they collapse poetry instead

that's the 0-sum of it
something has to go
the money or the beauty

Unlikely Attitude

possible outcomes
resting like leaves or gulls
on the tops of trees
by a bay by the bye
fluttering after the outcome
is cashed in
full income
soon birds flap away

in my case
I check into a motel
set on a slant
just before night each day
the gull gather and raise their gullwings
saluting the leaves that have left
and I fall into a doze
to celebrate a dozen
autumns at the beach
on a slant

ill / ill will / I will

Likening

of the numerous things
things like our names
that are given to us
not earned

our faces distort
into our own

Unrandom

projecting me on you
leads to conclusions
wide and vague
like onions being sliced in a warm kitchen
tears flow down the drain
no one is flush with care
I knew it would come to this one day

the rush outdoors is unbent
let's finagle our way into the projection
and become like the wind in the leaves
in the blend of air and light

Toggled and Told

she can't get it
it's my job to help
looking at the options results
in pained expressions
and outward looking
I'm not able to single
out the passions
the logic of gypsies
is helping the lunatics
escape reason
my nose is active
designing a new automobile
using scratch and green toads
I'm lonely about the tree
cut down when I was four

Wintering Nearby

in the woods
we wonder
when will it snow
under the pines
right by the trunks
there is a cylinder of warmth
where the body against
the needles on the ground
make a tent of comfort
above the flakes the clouds
shelter us crouching here
a small fire of twigs between us
a stout stone in position to shield any wind
is just inside the ring of snow
that makes this deep winter
we are as in a cave
we are in the woods
wondering about the snow
wondering how to reach one hand
into another

Floating Under

there is a culvert
under the road
it is made of stone
because it was made a long time ago
looking through it
I see the water
or is it the future
flowing from the field
and passing into the woods as swamp

Leader

so small minded
from a good school and proud of his bad ideas
he has it all and talks about it
is he worth the effort to think about

Lament Under Determination

filled with faith
his head shaved and recently entered
his speech slowed but filled
with longing and distress
from too much determination
he smiles and asks me to pray
for him and the chemistry
killing the fastest growing
things in him / not
things like hope or belief
filled with life
he waits for the chance
to meet someone
he relishes who will fill him
after the world has been emptied
of him / and further filled by faith

On Going Home

does it sound trite
the call to prayer and attention to small
details of language
are there interpretations
or is it just the way it sounds

I'll never understand
there is a plainness to his message
like a cemetery with flat stones
that never conceal a view or intrude
where to understand a life
you must bow completely
the place is like a garden
he is like a garden
to understand him
bow all the way

Roads / Directions

the road past our house
leads east toward the sea
and west toward the nearest large town
then on toward the west of my dreams
Fuddlike interpretations aside
this is where they have been
the sun lowering / chipping off
windwaves in the low lake
offset from the hills by little slopes
looking westward I see little
from eyeglare

I recall the bikerides every day
to reinforce my listless love
and now I clip in / head downwind
south toward home
where my legs will unwind

Unhappy? What Do You Think?

by a favorite river
under the weeping tree
gangly / branches dipping
into the calming waves
my friend is by me
in the corner of my head
recessed behind sentiment
he is smiling to himself
and the stones at the bottom of the coursing
stream nearest us
soon he'll pass away
replaced by a song he liked
and me too / just the two
of us and a gangly tree
weeping for us both

Public Acts

the bridge
a long span to serve two banks
a lot of work for common good
who for greed would do this
who but those for whom greed
is their belief system
they will be comfortable
while I starve and read

All Over Yellow

night yellow lights struggling
across the waving-water river
mills felled by the banks
knee-bound and shards from wired windows
calling to the current divided
into streams some close som far
from shore

we're in the car / you're telling
me a story of your life which is no
story but the frame beneath a day
of your days

we say so infrequently
that your stories are all the same ones
because who remembers beginnings
any more

your voice against the window
the lights in squiggles just the usual
for them but puzzles for us
the exit is coming up and soon
I'll be getting out
you'll be moving on
and we'll be all over

Perfect Colors

the lights in the room
are programmed to cast
candle yellow light
on the cream walls and copied art
built for two
all the rooms I stay in
it's me just
me every time
the knock at the door
is no one I know
just that old black dog
back again for our restless
night together

You and Me

Accosted / Assured

assembled / assumed
a different brain operates
in the night after we wake
and can't resleep
the worst become sharp
the best distant and enraptured

like the constructed / imagined / mashed together
sets for the making of King Kong
the dulled brilliance of the downing sun
the distant hills
the enclosing woods
forsaken field
the timid stone wall
and you
form planes my thoughts may rest on
washed out to washed up
from sentiment to sentimentality
dream or waking / what's the diff?

such times the sheets bear witness
through wetness
of the rolling / roiling thinking / tossing
then the narcotic dictation of hormonal migration
to ... almost said normal
but I meant sleep or maybe daylight

Cheeselist

talleggio / italy / cow / washed rind
onetik brebis / spain / basque / goat and sheep
burrata / italy / buffalo milk

Roads and Beyond

certain traits of the gravel
beside the road compell
care in bicycling
the bicycle designed with people
in mind and people required
like planes or other industrial
contrivances / think of it this way
brains needed for motor control
bikes waver and gravel is ready
to cave in stability / make scrap of it
render unto the seizer what is messed up

well / the end of the road is a lint trap
but near the river and cool with bugs and mist
there is mud but beneath are ancient forests
and maybe-still/growing grass
how many glances to the side are needed
to make it here with all those graveled
sides beckoning

Micro Work

library work
scanning the past
the signal a rock might
send / more complex
than a simple line
the randomness of nothing
that matters

At Guck's

sensible parties
dancing in red light downstairs
you can never tell who will play the piano
to gain attention
but it's the holding that counts

Dancing Queen

first the boat founders
and then the waves become outlandish
standing on the prow
I can watch it all
it reminds me of the sock hop
and trying to dance slowly with some girls
they didn't all know how to say no
so some did
the water crashed over them
they were ships stuck on shore
dancing with me
because they couldn't get away

Homegoing

under the bridge
ice floes gather stuck
against piers and cracking up

downriver the pieces
are small and fill what seems
like rivers apexed at the piers
piercing the sheet of ice
moving downriver

after I've stood here
looking down
for half of winter
I can't figure the best way
off this bridge and down the road
where someone tells me
there are people I love

White Sky

there is this
beneath a high sun features
are too white hot
eyes cannot fall on pages
pavement is liquid black
tackling tires and bootsoles
lifting air lifting hope
we want it
the rest is waiting

Left Behind

he passed me
up a slight hill
his bike better than mine
his body more lithe
but my legs are stronger than his
through heavy squats and crazy lifting
I catch him / hang back just behind him
he doesn't realize I have matched him
birds alight on branches in the breeze
as we work past
as long as I ignore my pain
I keep up / but like anyone
who thinks of living
I let my legs talk back
and I begin to drop back
birds are up again
I can almost see him
while I move ahead
it's like this in everything

Down River

behind a fence
holes large as doorways
a slope up to a perch
where people sleep
in bags / water bottles within reach
backpacks of clothes
things / maybe books or photos
they eat what's left
drink to feel less
some of us are surprised
to learn they're human almost
like us

Mountain View

edge of woods
mist hangs there
turns the white of birches
snow is drifted over the trail
so we've come up here
found this warm place
in late spring not quite
above tree level
behind you I've reached around
feel the flickers of life
smell the perfume your brushed
into your hair
as we look forward
the grey band of rain
is just upon us

Weary of Roads

can you count the roads
the streets in a city
there are too many paved roads
to ever travel them all
imagine all the tires it would take
all the road novels and tapes of music
all the coffee spilled on tight turns
the consumption of gas and oil and chemicals
in general / to travel them all
each made for important reasons
by people with no time to waste

Cold Beneath the Mountain

not late afternoon
but leaden with clouds
in places rubbed rouge
by the painted face of disrepair
lead is the color of coldness
of distance and heavy relapses
this darkened sight reminds me
of the evenings we spent beneath
cheap sleeping bags / rectangular
filled with cotton
skin near skin / fire in the woodstove
just feet away
rouge is the color of about to happen
boundaries or is it borders
about to / just
it seems like kissing
but around the edges I feel the cold
outside / the cold
the hot stove / the heavy bags
this is not late afternoon

Caught Half In / Half Out

the door opened
I've stooped to grab the paper
but the road is showing
a provocation of dark hair
and disbelieving mouth and eyes—
she has seen me
I'm sure
I'd duck back in but
what for

behind me the air doesn't move much
an old place
an important place

Unconnected Stream

below the rock in the clearing
a small pool
bitter with fall leaves
it has no source
but begins a small stream
that picks up from no further sources
in 15 years I followed it downstream
only 100 yards
I imagine where it comes out near the road
as a torrent / rushing current
where in a side pool I'd fish
never catching anything
not making the connection

Invented Beauty

the piquant scent of piñón wood
in the clear night air
red / green chilis
posole / tamales
blue corn tortillas / bizcochitos
an enveloping garland of warmth extends
from faux-brick hearths in doublewides
to sculptured kiva fireplaces
in the corners of art galleries
in the ghetto of art galleries
during the farolito walk
/on that evening/
in the biting cold
cars verboten
electric street lights turned off
the pulse of modern life grows faint
while locals descend on Acequia Madre
we have no way to know
how many dogs are slinking through
the square in the pueblo
invented beauty
in single-digit temperatures

Rock and Trees

trees / how many have we cut
up on the hill and dragged back
it's easy to count / but counting
puts a limit on things / hides
the beauty of the indefinite
we're taught knowing is superior
a wide field and every blade is known
every small thing / that reminds me of the stone
in the center of the field / the day I hid
behind it while each of them called
out / I didn't call back
these stories are linked through them
they liked blue lights on the tree
in the window / just a deep blue
a hint of void / how many are there
is there a way to miss them

From You

wash it's far
may Crusty a got a.
give a fly a work but her
or when it keep may too may put
it's round a just not ran try.
do be cut see once ! clean it white
some came may found on.
before try are a too in would may.
Waffle iron ! then it Grunion
but bring try red it read , as on go , know on here a its but.
gave and them the upon
and Corn ! we be could but slow or.
Monkey + (anything)
see again or did try of be.
keep and Broccoli may him
a open , warm ! are in wash and too ! pretty
but once a Crusty but.
would some yes , for some
much a wash a after may wish the.

Linwood

let's talk about green
color of life when it pushes up
from ground wet from downpours
or morning mist / morning dew/
any sort of cliché
color of death when it covers the vault
things inside
so imagine a blue splotched sky
padded with white
backdropping the green blips
of tree branches in early spring

it's a place I've visited before
stood in this place before
much shorter than I am now
let's talk about repetition

Just Blind

remember the year we got
6' of snow in February
it was the year I couldn't see
/ just had my operation /
the second and I was not allowed
to see bright lights / but when
they brought me home
with my dark dark sunglasses on
I could see the snow piled high
with pathways dug deep into it
driveway / path from there to the front door
from there to the path from the road
to the side door / a path to the back
from the cellardoor to the drying lines
where in the summer my mother would hang clothes
every day / all this as I rushed from the car
to the garage door / not all of it visible
so I must have imagined some of it
my eyes could not see in bright light
I remember the snow had blue edges
still do

Story

the cascades
water picking up the bitterness
of stones in its way
—or is it the right word—
there is no continuous thing
that is water
water is a swarm
a friendly one
we know it by its mass behavior
and statistics / stuff working with stuff
there is no story that leads from letters or sounds
to stories and beyond

1973, When We Believed

anniversary / 32 years
it would have been
but one of us
couldn't make it beyond 10
many I love were alive then
love meant something different
my father played the organ poorly
but he played
my mother watched
all believed
but me

Snowed In By Meaning

some times
the lights are off
I sit in front
of a window
watching snow drop past
the yellow lights
of streetlights
watching the snow make black
pavement white
some times
a truck goes past
while I sit
watching and the snow
is made packed
in the shape of tires

after a while these
sharp tracks are softened
the yellow lights are softened
the snow falls harder
this hardness speeds the softening
meaning is back in vogue

Flyover Observer

up here
high but low
enough to see the stitches
of streetlights leading toward
a city where the crisscrossing
streets and slow-moving headlights
are highlighted by the contrasting
dark ribbon of a river running variously
through it / far away on a road
not marked by lights a car
is moving away from the city
if we could see it up close
we'd see that the car was slowing
then speeding up / hesitating
as if the urge to run away
were running away

Movie Not Missed

funny worry
first time for me
last?—unlikely
to be able to see something
before I die
suppose I didn't?
I would miss seeing it
because there would something
to do the missing
we are thus
so sentimental about
ourselves

Real Poet

poetry contests are rigged
I know dozens of poets
some of whom judge contests
I never won a thing
am I real?

Question of Tactics / The Moral of the Story

well consider the rain
again the chalice of the streetlamp
holds the tingling cold rain drops
headed like bulbs bursting
to the pavement to pool in puddles
it's an old story
older than streetlamps and pavement
this rain / it asks just one question
once for every drop that falls
we have heard it for so long
we don't hear it again
each drop that falls to the ground asks
are we saved

Rain Leaves

recall the rain
weather that makes more of a difference
than mood / we fall when rain falls
roads become beautiful
the car ads tell us so
sound is never as close
as when it is rain on the roof
or blowing against the windows
in the night after we are wakened
it becomes a miracle
whenever it feels like it
its makes the earth we tread upon
(that in its bulk keeps us grounded and not spaced)
mud / a short ways to what we know best
recall the leaves

Partial Installation

my response in all cases
the correct response may be
a dialog appears
expert install you will be
pace and fast internet access
read this or visit Gerben

Of Noise

time to write
dialog of broken half-words
half-spoken in a kitchen
of whole power

at the kitchen table
I read the book containing
a poem like this one
while she fries onions
and smokes

no one is ready for her outbursts
herself included
because they are a switch flipping

on New Year's we watch the Rose Parade
in snowy b&w and order
through a magazine
an 8mm movie of the floats
and watch it 3 months later
with the same enthusiasm

time to write of the trips
through the woods
of grandparents sleeping somewhere
in the house I can't recall
the smell of clothes
stored most months
in closets filled with mothballs

those times feel important still
even as part only of my faded
memory like a TV set with no antenna
striving to make a picture clear
from a source made only
of noise

Not a Gate of Hell But Its Doorknob

A Collection of Poems

Richard P. Gabriel

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Café Jitters in the Presence of Beauty

the prospect of espresso
makes our day
the girl who is parading her profile
around the café really
owns the place and makes her money
using the thick coffee / its rich flavors
her thick hair / the salt of her cheeks
more have crowded into the café
for the espresso and sweets
for the salt and thick dark hair
tangled in the open weave of her sweater

my friend drinks a macchiato
made by the salted woman
with a drizzle of cream on the top of an espresso
foamed into a brown sludge by a technique
that raises our hopes for sleepy sex
as we walk out she watches the backs of our legs
and our heavy backs / the red at the bases
of our necks / we feel her eyes on us
we believe and head for the strip club
where we feel our way along
like the blind / like the all-knowing

January 2, 2006

Hack Time

no more time
for simple poetry and snacks
the computer is misbehaving
and it hurts my teeth

Geometry of Making

across the street
the building is just geometry
a surrendered yellow wall
windows a shy blue
they are not uniform
the windows
it should be beauty
but there is nothing to see
but the beauty

watching this wall
after a morning
with you
it's hard to know
what to look forward to

January 4, 2006

Ceramic Panic

reminds me of the vase
curves / the loneliness
deep within the mouth
shininess that doesn't diminish
over time that consumes us

the last time I looked
the vase blushed but couldn't
turn away / I longed
for a vessel / found
you instead

Circles Everywhere

at the lake
seagulls swarm and circle
they are a cloud
above a promise
with effort I can see
them as separate birds
I'm sure they are acting
all the same way
but I know they
each believe it is special
moving in its own ellipse
in space / the air is rising
so they use their wings
only to tilt

this diversion
holds me until my breathing
turns slow
until I am not parched
until the bike
believes it's special
and asks me
go

January 6, 2006

Another Bad

death has not moved off
I've moved as fast as I can
I've changed everything
death is like glue
death is not faked out
I tire of moving fast
death never

Disappearance

when I look at pictures
of the young in poses
that suggest seduction or allure
it is into the past I gaze
the feelings are unstoppable
but weak and un compelling
with no way to go back
the work seems not worth
what it cost
with physicians hovering
the past plays like a movie
because the future is absent

Two Steps Back

work / hard work and little reward
it moves forward slowly and without
definitive progress / like walking
down a back road / heavy head wind
so strong it's one step forward
two steps back / I've turned my back
on many I realize / now that there are things
to look back on / I've been left behind
everyone takes a turn at being cruel
the road is named cruelty
we all take the same road

Legend Attained

Harry played like no one I'd ever heard
after a blizzard he played with the garage
doors open and knocked loose
icicles up and down
the street / Harry played that day
like Jimi and decided I think
to get a Winter home
in a town with the same name
he lived this way
humorously for 20 years
Groveland in the Summer
Groveland in the Winter
everyone in his band is dead
the riffs / the licks
nothing has held together

Digital Overview

thrill of technical advancement
makes the memory nothing
or not much / + the efforts
of people etc who need to type it all in
no one can understand
no one is brave who does this
a random fool or two
if there were any indication
the past would stop cold
the favorites wouldn't know it
from this machine
I see all

The Burmese Ruby

sometimes a painting's
meaning is just its dollar figure
we admire it more because
not one of them is the same

Day Bad

every little
thing goes
wrong and repairs
need to be made
on and on
on and on

Blue Tent / Rubble

as time passes
the impossible becomes
possible and like a tide
edging through the day
the possible becomes implausible
and more once more
by the tracks a pile of rubble
resolves to a blue ruck-made tent
old age / no home
it all seems impossible
but the blue tent looks warm
as he sits and reads

Your Dust

better to crouch
talking in the dirt poking
at rocks with sticks
still using horses / no machines
right and wrong reduced from living color
to old movies / from somewhere
beyond the next rise the sound
of cattle started up and soon
dust kicked up over the rise
and settled onto our coffee mugs
we placed them on the ground
in the dirt / our faces speak
in wrinkles only / our words
are gullies / deep worn ones
shallow wide ones / you job
is to fill in the blanks / hint
you're making the sound
that combines to hooves on rocks
and dirt over the rise and down
in the gully

Visco Fuse

black powder wrapped in cloth
and waterproofed
so it will burn under all conditions
explosions are ends
or is the ringing
and smoke rising and
the debris from nearby things
falling as if tears from the sky
is the end and the explosion near the end
the celebration

Fuse for Consumers

Overheard Thoughts

above Munich once more
this time dead in winter at sundown
snow-covered hills covered with snow fog
though dark enough below for lights
few lights are on as people in their farmhouses
and townhouses admire the late twilight light
small stands of forest darken the snow lightened fields
and from one a belch of smoke rises
/ remind me Celan /
and blends into the fogs scattered about
some cars hug almost miraculously
the darkened roads lined with twiggy trees
I'm almost there again
and thoughts of you and your heels kicking
your hem ahead of me coat my eyes
fill my sleep-filled head
the dead of winter / here once more

On Homeward

so tonight as rain turned to snow turned to...
I found what we stepped on instructive
and the shapes of shoes and pants above them
/ the work heels do to hems and the looks
of eager desperation on faces facing the north wind
or was it that the street faced north
/ dim spectral light of a northern city
during dark when thoughts turn
to a heavy meal and a book too long
to ever finish

under an overhang I wait
or do I watch
the women pass by
give me despair for the ugliness
they call love

In the (Daylight)

now your face
what would I have bought
were it you
as you say
there is not enough daylight
to wake up properly
and even though
you are as happy
as you ever could be
who says love and beauty
are the same thing
it's all the same

Night of Held Hands

I noticed outside
in cold dark in Munich
in front of the restaurant
waiting for Jens
that old wives around here
wear their hair long and colored
liked lionesses in hiding
and they hold the hands
of their husbands like schoolgirls
outdoing their parents
on the coldest of nights

the doors close around me
the night sky is black while
the moon makes it way through
the valleys of streets

along the way
the statues of lions
startle with color
and shapes made like men

above the sky's still / black

Farewell At Last

time to leave
and the sun shines
what once was titillation
is now hung out and dried up
the romance of overcast evenings
and snow like afterthoughts
has framed my mood as I plan
my trip away
the plane will find the sky
a burden and heavy
it will be dark all through the journey
I will arrive in the dark
and will remain there

Dante Said It First

they speak to me now
opening up in torrents
spilling themselves like sunlight
for I am the dark now
the night
the one as dead
because speaking with the dead
leaves only secrets behind

Metaphor Police

feeling our way along
the edge of the lake
where we once found a place
to stop and enjoy each other
we never find time to stop
anymore / and nothing about today
is going to change things

but now we watch the city
from a high point
with time compressed
so that the highways are white streaks
and red streaks like retreats

we scope each other with binocs
sometimes with prisms to turn us
upside down so our love remains fresh
like the edge of the lake
like an enormous error
near the end of a long
and cherished computation

A Tall Cold One

many secrets on the street
which is the main axis
of the old city
and you find your secrets
hidden in the lions
or other marks of antiquity
you are wrapped as always
in the warmest you have
but the cold is hovering
by your boundaries

the train station sneaks up on us
and we check which track
provides the most romance
shall we glide to Berlin
speed to Paris

but the cold gets to the tracks
they turn ice-like and the trains
remain in place all night
while we head for a warm place
a place with fire
a place where we can sit
opposite each other and dream

Shades

which version would you like
the one / let's talk about some other
more important thing first
like the shade of green
on a long suffering bridge
think about that green
—which you could do
if you could guess which
bridge I mean—
and then the sad blue behind
and ruffling green shades in the trees
the intersecting deep ripples
in the direction confused river
do you like the shade / with
the audience in tears
or the one with the barrels of trash
overflowing and a small fire
the hopeless cook over

which version /
do you like them

Diver

almond topped
building and dumpsters
filled and refilled
and emptied by those
whose fortunes are subsumed
by the lesser few
and suspects

what they find in the dumpster
is the hope taken and dumped

Paris Ride

bike off the hook
down the stairs and out
onto the streets
some cobbled still
riding in the cold
the air is damp
almost random icicles
there is the impossible
this river running counter
in the concrete ravine
the buildings stonelike and the people in them
or there is the possible
that might (also)
be true

Morning Times Along

by the tracks
trains like old dreams
repeating their worn up
paths and we toss the last
carrot into the cabbagey soup
with the shank bone
from a butcher we used to buy from
before the / well before
built of whatever
warmth is touchy since / well since
in the mornings we face the sun
as it comes up and pray until
the train comes up the slight
rise and bellows up a storm
and we hug to show love
share heat / well heat

Nowhere

now the roadways
supports are rusted
in bubbles over and through
the green paint / bricks
with their corners chipped off
or worn away / color was once
the bright spot in buildings
the speckled red of bricks
back when my dad was a kid
and the paint was green
roadways and bridges new
in the time it took for him
to grow out of that city
the rust had started
at least one brick had its corner chipped

through all of this decay
he grew to forget
where his dad was buried
/ under the hot sun
among the faithful
with a child of no one
beside him
the forgotten I suppose
the rust away
the green paint unable to hold the memories
together / let us pray
that the roads will never sink
under the earth
as they both now have
and I soon will

Sidewalk Scene Impression

the view down the street
is cluttered / at the end of the street
two trolleys pass as opposites
people wade along the sidewalks
and cross without direction
cars go and stop / reverse to park and gawk
overhead wires and lines dissect
the early twilight sky
last night it snowed and tonight
the slush is black
we could find lovers here
perhaps in the darkened windows
half reflection and half cheap goods

Label & Right

they've saturated the colors
to compensate for the plot
which holds little
streets don't mean much
being conduits of past and time
we have discovered our role
helper / helper / helper
passed on at least twice
simple / but the sense is made

Research / er

clues stay hidden
revelations come in small pieces
my dreams are desperate for lips
and smells / besides this the working
is hard and part of my bold reform agenda
what I learn slows me down
and stop signs grow redder
now I have an address
so I can feel what is felt there

Undertangled

some days the technical
details grow dim and the proofs
seem further off like the Titanic
veering off from shore
such a ship was packed with technology
and good ideas bordering on beautiful
design / but all of it was just scrap
and oily connections
in the end what love may have been on board
became the rust of a memory
or a story or the bottom

Wandering Through Town and Finding My Seat

in a town with nothing
the hand me downs behave
like gold and sink at the first
sign of water

I'm hungry for orphans
of taste / nuggets free
of mistakes
the current is hot to make it down
to the sea

these streets meant
something but everywhere
I walk now they are filled
with punks who know little
know all / I search for clues
and find the breath of stories
like a wind that comes and goes
in indecision and out of a mind

I've sat there all day
waiting for a word
there is no place
for a word to come from

Rambling Through the Farm

faithful to suspense
running like chickens
in search of a warm coop
whitewashed and stripped
of the nesting places
and feeding stations
the abandoned coop
makes a smelly
clubhouse once shovelled out
surrounded by tall and deep green grass
paths from barn to trough to the milkhouse
faithful to suspense I allow
my memories to gather
like a smell that drops
into a streambed
and washes away
is written down

Unbalanced Path

under a log
buried in a hole
sealed in a can
wrapped in plastic
in an envelope
folded 3 times
the story I've written
and read only once
to a handful of people
who dreamt only of sadness
and not this
no not this

Roadsides

these memorials wait
by the side of the road
for the trucks pass by
for the cars to go around the bend
or over the next hill
they look handbuilt
but I read somewhere you can buy
the crosses on the Net
the memorials wait
to become memories
to hold the important facts
while the cars and trucks
and bicycles and walkers
are out of sight
and the facts that bubble up
when the car stops and the women weep
their legs dangling from the passenger sides
of the car depend / depend
on just what you imagine
they depend on

Release 1.1

technology is itching to inch
up the price until consumers cry uncle
but consumers sometimes
think and that's what the ceos
can't abide for the fish are not
to be allowed to swim upstream

the foolish believe that harshness
has been moderated but here are people
to teach a real lesson

Three Crossings

one of two stories
from a village with thatched roofs
and mud streets
smelling of excretions and murky smoke
hot train ride in seatless cars
and a boat ride below deck
bottom bunk
everything roped to a wrist
from a city of marble and slate
cobbled streets but modest nonetheless
smelling of pastries and imported turkish coffee
long ride in second class
and a ride on a sister of Titanic
narrow bed
and a modest stateroom
it's one of these
or both at the same time

Science Limpes to the Finish Line

the theory is unsound
but the applications too important
to ignore so the theory is placed
on life support with the remark
that the way the world is
is the way it must be

Riding the Sunset

what do we face
when the birds fly off
and the clouds cover the sun
on it's way down as cold
settles in / the tvs coming on
and a thunderclap in the next county
rumbles up the street
the covers cause the rash
that soap can't quench
the roof is getting ready to leak
but only the winter knows it
what do we face
when our faces face down

Professionalism in the End

one day they will tell you
in syrupy phrases and with frank
smiles that you have no options
but how much pain you
wish withheld in furtherance
of your life goals
one more thing to check off
in your list of accomplishments
that you are not ready
is ungrammatical to them
because they need their forms
checked off and signed
and their official demeanors
and youthful rush
helps push the pens across the page
and in exchange they promise
to not revive you if you have
a heart dead beat

Inconceivable Reluctance

death is the puzzle of how
things worked
when you pick up after
there are many things missing
that cannot have been
how how how
well there must be paths that resolve
into patterns that make puzzles nothing
death makes it work

No_Op 1

like furrows deep
in the brow ideas can leave
behind harrowing depths
one wonders what relations
exist between this and reverb

February 13, 2006

Birdless Haiku

the world simply
waits to get everything
coming to it

A Dog's Chances

"Look at the Labrador,"
said Buzz—Buzz shorthaired with a strong,
bullish build and a stoic presence,
is the type of dog
that the country will come to know—'s owner.
"It looks like the type of dog
that would be in a children's book
with the word 'dog' under it.
It's your basic dog.
And I think that hurts
its chances.

Recursive

there are certainly questions
one could ask about design
like do you need a person
or could a designed thing
design

Notes After a Found Poem

outside people are running
they are people I guess
because the rain has drenched
my vision and so the day
has halted its progress toward
revelation and longing
clouds have obscured me
from the watchful eyes
and despair of people

Short Take 1

some currents are loaded
and hint at the implications
in the clouds
the relation is the refraction
of the surface
a reflection of the difference
between up and lost

Lasting Manual

see the dead
review their lives
their breathing is not regular
and not really desired
they say their bodies are getting ready
but it is just babbling to make
the left behind ready
by thinking there is a reason
for all this
but it's just the requirement of death
for life that makes
the world go 'round

What's There's What's Not There

the desert waits
we believe it's flat
but it undulates
waves at sunrises / sunsets
heat / flowers / dry dust
roadside memorials
abandoned planes
wind against the car
pushing to the higher plains
crossing streams green
from runoff and accumulated life
the desert waits
for more to leave

Watch / Wait

death is on my mind
what to talk about when the near
to death are nearby
visitors come and the story
of how he's near
death is repeated as he sleeps
we wait while the breathing
grows more coarse
we wet his open mouth
he sometimes half stares
we push the buttons
on the microwave to make tea
because we stay up
waiting

Another Last Day

suddenly awake
nothing but
dark / silence
cries / wake up wake up
it's not fair
wake up just one more time
but the half stare widened
breathing damped
only one breath was left
and that one gone

we pretend to imagine
the store of breaths allocated
at the start and watch them drain
(don't run / don't run them down)
but after a time we don't notice
that the pile grows smaller
and are surprised when it ends

daddy I love you so very very much
handled / transferred
wrapped / strapped
covered & wheeled out

[[he was afraid to die I think since
he talked always of living to 100
even when the realistic possibility
disappeared—his liver was nearly
gone / he was afraid his wife
wouldn't know how to help him if
he could not breathe and asked for
a stranger to come and spend the
night / we had atropine and mor-
phine to reduce the urge to
struggle to breathe / he thought we
were helping him live but we were
doing something else / we knew his
store was running out though he
calculated decades more / we knew
while he hoped / I hope never to
face this again—to know what
someone I love doesn't/cannot/
will not / he will miss forever the
light on newly budded trees / he
will never compliment the person
treating for her good cooking / he
will never again order a cup of mud
/ he will never again see the beauty
of home / we loved him]]

To the *n*

again we designed
a marker that means little
to most but all to some
we did it using our expertise
operating with not much thought
but the result was good
and within bounds
and our expertise did the job

why did it go so fast
some things are exponential

Almost

sitting right where he died
nothing occurs to me what
to write / but in the next room
some effort is being made
to keep living

some suppose we should
mope and cry / maybe that's
the right way / maybe ours
is / the point is
to make it from day n
to $n+1$

something different is bound
to happen / God has told us this
in a book written by men (we all
suppose) but exaggeration
is all around

he wasn't able to spell
all the words he needed to write
and he like to find money
on the ground and at the gambling
table / he routinely did
so don't laugh or doubt
he had luck in all things

As Like

snow falling like traces
of models wiggling
for the cameras
things like this
demonstrate the antistructure
of post rationalism or
that things made the same way
(randomness and hopeful combination)
behave as likes
even painters knew this
though the audience believes in
drawing

back to the snow
it blankets the ground
looking like a warm fluffy blanket
when it's probably freezing to death
whatever is beneath it

Fate Likes Us

water under the bridge
nothing like the million tomorrows
our fate is like his
living requires it
statistics cannot be trumped
his gambles but one
paid off

Design Flame

kids walking solemnly
smiling while looking to the side
at friends / wonder what wonders
our lives tap into / designed for hope
to root / one day fear will take
each of us / we all take part
in the ceremony of extinguishing
the flame

Hijacking

cousin william
hear his tale
dad would beat
his wife near death
william 12 one day
could stand it no more
when one day dad
beat her once more
william snuck to the barn
and grabbed a hoe
caved his head in from the back
after saving his mom
william was put in a cage
in jail in the center of the room
where all could see and laugh

once out he drank
went nuts
hoped for a miracle
will die alone

My Wish

who came up
with the idea
to make health care a business
those people deserve
to become very ill

Dark And

rain and its depromise
it appears like water falling
from the sky
such an odd idea and full of mistakes
things unhinge and condensation
piles onto inside windows
hate is like tonight

Right Now Design

what is design but the progress
of mankind

how is it that devices exist
no one has built

like pieces of metal
coiled into spirals
sitting on the ground

who loves the dark blue
of cities photographed at night
from above

what is design but the shame
of mankind or eyes that kill

we wander through spaces
made of minds and things that die

savor design even
when it's not made

Insubstantial Correlative

unlikely conclusion
based on specialized guesses
moderated by unlikely distributions
reasoning this way makes something
special of our ideas instead
of the things themselves

Right Ahead

the latest fad
is the latest
fads figure into the thrill of the night hour
don't be nervous
but be edgy and ready
think about the color of your hair
and make your eyes match by various
squinting

there is no doubt in anyone's mind
that doubt is everywhere
in every mind
such strength of belief
is the latest fad

March 5, 2006

Sound of Poetry

sure it's easy
just type in words
as I write this I hear
clicks whose rhythm
mimics what I see

Silent Ticking

no one wants to weep
when those who doesn't know
how to love die

we don't care who
knows how to love
when we are so beautiful
that we don't need to smile

on the border
things get desperate
when the sun goes out

the ones who cannot love
can weep or look more serious
for a minute
and then what

The Red Stripe

he asks the question
that his heart denies
with the building
with the red stripe up it behind
he needs the answer
to ease the future
into the present
or else the red stripe
will widen like the sun across the horizon
like the bleeding that is the end of the day
like the pathway few feet return from

the craft of his eyes
are to look just off
to every important side
and thereby sweep
the meaning of the world
into his hungering
memory

A Hank of Pork Casings

nothing makes more sense
than the feeling one has
when the last feeling
has stopped
when the sunsets don't matter
when the first thing to happen
is as likely as the extra things that didn't
let's translate our lives
to the language of last doors
and pass it along to a bucket
of punctuation for the best songs
to come out like poetry sausages

Hazing

outside
yellow lights
lined up and shimmering
near ones sing with a slow vibrato
far ones just listen as the wind
winds through them
everything is lonely

Little Flanges

imagine the thunder
arriving from just one direction
imagine the lightning
hitting the ground from every direction
this is the imagination
picking the spaces between
and passing the meeting
places which are the words
on the backs of sent
postcards

When We're Young

she slims on
her jeans
and like they all do
she wags while they
become on
in this case
it's flowers

when I walk in
it's a big rounded
W or should I say
UU

Changing the World

shall we endeavor
to inspire geeks
and change the world
what is comprehensible
what's further ahead
this is our job
meanwhile we are just watching
as people make things up
so we find that
art sparks engineering
and makes science

Above & High Enough

so the lightning drops down
curtains pulled down quick
but snapping back just as

viewed from above it's the homelights
that catch my eye in between what must be
thumps hitting the ground

sometimes the deep shades
piled up about the houses
where fathers surely are reading
to their daughters or else
the dishes are gathering solidified grease

soon we've passed over and among the dots
the river is apparent

we are ready to land
to stick to the earth
yet again

Two Words / Bookends

tired
his melancholy is beyond mine
but he is not real
or only as real as a miracle
he pushes them away
watches what he craves
after he's pushed them
tonight it's about passion
and its sidekick
despair

March 15, 2006

San Antonio Dreamin'

being a little stupid
makes you smarter
just ask someone
who doesn't know

Anger and Burial

update your account
be on top
of things / say your prayers
close the glass door to be safe
no one is willing to wait
even with all the time
the world is willing
to part with

A Loneliness

she bends to kiss
eyelashes tangle
what they look at makes
summer lonely
but one of them pulls away
it's not the one you think
watch as the other
walks away

Gravel Roads Through Trees

many of the days
are tired like this one
rain is typical
longing is typical
more is bound to us
our intersections are just little
stretches of time
when the unbearable
turn their backs
when the hungry for color
step like whores down hallways
and past doorways
the end of times appears
and the glass doorways are screwed shut
and special cards are taped
thereupon

Without the Rest

forge ahead
with paint the glow of pure
intellect / place the gown
on the past eruption
link the leavened
pink-sided walls
to the unfolding designs
and ligaments
we are nowhere if not
unafraid of the tender
pretensions and pretenders
and pretzels of loud
lifting and settling
the narrative of peculiar
time is an anvil

Aleatory I

I find some awful antics
in your unlawful semantics

the candle burns its oil
and forms a smudge
as potent as your rationality

the trip begins today
in heavy rain and hearts

Every 4 Words

on the train the girl answered
in a bedroom voice
in a musical language with spits
every 4 words
she babytalked and chattered like a mocking
bird / behind her castle after castle
run down / hotelish / palatial
hunkered to the cliffside
overseeing the Rhine
with standing waves 7' high
and flatboats urging upriver

but with the clouds sunk
like the girl's lids
and the window caked and streaked
it was all a smudge
even the girl
her dark hair dripping
on the jewelry in her ears
and the cell phone buried
there like the last thing she said

Break Sticks

huge he
is all around her
bent over / she's bent
back / he lunges
her head is driven
back / his leather
coat is black
as night encompassing our street
we pass and she her
hair drawn to the earth

the bus waits
passengers wait
we stop / turn / &
wait / when will he stop
is what we cannot say
kissing goodbye
in this smudged' &
tender mess

Words Mean More Than You

penalty box

unanimously Polaroid

an unjust teakettle

a shotgun of daydream

bridal mutable truckload is disavowal

credibility validity as blueprint geology

airwaves in a (sic) rash

stripped to the handcuffs

an almanac unspecified this

a fragile arisen weightlifter

roulette lava ointment as initiate

predisposed power outage

spearmint gallows

sharply imperceptible

terrified as an inward rubber-stamp

she was a marshy shy well-advised shut-in

Filtered

below the city
is lifting its lights
but from here nothing
looks to be moving
what are these lights
what if there were gone
even in the distance
they don't waver
that is remoteness
creeping up on me
and making me ready
to jump

Goethe Haus

house of a wealthy poet
the room where he wrote
above the street near the edge of town
with a pump they avoided
waiting for water
the floors creak and crack
his talent for drawing
surprises

I find it feels not
like as poet's house
nor could I feel him writing there
one can only imagine
what he couldn't imagine
in this house

Draining

pain is lively
it starts before exhaustion
it ends with breath
for now let's sit
and measure out breaths

Truth or Despair?

all is a lack
it's the talent's missing
look at it this way
it's crumby

Practice

I lay under the blanket
unable to turn her way
from tired and ill
she stroked my shoulder
and said hope
you feel better
soon Dad
later I thought
this was practice
for when she would say
goodbye

Time in This Story

imagine the wings of listlessness
hammering space into timelessness
when the time comes
the songs will all slow down
until they no longer fit
in the imagination

tell me the story
when I ask
when it's my turn

Dream Recurrent

her beauty is like the cherry sunset
hazed over in white clouds
like a cream and honey warmed drink
she is standing at the edge of the field
by the stonewall / standing before it
with the broken clouded sun going down
behind her / here where no one is living
with ambition / but she turns to me
and her look unbrightens and warms
the dream of perfect beauty and wheat fields growing
beyond dormancy with her / in the background
the guitar is strumming and a pretty voice
calls out and shes back again to face the fading
light and leaving me to wonder after her

Dream Recurred

he turns and the sun flares
her hair and in the late day heat
the motes are dense behind her
she would reach out were time
not an issue / she instead drops her head
and returns to the sun and declares it
hers

Life Events

he drove to the hospital
he never drove away

later after it was over
I drove his car home

Profession of Hate

we pray and the links
are unreal / satan has caught
the man of professed faith
he still spouts / we think of the whale
we know his fate
it makes us pray more
for he knows nothing of irony

False Call

looking in the voice
for true to burp out
for the back plots to add up
nothing is all in the way
we heard the familiar ring ring
all night / our worry is like
a voice dropped to a growl
and painted behind by pink

Old Bridges Taunt Fresh Water

in the end the river
is nothing more than a figure
or a metaphor
or the basis of every memory

the river is water
gathered because it feels low
bridges built across play favorites
tease crossers with liquid anguish

where the towns are older
the need to be close to rivers
is rooted deeper
the bridges mean more
but the water is just as young

I Read About This Somewhere

the experiment was proposed
injections / observations under peculiar light
shipping people to cities they
don't favor / carefully placed people
behind buses and signs
watching while the shipped
stare and sweat / scan maps
like glow worms / wonder whether
they changed enough
money for a taxi

a team has drums
is banging them as they descend
to the lower tracks
they say chocolate
is good here

the experiment goes on
carefully placed people
watching behind buses and signs
observe the subject regard
the statue of the fat nymph
floating in air on a base
on the walk by the river
flourishing from purposes upstream
engaged in a flowing process

the experiment that was proposed
ended when the expresso
met the chocolate
we considered these injections
for the purpose of the experiment
so that we could fly home
before the fear foreign taxis
could flourish in our throats

Logic in its Place

skeptical / arrogant
authority must be right
authority works only when it is right
therefore it is always right

the stories we love to hear are
the authorities are right
they have made them pay
therefore we are safe

the authorities are wrong
they have been humiliated in their arrogance
therefore we are safe

Unlike the Past

the bend in the river
tearing away at the banks
or the cool green leaves shading
the water / cooling it
across the river girls gathered
once / turned soon to contagion

the bridge we can see from here
isn't an escape route
but is instead emptying
of love from the hearts cooled
off and chaperoned

instead I am alone
where lovers were presumed
to walk hand in hand in red autumn
so much unexpectedly delivered
by the bend in the river

Short Proclamation

too many lights
have switched on
and guard the nights
alone in their conviction
that darkness is the light
of understatement

they flicker
their slight influence
is the singular infatuation

I'll nod off until they fade
into the dawn if there
be one tomorrow

A Few Things

one of the ways
from the desert into the city
is an old river bed
that sometimes still
fills with grass & weeds
walking along it
I find the dry heat
filling me with hope
and understanding
not to mention
the nostalgia

April 10, 2006

Taking It Away

talk to me
tell me to persevere
tell me quitting
is the pleasurable way
undeniably a quitter

End of a Long Storm

pick some colors
they go with your eyes
pick some others
they go with you
birds flap against
the window
their thoughts seem to fly away
the phone rings while the rain
spells a deep chill
instead of love
we have alone

Looking Back & Down

zooming in on the old farm
photos from satellites
when I was growing up there
nothing like this seemed
remotely possible

growing up there
nothing seemed
remotely possible

Figure It This Way

well it's the rain I suppose
that's buried the land
and flattened back the ears
or leaves you might call them

toward evening the sun turns
it all green
but little squirts the light darkens
but grows quirky each notch
the colors are lightened
until dark overtakes them

in the dark the wet returns
a blanket of despair it seems
wrapped in doubt
and the future

Twelve Truths

quit quit quit
work work work
do it do it do it

Meta Time

fast / slow
the days move as they do
uncritical / unaware
of how it affects the future
or past

I'm impressed that time
is not here but up a level
not part of our reality
but the one that dreams
of us

Is Your World Like This?

I knocked on her door
end of the elm lane
moon up and flooding
my mind / she came
to the door and was looking
up while I was looking
to the West where somewhere
the land wasn't flat
where something else
but wheat was growing
where I could be someone
and not no one / where her
love would seem like warmed gloves
on a cold night / a cold night
like that night when I drove her
to the tank where we stopped
under the tree for hours
and the world that was not
flat was her

Dagger as in Footnote

home alone
fear because of the darkness
because of the trees that become a forest
from that darkness
lights are on everywhere
I've carried the knife
into my room and locked
every door between me
and the world

do you think this is metaphorical
do you think this is a memory of childhood
watch out / I have the knife

Arts of Distortion

the strings are bent
tubes are involved in making
more of this than appears
to listening ears
but the sound is not perfect
there is the wavering
scratch of metal strings
on grooved frets
these distortions
are the music / the art

Roadside Station at the Crossroads

places in the desert
a road built for an old
reason / the reason
is to connect one no
place to another no
place / but right here
a careful cross
a heart carved
with love steaming off
with dates and a baby's name
held up by stones around its base
a reliquary where the relics
are twisted chrome and shattered
taillights of the car that killed her
this would be sad except the hot
sun won't let it be / the sun insists
it is only the truth

One

so many songs to hear
which will be the last one
will I hear it standing by the cold
window trading the hot air
above for the cold below
the cold outside seeping
through

where will I be
when the song starts
when it ends
will I be sad
will the song

someone will choose
the music for later
will decide what to read
or say / I hope every
step means something
to each person
that it means something
different to each

BlueGlass

we learn more
from what is found by the sides
of roads than from all the philosophy
texts on the big wall of serious books
in the library you know I'm
talking about

a blueglass bottle
can uncover the origins
of love / we look through
the glass / the world changes
when we lower the glass
and look again / is all
normal or is normal
now blue

in my car
the radio on
there is music on top of the static
heat is rising from the brown
parts of the scene
little things are moving
spastically from bits of green
to others

I'll stay here
study this a while
the blue bottle
spilled of love

Trivial Fences

stones piled up
debris from a year of clearing
why not use them
to mark the boundary
to keep in cows
to keep out neighbors
who feel inclined
called walls
they're neatened
debris fields

A Perfect Day

to find one
to walk in golden air
filled with dust and motes
a perfect day
to find her
to walk with her
the duration of perfection
is limited
at least a day
not much more
somewhere there must be deep
warmth / bright light
dark enough to swallow
doubt and regret

I've found it
more than once
fewer than enough

April 24, 2006

Norway Ahead

another trip
too many stops
too much flying
can I last long
this way

Schiphol Airport

international but dull beyond
meager expression
great writers can't see beyond
the metal cages
red green yellow
white signs
beneath the sign that energetically relates
Gates **D**59-87 / + airplane / + arrow to the right

the delightful female announcer
in Dutch
sounds like she has just swallowed
bad Dutch
pancakes / or perhaps she is part dog

I need to find some food before my flight
north to Norway
and just 2 hours to do it in
it's so international here
perhaps I should find some pancakes

((((it is so tempting to make fun of the name)))

Dinner Near Downs

born with mistakes
they are happy and wide eyed
they walk cautiously because
things are wrong
their dinner is inside the other room
sharing the hall with ours
but we are drinking and talking tech

they dribble out to visit the toilettes
they stare at us
quite expertly
because it's us who're odd
they go past with a confident step

one though has latched onto
a group of us talking
we are so inward
we notice him staring
quite expertly at us
tilting his head at the nonspeech
he hears / the not a stitch of sense
in our voices
the static music of our unuplifted speaking
he cannot smile
because nothing about us is funny
his face lifts up with pity
he hopes the best for us
that our dinner has as many
treats as his

We Wonder

house of magnets
up the street from the salvaged
mine / we wonder
is it explosive
causation pulled back to the sun
which sets warily behind
gendered pink
the statues know
they're low on light
and stony lipped

Blues by the Fjord

blues can be sung only
in one language
slack / slack back
beat / off key at key
points / it needs a sloppy
language / and a drawn out
pattern / sleepy and lazy
under the influence of hot humid
bad luck

they sing it everywhere
like this

Final Move

I expected more
pure beauties / instead
more heaviness
and unlightened features

the day grew warm
then hot under unblocked
skies / the street signs
rang out bad spelling
some men held their women
sexually by the fjord

we got cold drinks
and watched boats and birds
balloons and listened
to the trance band sing
like girls and its echoes
echo the gruff clatter of a basement
band around the corner by the church

we walked the boundaries
of the city and still had enough
time for a nap before dinner

Schiphol of Fools

nothing is worth more
than rest and the anxiety
of boredom

when the plane bounces onto the runway
rest becomes visions of wrecks

above my head the twisted pipe
filled with power laughs
a dozen ha/s
and half that hi/s

this airport was designed
by children for adults
the result is boredom
because quick creation
soon gels

Lament for Gone

nothing is like the lament
of lost questions
sitting in the kitchen drinking soured
coffee / picking up bits
of cake and squishing them
into my mouth
questions float to the top
of the mind before
drifting down into the pool
of dreams

now there is no
one to ask
just a book to write
that cannot be fact
cannot be fiction

James Schiller

we played and sang in '68
and then again in '96
some ways nothing has changed
the singing is fakey falsetto
the guitar overwrought
in others the years paint
a picture of talents grown
fuller but childish
or is it childlike
of maybe chilling
years make nothing
something / even when evening
erases the differences

Last Rights

everything breaks
the code / the head
I've come too close
too many
times and this time feels like
the last time
as in final not most
recent / it starts
with fatigue
then it proceeds to
I've over done it

Custom Hog Revolt

we don't want
to hear our machines
cars have perfect mufflers
motorcycles whisper
with spandex execs on them
noise canceling headgear
to eliminate the world
one sense at a time

Over Tire

that's the problem
with n
sometimes it's small
sometimes large
but it's always some
number like the number
of loves that pass by
on the way away

Coursing Over

in the air
towns sliding by
lights defining the edges to the feast
never have those people
been so involved
in the weather

too many refuse
to live
in the shadows of the mountains
threatening the peace
with their undue temperaments

so the music plays
and goes on to repeat

In The Old Part

train goes by
down by the river
many streets over
but the sound of its horn
follows streets and alleyways
ends up in this room
another hotel I will never remember
except for these words
written without the smallest hint
of the meaning of poetry

Seven Pounds of Science

colors can be altered
in the midst of ideas
in the world their
status is unfettered
you would think
something this objective
would be objective

In a Bogart Movie

he looked in lighted
windows while driving
by I'm sure in the late
evening back from a play
or symphony through the middle
of a congested town
and by those lights women wept
while reading of love
in a town from a movie
starring a male star

such is power of a story
told in small words
in black and white

Fool's Rush Over

there were paths
words crossed
tired beyond redemption
all seems important now
the path is right

Par Excellence

my dream
par excellence
was to die of fear
I never envied like you
the dove that had flown
leaving to mark its passage
with a few white feathers

wearing feathers promotes
the beauty of a woman
by magic / arcane /
associated with psychic abilities
weaving and women

there were three thousand other beauties
in the women's palace
his kingfisher-feather covers were cold
for who was to be with him

flutes are sacred and hidden
any woman who approaches deserves death
thus the bat got the white feather of the dove
and the green one got the scene on Dongting Lake
made entirely of kingfisher feathers

after this there are sculptures of characters
a dream of red

Got It

why not three endings
instead of one
stories have one
life has three
apply this to your life
you graduated from high school
having learned everything
and made love once or twice
then you married with a job and kids / a dog—get it
what's the third ending
the obvious guess is wrong
it precedes everything
get it

Tidepools: La Jolla (adapted like silly)

Quickly Mystiker—this is the one that mirrors the profoundest world.
The girl in us leans a little narrower.

You lean too to him this evening, Helen Emily,
my hand hold, to see us two volatile, although träumerisch,

as as your breath which my morning of shaving glass
it tarnishes dries that seaward and the foam of sea, leaves grass of band,

with Furchtsame Unkräuter—also a twisted vein seaspray,
a collar, of which you add your lips, to slip by then far—

naked feet of lichen—of a defective switch, your Schreier
take the color erröten-gebürstete with cloud of package your cheeks balance

then knees still with the moons and Trompeten, the shells of arrival, the dollar
and Nixeventilatoren and purses, Anemonen, and small stars.

Another day of winter, my love, if you are older,
C. - with-D. perhaps that if we are two older (grassement and more coldly),

let us become you go from return to this place here niederwerfen—
if that which does not remove the exact position trafficky years

of the memory of business, since with him the sun
flames a narrow manner each one the wolkenloser day

which has place to see and reality, as me to come once again could admit
this whole world piling up one evening in your eyes filling.

Untouchable

listen to yourself
as the wind picks up
the scattered tissues lying
in wait for the start
of the cancellation
of sadness
the old gas pumps
on the road only
the abandoned travel
on their ways from brokendown
homes to excessive stores
still work but seem surrendered
to the passage of progress
past them
listen to yourself
while I stop for gas
choose my place
settle

More Film

it's the nature of color
to be loved by those who aim
to persuade / it's the nature
of looking to feel the taste
of something familiar
heat has the power
to deepen bonds
it's a comfort that closes
in on you
saturated allegiances
and contrasts in colors
in temperatures
it's what link we depend on

Next Time for Sure

today I heard the water
is rising up the rise
I walked them up
to place them in the ground

the 1000-year flood might
get them 100 feet up the rise
but today it falls a few feet short
and now who can wait another 1000
why
we all can can't
we

It's What We Do

favorite places
drenched and forlorn
under the spell
and lying in wait
those with faith are leaving in droves
but even though they are certain
they aren't sure of many things
water as in purification
cleansing / muttered words
of healing / bring on the evaluations
call me if anything changes
and I need to revise this

May 18, 2006

Unpleasantness Again

let's say it this way
the details of life
are discouraging

Single Minded

there is safety in doing it right
making the story play
like a lamp sputtering out
which is the talons the love
teaches us with
when everyone is afraid
dare to be different

Fairy Tale & Flood

little
do they know
the fate of the depth
of the water inching
up the banks and piers
the bridge seems not
to notice that its underside
is fighting for air

just a rain
falling up river
gathering in streams
and side streams
the little bits of tangled trees
and houses floating downstream
signify our world ensnared
in art and the bridge
is our crossing
passage

To Details

analyze a problem statement
typically stated as a word problem
express its essence
abstractly and with examples
formulate statements
and comments in a precise language
evaluate and revise these activities
in light of checks and tests
pay attention

Compiler

think of who has power
how it's used
do they ever let go
even when they are wrong
to them you are a suspect
suspect them
in return

Seeing Under

remember when the lines
were formed and little prayers were spoken
at the tops of stairs
below in basements it was as if
small streams flowed underground
and found their ways in

salvation is no consolation
the passion of tongue to tongue
harms love since the pitfalls of one
are the tiptops of the other

Relent

the long trip comes to an end
afterward there is yet
a longing face looking up with hope
rain from a hard drizzle
by the pier by the bay
when it's late
near midnight
or past
past the need
for sleeping
my long trip is over
nearly over
time to write

Since You've Been Gone

explanations
don't ask
seek nothing not apparent
what's given is to be taken
without this
nothing
happens

In Memoriam for My Writer Friend

he could write
perfect lines / all talent
he lived the life
in quotes
and turned his name inside out
to become the Irish poet that lived
in his head

he stood with me once
when he was old
had given up
had stopped writing
he was gray and not much more of him left
he spoke hardly at all
as we moved from table to table
what he saw is gone now
what he saw went into his head
and lies there now
the way everything we know
will one day lie

Language Without Science

tired
untried
tonguetied
words are
more than their meanings
science doesn't know this
science doesn't think
it uses language

When It Doesn't Count

what if it were so cold
snow forming a sky
above it the unimaginable
except in stories
so cold that hell and pain
were relief
frozen mud and suffering climates
a woman's voice telling
instructions / is she speaking
another language

Story of No Memory

in the long past
in the war
a woman walked into the town
and became the great nurse
many devoted themselves to her
she kept her hair up
to keep the men alive
she seemed to love many back

later
I don't know how long
no one else does too
a shell hit her hospital
I found her
under the operating table
her face was red turning purple
smoke filled the room and was rising everywhere
her hair I saw
was down / never having had the chance
to drape the man she loved

When Math Meets Faith

the scribe who cannibalized
the last copy of Archimedes'
Method for its paper
for a prayer book
scraping off the words
cutting it into a
better
size / writing across
its original lines
losing the knowledge
of the first steps toward
modern mathematics
imagine
what he heard
when he didn't quite
make it to heaven

Once More

we hate it all
the past is catching up again
every fear is becoming real
where will I go

Advice from the Wrong

the fairy tale
goes on
smart people who believe in the foolish idea
that
well you know
cannot see that the statements are trivially
not right
they see it from the victor's viewpoint
yes
like me / drink your milk
and become rich
<<I did>>

Clear Beauty

beautiful
intense / dreamfilling
special around the eyes
her face is a light
her attention is a release
and a tensing
she is my
imagination
in love

Choose Your Form

who means it
which eyes are on you
what is the effect of her laugh
on how far you can run
on top of that
which direction does she turn
when you turn to walk away

Perfectly Warm

nothing is like it
total strangers
drifting up from the river bank
settling by the lawn
nothing like the green grass growing
for centuries
the romance of tradition
nothing like settling in for the perfect
day / the chance to enact what doesn't
come often / what is the discomfort
that will come when it's plain
no more perfect days
are to be had

Format is King

the default typefaces are not acceptable
they will be converted to non-scaling Type 3 Postscript
a process and the resulting paper will be very difficult
(/prep/bad.pdf for an example) / several
please contact your local system
name of the primary author and titles of documents should be
"The Rendering Equation"

Unkempt Love

it is fancy and unfiltered
the canals are real
even in their metaphors
scrounge and hope for it
image the belt that hold up
these garters

One Side Tired, the Other Brave

tired and sore
filling with fatigue
little is worth all this effort
it makes a man cry
to see what others
will do
for honor only

Head Around

reading
what one has written in the distant
past one is surprised
at the foolishness
the wisdom
both of which (line of pure traffic circle)
have diminished
to a gray

The Climb for All of Us

shining place on a hill
the way up winds
and is sharp with rocks
you depend on your heart
to get up it
you see many up there
while your legs slow
soon they no longer carry
and this is your place
a small view down
into a swampy depression
surrounded by trees starting to fossilize
from above
you hear the sound of laughter
as your heart slows down
but shows no sign
of wishing to go on

Reduction

every long day
makes the remaining
number shrink

Company Numbers

the brand lives on
but identity is dead
to the casual it seems all is well
but despair lines the streets
or is it happiness suffering an infestation
the past is like a friend who's forgotten your name
on a smalltown block
children don't know better
but notice their dads are home more
speak of harvesting down at a neighbor's farm
all this in a town lacking so
in poetry / so full of one company
that all the streets are named
after numbers

Big

many aspects
make it fun
hard pumping
legs not sure what's next
the descent where courage
rarely exceeds hope
it's long and unpleasant
and the heart craves it
like a big finish to something
small

Spatchcock in Response to a Tregetour

she's made her list
(wonderful for her)
and said it's annotated
but she means some poetic thing

like all poets
she refers to random things
as if a list of peculiar nouns
is a poem / ok
here's mine then

aegrotat boustrophedon carfax
delenda enchiridion famulus
growlery haecceity incunabulum
jeremiad kenspeckle liripipe
mumpsimus nepenthe omphaloskepsis
pilgarlick quincunx redivivus
spatchcock tregetour ultracrepidate
vilipend widdershins xenium
yare zetetic

and here's my annotation
she is a tregetour
and this spatchcock
is dedicated to her

Latin After All (Else)

all of it
special and loud
special language holding fourth
position in a field of four
the time is coming
fast and soon
my goal plain language
who hasn't had that as their goal

perhaps though
it's time to back up to the complication
of fragrance and the spine of eludation

It's In The Records

harsh heat ripping the corn
horses hanging their heads
in the trough fed by a hand pump
that encourages up
a harsh metallic water
so cold / hard it doesn't taste
like water but like the past
cut dried hay flecks on the back
of his neck never stop itching
in heat murderous as this
washing them away in the trough
is never enough

they cool the milk using this water
like a French butter keeper
but who would know that farmer
cutting hay by hand in that heat
would die to make his daughter
bitter in her suspicion of those who ask
her (things) and that all goes
for me too

Café Night

she was there in the heat
night under lights at a table
drinking coffee with a straw
her hair is yellow white
her sweater is white
the night doesn't seem to wear on her
she smiles in profile
the night insects rise up
the moon casts its romance on the table
and the coffee wants to cool but can't
I am here for everything

At The Mermen Gig

along the labyrinth lines
she steps and with slightest
moves swings the hula
hoop above her hips
contemplative as step by step
she slowly moves each foot
in minor stops and starts
and the world like a hula
hoop winds around her
we stare and believe
like christian faith
that every party needs this labyrinth
and that hula hoop
and that woman comfortable
in everything I see

Travel Day

looks like another
trip back to the valley
it's bound to be light
unbearable / cautionary
facts took place on every stretch
what's found is lightning
off key / few care to look
back this way / tilting at the edges
of memory / like a savory
fashion tile and unpleasant
encounter

tomorrow is full of it
and bad news to boot

Fog Philosophy

above the bays
and inland ponds
lakes and even heavy mistfog rises
the plane descends in thumps
the air is too hot
too humid
for plane lifting
the passengers grip their clothes
tightly in fists made for clinging
to high branches
it's no wonder we hold our sleeves
as our lives
it seems
drop from beneath us
leaving our bravery to whisk away
like a cloud too near the ground

Doubt

undoubtedly I walked
through Cambridge
after the controversial
dinner about panes
of glass

in this last day of Spring
the women
even from MIT
are brimming with sex
skirts abound
the sidewalks are in their 90th
crumbling and asphalt
usually flowing
is crack and dust

no doubt I pulled away
from the curb merging
into traffic
and out for a maple walnut
at the ice cream stand
which has no panes
of glass

No

The Cause for Grief

he died suddenly
after his puzzling talk
and standing over his grave
I picture his yielded body
just below / glancing up
the hill I see her grave
their last talk poisoning
between like the humidity
of that day about 70 years ago
were they to meet
(have they?)
what would they share
his world would be so old
with Amelia just gone
and all investigations over

Dreamster

U still dreaming
at getting in to shape
Hope u r because
I saw these guys,
<obscure>
versions embrace a
a of moment mandatory
(He)
the knew / universal sooner
play health insurance
(Not I)
only plan he

June 23, 2006

In Lynn

with unexpected detours
I found Auntie
and noted her loudmouth
proud daughter buried beside
her was not listed

Nashua -> Franklin

long ride with spills and rain
hills numerous beyond all imagining
we are sore but have survived
and tomorrow do it again
despite how hard we peddled
or how poor we seemed
it seemed like everyone out
not in a truck or such
would wave as if our endurance
was part of their psyches

Franklin -> Conway

saddle sore
foot sore
legs fine
heart fine
the question is whether butt will heal
toes will survive
partner not doing well
but hanging in there
longest day tomorrow
climb from 500 'to 1700'
over 20 miles
yikes though not steep
unyielding
all alone tomorrow
man and half machine

Conway -> Colebrook

imagine nonstop rain
temp dropping as altitude climbs
no real rain gear
a late start
this equals Allan's sister
stumbling on us and driving us
the rest of the way
failure?
luck?
pleasure??

Colebrook -> Lennoxville

on the wind hill
a family
everyone short
w/4 kids bare feet
in the mud & tractortired
jeeps & 2 dirt scooters
their house of brick
to withstand the ridgebred gale

we ask directions
in oddcadenced French
and are told
correctly
to head indeed
down the gravel
road north

Lennoxville -> Victoriaville

hills hills hills
down the 12%
up the 12%
over over over over again
even after rescue
we insisted on finishing
we left at 9am
got there at 8pm
did I mention the Route Verte
with it's 5 miles of mountain biking trails
advertised as road bike ready
ugh / such fatigue

Victoriaville -> Quebec City

hah you thought yesterday was bad
today was 60 miles including
15 trips up to Skyline
(equivalent)
we walked up some hills
there was a valley through which
we could have ridden
had we chosen to brave traffic
400 years ago Quebec French froze
wrt French French
so there is no word for switchback
the most important tool of the road planner
is the straightedge
sore / a little tired / ready to sleep

Predation of Scenery

against a background
like the orange bright outline
of a complicated branding
iron just heated beyond recognition
this being the sun descending
behind risen rough hills
and asbestos dark clouds
in impossible clear air
to which I've turned my back
ahead is the picture
on the inside side of the pane of a shampoo store
of a woman whose hair is womanly
blonde and curled
her eyes are sunk
from an awful and sexual fear
her nose is unobvious
her mouth and chin are pulling back
as from a fear or as from a malevolence
her look of fear grows to one of predation
or hatred or aggression even in its retention
of fear

I cannot but step back
step back again
almost off the curb onto a street of Quebec
who is she
why is her name written as if of normality on the poster
what would she take if she burst off the flatness
where can I run from such a vision
of distance like her

Above the Fleuve

what is her beauty to me
I find I require an extreme
of size / in places / only / or
some possible extravagance
which shows her extremes
of sexuality among pure & private
matters / like she puts her simple
needs ahead of the complex
to find of her a largeness
is to find the nugget that makes
a dig worth all

today she walked past in an orange glory
and stood posing like a figurehead
on the best boat / favoring the wind
in the way of a sailing favor
/ in this find no
1-1 correspondence of fact
to statement /

Back

packing in the rain
the ride over
taking hours what took days
this time is about to be over
the transition a long ride
passing partly past
where we had gone by our own power
when I got back I nearly cried
because the world was as it was

Late Afternoon Car Trip

road straight
to the desert like a painted line
Joshua trees and poppies
aligned with sunlight
a rattler buys it under the car in front of me's
tires

arrived at last the wear has torn
my ability to metaphorize
or at least not in the way
that leads to good work

You Tell Me

he is unaware
of people and emotions
life ends suddenly
for him and there are no repercussions
we ask if he wants to visit his mother
and he says what for
it is the mother he saved
by killing his father
and he does not wish to visit
her grave
we are sick
he asks us to take him to the store
where he buys an apricot pie
and asks if we want to share

You Tell Me [2]

god's voice is everywhere
and therefore
nowhere
here
the wind is everywhere
but not nowhere
it is here now
it is making itself known
right now
hearts beat faster in high wind
slower in
god's presence

Mistakes Forever

when I found Aunt Ina's marker
(in the graveyard in the hotdry desert)
her name was not quite what I was told
(she spelled it twice)
the C starting her last name was a G
(did anyone notice / was it too expensive to fix)
misspelling is proper for a family like this
(I think)
because: bad choices / poor education / bad luck
(there is no shame)
I suppose typos are as common as people

En Passant

we said goodbye
in the sun running
above 100° after sitting
in the shade till he returned
we spoke of the silk flowers
and his mother and
he thanked us
first time for anything
he laughed when we said he might outlive us
when we got home the phone told us
he was picked up last week
news travels slowly sometimes
even though we already knew it

The Faithful Don't Grow Back

when I read the poetry
of published poets
today in 2006
I find their fawning over nature
myths and religious icons
boring as all hell
saints and seabirds
angelic psalms
foobar
foo on you
I say
a little sparrow whittling on a tune
sitting on a maple branch
back over my left shoulder
and the river still flows

Silly Putting it to You

let's consider the pinch
makes for fast / expeditious decisions
makes for improvisation and creation of the unexpected
it follows the normal course and is followed by it
makes us realize planning is a guess
happening suddenly
requiring expenditure of great effort
a pinch is best when it's a hit
silly as it is
this is all true

Display of Great Hair and Tits

in this eating place
dark paneled and catering to the wealthy male
the blonde woman across the room
in anomalous if not exaggerated
long hair
a true blonde
(trouble ordering
trouble walking out)
(to judge by the comments her date
makes to the waiter

/

to judge by the way he guides her
by hand past our table to their
valeted car)
we eat too much
dreading the bed
waiting to put it on
the cool sea air
is no antidote to envy
despite that
I sit here recollecting
he is somewhere else
(and with her)
I'm not even up a good meal

Religious Inexperience

San Diego again
no sign of perfection
nor any chances for walks along the docks
or bay

in the harbor lie cruise ships
and cruise missiles on carriers
and carrier groups
waiting for the great decider
to decide who is next
I am not next
elders are for giving advice
telling stories

the story I want to tell
is not known to me
it's about people I know
mostly by inferred coincidences
I have some pictures
and small leavings

one thing
is to write my name on the tombstone
leave it at that
let someone else put it all together
only there is no one else
no someone

but now they're paging
Marie Seabreeze
and it makes me think of Greece
and the Mediterranean so salty
I could float upright
blue
turquoise
ruins by construction
stone by concrete
I hear the donkey braying
and see the fatman's orange vest
stretched tight to breaking
and know what's in it for me

Tone, Tone, Tone

the beauty is unfolded
this street leads farther away than that
we might as well be in a foreign country
for all the understanding on display
in my case
the pains grow
and the rewards diminish
but today I was paid in tubes
for an essay on tubes
the only justice
is poetic

Tonality of Civilization

miniaturized tubes
height of civilization
now analog is a dead dog
designed to take 5 blows from a hammer
in 4 distinct places
in 16,000 hours of operation
60 tubes showed no slumping
can I say the same?

Give What You Want

I don't dance well
I can't sing
I know 8 chords
on the guitar
but put it all together
and no one can touch me
the epitome of success
in the absence of talent

Translating to Words

no matter where you are reading
influx this article from
you most likely have suspension
a printer nearby

there's a very good chance
that it is an inkjet printer
since their introduction
inkjet printers have puncture grown
in popularity and performance

an inkjet printer is any printer
that places extremely expectation
small droplets of ink onto paper
to create an image
the dots are extremely small
(usually between 50 dyeing and 60 microns in diameter)

the dots can have different colors
combined peacock together
to create photo-quality images

Painter's Vision Back

nothing here surprises me
but you
the sun rising is creamy
like apricot skin
the moisture in the cup
of your back
is the greeting of a blanket
in the morning that needs one

how many mornings
can a scene like this play
out / this morning
the dew rises easily
it will be a day of no
moisture

Business 101

the goal of each business
is to make the purchase of its products
necessary

when this happens
people are screwed
because they have no choice
and must pay whatever is required

for businesses to provide
happiness for people
they must
in general
be failing

regulation
is built-in
failure

qed

July 18, 2006

Slyku

parking lot
behind the hotel
cars waiting
for lovers
to finish

16mm Of Course

across the street
they dance and reach
out to touch
they stop at times
between songs to take a drink
otherwise they are reaching
out to the other's waist
over here I'm taking a drink too
and watching them
it's like a movie
I don't see
but star in

July 20, 2006

Tenderness of Two

two things are worth
remembering
the time she leaned forward
to prolong the kiss
/ and /
the weight of the urn
as it was placed in the vault
by his

Not a Gate of Hell But Its Doorknob

we're not alone
we—I mean she is at the corner
and I'm here in the shadow of a tree

it's night
/ this is usual /
I think she's waiting for someone
I can hear her listening
she turns whenever
the wind shifts—

are like unIntroduced lovers
in the timeless world
of imperial postmodernism

where the wind is more of a character
than the man two blocks over
who is the center of this picture
because the gutter trash responds
more than any living thing

All Night Long

tonight the heat
is winning
the lights are going
off / on / off / on(ff)
off seems to be winning
what is sustained is what
is saved up
when the lights go off
the sweat beads up
though there is no AC
in this house
I imagine the last days
for grandpa were like this
but lights were less certain
or at least made of less uncertain
materials / such as his daughter
who thought of him every last
breath she thought she
was taking

Stop Last Night

last night
the heat was what
she experienced
on the farm every summer night
after he left her
what must it have been like
to leave him there in the hospital room
then in the front room in the casket
and then in the ground
treeless / low markers
she never expected me
to do the work of putting her
(and her husband)
where she wanted them to be
she trusted me that little
and now the writing must start
(or stop)

The Heat is On

between here
and home there
is plain land
people who are nuanced
via global culture
still
driving through
stopping even
makes it plain
the world can slow down
without dropping out

Up River

what if we went upriver
paddling where we can
poling when paddling can't work
wading and lining after that
walking when all else fails
up past the shallows
up through fast water
up over rapids and falls

they said the best land
was downriver
that even pleasure
would be met there

but the lure of the source
is eventually overpowering
and we would go up as high
as needed with as much energy
as it takes or until there was no
more left

Unremarkable Differences

she never travelled
never asked to or
wanted to
she drove to Florida
in the '60s
took the bus once to California
flew there once too
she was afraid
I think
of strangeness
and strangers
of the kinds of shenanigans
that could cost her
better to walk the three
paths she knew
over and over
until she fell over
one night

Was It A Club?

she was ready
for me to acquiesce
she was ready
to give
she took me to all her favorite spots
she wanted the hot air
to be the conduit for us
she wanted the fireworks
to be metaphors
I liked her and no more
wasn't that enough

down by the river
we watched the power boats
just barely make it upriver
into the lock
the going was slow there
then out the other side
hard upriver once more
I drove her home

Riding

on the ride
there is pain
the smells of trees and weeds
the wind is hot
the tires are overpressured
and roll easily
the gears mesh smoothly
even after riding this route
hundreds of time
it still hurts

Nothing More

well it's true
small things can wring enthusiasm
out like a vendetta
years after
but the arc is the arc
for some of us the dream
doesn't exist
only this minute passing
into that

Jesus Early Sensitive

available

Richard

doubt tool glad Politic cautious Full high sentence

design, but All designers what people like hate want. Some may from process

lens. Hopsons players RPG

level. often Who wants every five seconds quottoo oftenquot quotnot player. Designers

Hell. flame

lantern threw nerves patterns screen: throwing turning Prince Hamlet attendant

used

think using aids about certainly useful much

feather flock Both merit true ways people. given clearly unclear act

copies U.S. residents Solutions

bars used soak spilled beeretc. Italian artist. Cookies cream. Baptist Matthew

plate Time hundred visions revisions taking toast

wept fasted prayed Though seen

perfume dress digress wrap shawl. Shall

snicker

Metabiking

today the world is super real
and slightly gothic
people are writing in a prison workshop
and the high winds
the sweet weed smells
and my slow ride
are what they've made
but now the criticism has started
(in the form of constructive suggestions of course)
and tomorrow I ride again
oh my

Balcony Living

below
the city is painted orange
up here
the dark is the cold face of questions
traffic and waves from nearby beaches
horns direct our attention
to the sidewalks
where every woman is walking
straight to her lover
making us doubt
the importance of the sky
and its mirror the pavement

August 2, 2006

Hurry Hurry

there is new information
important details
complete coverage
all this must be known soon
it is vital to you
perhaps your death depends on it
at 11

August 3, 2006

Today

it's a job
it pays for habits

Tamworth / Summer

remembering the days
waking late after the heat's up
a heavy breakfast and then back
to bed to read and doze
watching tv when it's time to watch tv
then reading deep
into the night
when it's finally cool
parents in the other room
sleeping elsewhere

after days of this
the fatigue grows
until the only relief is to leave
leave them behind
again after again

Along the Way

today the finishing touches
have been touched up
touched on / tuned out
tonight the shadows
are on vacation
the roads are not fully made
are unmade
the story is fading out
not made of words like bricks
but sound like sand or wind
soon sound becomes noise
and noise blends into the randomness
that is the world coincidentally solid
today but tomorrow
the touches are finished

Off To Football / 1965

they pulled up and opened
the front passenger door
the air was on the edge of warm
and shellacked with the smell
of burning leaves
the '60s and I
was 15
he was teaching me to film games
the older english teacher was driving
she was his date was the latin teacher
younger and wearing tight everything
including perfume / she was the first
woman I ever sat that close
ever smelled
ever felt
I don't remember the rest of the day

August 7, 2006

At the Library

there are things to find
but they are small
don't reveal much
without exploration
and imagination
the last stories she told me
about her last days at school
were true
what to make of that

Arrangements and Brightness

the sun
low
sheers through the light
green canopy to the west
of the road
wherever I look to the west
green tingles my eyes
but when I look at the road
its sand border
the colors are true
not green
what things seem
is not what they appear

Does It Run in the Family

the old library
now the museum
and the pictures of mother
as a student looking like
me and my son
at the same age
little did she know that in 3 or 4
years everything would change
and the father she loved so
would be killed by her
mother

Lawn Duty

the hot days
drinking cheap booze
fourth of July just passed by
what was the argument about
were they both over the edge
how could she kick like that
why was he permitted to lie there
did he stay outside between the house and garage all night
who took him to the hospital
why did no one speak up
is this the why I've been looking for

Dying Love

when they married
they had to live somewhere
not with Nana though
not that
they chose the 1-room shack
that later became the slaughterhouse
at George Hoyt's place
figure that

August 12, 2006

Fall Of The House

the house is falling down
every one of their's is or has
until the writing is finished
the house is all I have

August 13, 2006

At Billy's

every day
something new
not much but new
a picture is coming
into focus
not enough for the truth
but enough for beauty
you know what I mean

Scratch?

a professor at MIT's
Advanced Vision Lab
is blind
the perfect match
natch

Light Ending

time's up
what was learned is unexpected
not welcome
the light that's thrown
is too harsh
does that make
what it reveals too real

Goodbye Under Different Circumstances

today was a day
like the day he was buried
I think and as I stooped
to scrape the dried grass from his name
I thought I could smell the still lingering
scent of the standing wreaths
and pillows carried so slowly
from the farm to this spot
in wagons pulled by old horses
even though many machines
were to be had / that day

someone said today was perfect
high sparse clouds in the sky
and a tad too high a dew point
made it less to me / but what
do I know of perfect

I guess it wasn't fair
she had to cry so much that day
the money was spent the day before
and his slight but useful back
and good wages were in the box
on another wagon

what I want to know
was whether Nana got what she wanted
is this what she wanted to kick
away so hard

Reflecting on a Day Unexperienced

certainly the day
was beautiful but who
would remember it that way
just a day when burying
happened / certainly
the shape of the land
the way it lay like a blanket
over the dead was the same
that day as today
this hole was on the new flats
certainly it was cheap
because what other choice
was there / and on the hill up and behind
there was nothing but welcoming space
I read that the day was warm
and a bit humid / I read about the arrangements
even though the paper was wrong
I don't know what I think about that day
I'll try writing it again one day soon
and find out

River Ways

the days were all clear
the stories varied
in that respect
the river water seemed
clear in one of its directions
they say you can never step
into the same river twice
but here / maybe you can

August 19, 2006

Bad Day / Bad

today was a bad day
as my failures of carelessness
—losing 2 important pictures—
finally were fully felt

Drive Off

everywhere the total
is less than the sum
the little ways are the former
broad ones / the color
of the light filtered through leaves
at the height of summer
is bright white and not the green
or red or copper they seem
when gazed through

the time always comes
when I need turn
my back / get in the car
parked under the beech
drive away my bad eye
toward you / go around the lot
over to the bridge to park
watch the sun recline
then to the airport where with luck
the plane turns west over you
and I can say goodbye
again

Before A Day Away

the place is familiar
the beech tree
the warm grass mowed a week before
the rise behind me
the mausoleum couched in bushes
and rhododendron
from up on the rise I can see the stones
that matter / down by the river
cars flow past like parts
of a river / the sound of rubber on asphalt
is like a hard hush
despite that / the day is quiet
the light clouds hang as if sadly remembering
this place is the same as it ever was
the place where goodbyes are forever
forgotten

July 7, 1937

think about it
the day like hell but smelling
of mowed hay and cows lounging
under useful trees
the road a sandy dirt but with pools of mud
in either direction
the man down in the shade
unable to stand
unable to talk
down in the shade and through the dark night
that never cooled down
why did no one take him to the hospital
did they think he was drunk
ashamed
faking it
was he unloved
what hell were they all
and I
in

Frenzy Time

the beauty of the place
sometimes fakes me out
the meanings that have piled up here
render the heat into odor
and light into fragrance
by writing a story a hurt
as large as the wide place in the river
by the bridge no one
but me
finds remarkable
might swallow up the sudden
downfall of doubts about
who is who
and who did exactly
well forget it
time is swallowing up these pieces
as fast as we spit them out
the ink and bits
can't back up the regrets and hushing
that an image can exist
drives the mind into frenzy

He Died

Old man Sanuk
was the father of Helen
who married John Gabriel.

Old man Sanuk was kicked
in the bladder by his wife (during a fight)
and it was ruptured.

Sam Scherbon reported seeing
him lying on the lawn
trying to recover.

Whenever he tried to urinate,
there was nothing passed.

By the time they took him
to medical attention
(many hours, I gather)
it was too late to help.

The story told to the neighborhood
was that he had been bruised
by the tongue of a hay wagon
while getting it out of the barn.

He died.

Bad July Day

they say the fight
started early
the heat had become dew the night before
but grew as the dew became the heat
some said they drank
but well but
they say he lay
on the ground for a long time
maybe overnight
then it was too late
yes too late
or I might have
known him
instead of the lies

Red Heart(h)

the hearth was a seat
red brick finely placed
mortar white like a fresh snow
I'd sit there by the window
that seemed large
the view to the west
every night the sky
it seemed
skinned over in grey
but out that way
out in that direction
there seemed a dropping
bit of hope

Rooftop Baloney

I used to climb up on the roof
first onto the oil tank
and onto the low side of the addition
then up the garage roof
and onto the steep slope over the living room
finally onto the flatter part of the roof

to get down
down over the living room
up and over the garage peak
down onto the addition
but the other side
and either onto the tree whose top
was gone and most of the branches
or a jump of 12 feet that made
my bones ring like electricity

I remember these steps all perfectly
but not the reason for any of them
why go on the roof
I did it dozens of times
—never a reason

oh, except when Ray Boucher
John Kurkjian and I climbed up
near sunset one fall and named
our acappella group
Red Sunset Bologna Sandwich

Self-Hagiography (Def 2)

once gossip was held
in secrets / behind the barn
down the street
you could hear it trailing off
as you approached
this meant it was of
you or of
someone near you
this gave you the chance
to sit by the river
wonder about what it was
this way examine yourself
without the harm of others' words

now you can read it everywhere
if there are stories of you
they are spread as graffiti
there is no need to construct
the words of critics yourself
they are right there
like
"Yes, I know that not everyone
is a Dick Gabriel fan, but...."

Misheard in the Air

you watch on over
in the troubled time
you can't stop turning
with the one-armed man
picture yourself in a magazine
get control of your life
picture yourself in a magazine
don't forget this life
and you hurt yourself
and you hurt yourself

If / If

if tonight you hear
a stranger call out
from the rain and the awning
shading her from the rain
and moonlight washing over
the tops of cloud layer
think before you call back
because what if
what if

At Tin Angel

above the rivers
in the warm air out on the restaurant porch
outside our private room
we lean on the rail
and watch the boats going up and downriver
pushing coal barges or ferrying spectators
listen to trains braking and going around curves
down and up river
see the lighted football stadium
where the Steelers are playing their last
preseason game
behind all this the city
divided up by the rivers
glows yellow and orange
tall buildings block their shapes
out of the lights
the sheets of wind on the river
small waves in expanding forms
slow it all down
make it a night when a friend
standing closer would have sheened
the scene

Like Authority

authority likes
to tell it to you
tell you to do
really just tell
no such thing
as listening
rules = tell power
bad rules = fun
via (accidental noncompliance)
when authority is in doubt
it relies on repetition
either tell again
or tell to do again
authority does not
embrace dialog

Prayers, Goodbyes, Unknowns

quux said the prayer
under the tree and over the urns
on the perfect day
in the high warmth
near the place of high drama
65 years earlier
or maybe 39 years earlier
there were many things
I didn't know about this
place / this place and many others

Story Story

the stories are being recompiled
based on new meanings for all the sentences
the words / where paragraphs end
what deserves to be a secret
then when
it's over to have only gossip
and writers at newspapers
talking to authorities
who have decided what should be
true as the truth
shall I make my own
or just record my
story of the story

No Don't Say It

someplace someone
is writing something
words are peppering pages
ink is drying
bits cleaving to disks
when this writing is read
someone's cerebellum perks
up if they like it
and if it sounds like music
in other words
if it's poe...

1937

the story is leaking
out into the world
I am practicing telling it
but not writing it
I must start that soon
or lose the details that make it
so strange / so compelling
imagine the hot day
the fight / the long pain on the lawn
the 8 years of intense work
just to live

nothing justifies this
but the story will live

Researching

into the night
I search for information
about who they were
and how they lived
trying to figure out
from the few pictures
what it could mean
software and talking
microfilm and old newspapers
are it

Need It

what would it mean
to find the facts
would it make a difference
to who I am
is it really my business to know
or worse to tell
but in this way truth
is like beer
truth is like truth—you need it

I Woke Into a Sheet of Gold Unspooled

words unspooled like thread to repair
burn into a single sheet of fire
slur of gold that turns the center
of this city to a burnished valley
he woke the man and beat him
neglected his prayers that night
burned into a single sheet of fire
slur of gold that turns

one night I woke up thirsty
and reached for a glass of water on the bedside table
the sun rose over an unseen Atlantic
the highways unspooled

microfilm was unspooled and festooned
like the remains of a ticker-tape
were the sewer outlets into the Tigris
major Bob woke me up the next morning

and I was thinking that among the things
America didn't bomb in Baghdad
were the sewer outlets into the Tigris
major Bob woke me up the next morning

her red-gold hair was twisted
into a thick French braid which swung
printer tape unspooled in a wild flood
two of the generators went dead

she took a leak
unspooled a few squares of Charmin
then jumped into the shower
1st April 2005—Eva's love for stripping?
idol's rap sheet?

the other foot woke with a start
was it Lydia somewhere just
he showered millions
with their gold as he flew overhead
disappearing

entering the search terms
Carthage, Tanit and child sacrifice
she watched the data-stream turn into a torrent

all posts tagged with Film | Metafilter
but once they were in the Gold Rush State
her husband left her
when the executives
woke up with a hangover
I assume

Sometimes Nature Subbing for God

I think it is part of human nature
for many to want to believe in a God
Subbing for InstaPundit
somehow I find myself heartily approving

dash subbing were the words
if you can't intercede on anyone's behalf
and if God has infinite mercy
then surely...

pomomusings: God not politics
yes being a christian a follower of christ
is by its very nature today
I think you'd see republicans & democrats
subbing in for pharisees & sadducees....

football fantasy fails, minerals in detergent?
the nature of claims, novel DNA!
I must thank Hal Bidlack for subbing for me last week

in defending his town
his arm is cursed
by a raging god possessed by a demon
nature and growing technology
affected the people of the land....

ebooks: neither e nor books
emerging ebooks need to embrace their nature
anyone with a press could run off
subbing in any apocryphal text he needs

Scanning Pictures

every day there's a reason to cry
it happens at odd times
but always some time
I see their pictures
and from the scenes
how they look
what they seem to be looking at
I try to figure who they are
attach a story to them
try to make the starts and ends
of their lives connect with a line
that hold the melody
all the way and longer

September 11, 2006

Worrying Night

tonight I worry
the sudden illness on the ride
reminded me of one thing
too many

Hot / Too

well I survived the night
rode today and felt bad but not dead
hot / too much work
did a flash movie for the conference
horrendous tool
work work work

Visage Jaune

along the way
most is out of sight
along the wall
that forms the street
the neon purple paint
glows in the streetlight
and when I stop it's part of the yellow world
even in the rain
which is fundamentally blue
later I return to step back and see
it in the light
and I see her lips
her green eyes
all from the sprayed vapor
from a can captured by an artist
and used mercilessly
on this innocent brick
wall being paid to form
a street at night

Short(ly)

simple things
hard to put together
but reminiscent of minds working hard and heating up
the scalp and head
but the spirit doesn't care about this
the wanderings of the unsimple
are more typical
abstraction creeps
in where it must

Collection

what difference did the river make
3 miles away
did she visit it
sit by it as it flowed one way
and then the other
she never talked about the river to me
we never went there
we never went anywhere except to Haverhill
shopping and Amesbury shopping
we rarely went to the beach
we went nowhere really
picture her working hard
all day / hauling food and waste
in the wheelbarrow
what difference the river made
was to methodically not care
about her or about anything that happened
nearby / the river is just there to collect
the weeping

Songliness

the song just goes on
words written over it
wring out what can be
there is always minute
when the songs bores
and seems wrong
but I take this to mean
the humanity of the other
wait
here comes the sweet
verse again

Walk Away

like the end of time
the time now is ending
this way we get to practice

for example
I've seen the turned body
of the delicious woman
and thought of what's left
of her 50 years later

practice more

Requisite Variety

what I've found is that the dust
and old books in the special reading
room celebrate the need to find
the missing parts of the story
which are the disturbances
that throw off the narrative
its details / which must be brought back
under control for the sake
of the story / thus saith
W. Ross Ashby trying to explain life
with control theory

Brought Back

that day just won't go away
sitting by the window all day
she must have brought it back
into her thoughts each time
nothing else pressed
those last years
that must have been every day
many times a day
she must have
brought it back

Me vs Me

scripting a debate
with yourself
it's hard to put yourself
in jeopardy
it's hard to lose

Another

she probably still walks
curved streets at night in the rain
the old flat is in the part of town
that doesn't matter
to her and therefore
to me / she hates
the rain
the cold
the dark
she cannot warm herself
she needs another for that
I've stood behind the streetlamps
shine and watched her going past
I've been unable to be another

Breakage

another day
when things go wrong
criticism
breakage
a too late night
across the street
a man moves across the window
seems to retrieve something
returns
it's like that

Nowhere Now

I remember my first kiss
it was about 5 feet
from where they found my mother
dead for 2 weeks
I cannot walk into that room
any more
it is an important room for me
I helped design it
I helped build it
I remember many cold nights
made warm there
the sounds of loons
above in the morning
you can tell what I wish for
but right now all I can think of now
is the picture of her wheeling
three bushel baskets
past the kitchen window
when she was young
and I was nowhere
like I am now

Over

the questions just keep coming
the answers get harder to make
the words are starting to become noise
some sentences are clipped as if edited
to remove the essence leaving the scaffolding
which is just a structure of noise
I've had a wild dream
and the cusp made my mind
repeat it repeat it repeat it
made my brain ill and angry
no question about it

Facts As Action

the fact is
that facts are
and theory without at least one fact input
is just gyroscoptic
pushing in a direction facts aren't
well everyone would rather
this were about bluebirds
and they could argue
oh bluebirds are facts
maybe the birds
but the blue?

How's It Scan

out and about
finding out which ways
make more sense
I need to spend more time
writing about details
like the computer I seduced
by flipping polarity
many things are of predictable length
this one is short

Losers (1)

my father was
he really was
a loser / many saw little value in him
his father was a helper
and buried anonymously
after he died
he was a loser too
this has been passed down
without alteration
to me

Safety in Density

safety is sometimes not an option
it can come close
but it's umbra is close in

Day 3

even with good news
there is no oblivion to the bad
there are still people who deserve
no respect

Say It

why write
when you don't see
what the point of living is
where your worth is next to nothing
who will say the final words that mean less

Feel Lost

it is impossible
the sadness I feel
how much more did my mother
feel when her father died
from a kick
of a pair of them
the truth is determined
by the most story-like story
I feel lost

October 2, 2006

Lost Aftereffects

hard to move
hard to pay attention
hard to play on
when you believe you've
lost and everyone
has left the stands

October 3, 2006

Pass Time

why bother with the falsehood
of writing every day
when I do little to create
art and much to fulfil the requirement
as if this would mean something

Not Getting Better

I am not confident
in my ability
to land on my feet
and so every day
is a torment
and all this while
family members of friends
are dying and my problems
are nothing

Night Of

I was at a farm, sitting by a table
with an umbrella over it, facing the farm
buildings with my back to a field
with a white fence in front of it.
You came over wearing a dark sweater
and a white, wide skirt
that was blowing in the wind.
You bent over to look at the table,
and it was some kind of machine
with some of it a computer.
You said you knew why I was so sad.

Then you sat on a stool and something funny
happened with how your skirt looked.
We both looked down at it while it blew peculiarly,
and then it blew toward your back (onto the fronts of your legs)
until you could sit down.
(yes, this is backwards.)
You said you had a student
who fixed the same problem (for you)
I was having with being sad.
You said he put in a "night of"
on your machine.
I asked what that was and you said
it made the software less reliable,
and that made space for the sadness to go away.
Then somehow you installed it, and then
we turned and looked at the field,
which was suddenly full of cows.
We kept on talking about the "night of,"
but I can't remember what we said.

Out But Resting

nothing is like it
the cold sometimes
driving drizzle
the fog like heavy cat feet
reaching over the hills
from a lonely beach
or a curtain behind which
a love might crouch
but I am able only
to stand by the largest tree
within view
and watch all this stuff
everything I see and have described
and all the thought and scenes
those things make you think and see
blow by on a cold
wind that comes from the same
place as loneliness

Change Avoided

we sometimes remain
ashamed for not changing
when change appeared imminent
but the opportunity passed
even though the change itself
was the definition of shame

Sleeping When It's Cold

looking selfward
the facts are revealing
I recall the mornings
when we slept in the sheer cold
with only the remains of the fireplace
fire to keep us warm until we fell
asleep / then the next morning
would be unbearable for its cold
engulfing our heads / but then someone
would build it up again
the fire from the past
and the reality that is a cold morning
would recede while I placed my head
in the sleeping bag
falling back to sleep for a bit
or the warmth would will itself my way
and the dreams would come back
think about it later
don't face it now
with facts like these
the mornings would need
to be colder to keep us alive

Over Color

there are numerous colors
in the shot
the events and people no longer
count / it's all about the lighting
and the connections beams of light
make / underexposure to emphasize
depth / you'd think a quick glance
would do opposite / this is one
of the surprises of shallow thinking

October 10, 2006

sad sad so sad

can I turn down my
own volume control
or rig up the Audacity
of realism and punch
myself into a fade out

Turn Off Rationality

sometimes the dumbest
approach is the best
don't belabor the thinking apparatus
walk a straight line
while the smarts do the thinking

Storm Back

storms pass overhead
lying in the field
bugs wondering
everything they can wonder about
clouds at a glance solid as bad news
but seen through intensity
looking up / back of the head bedded
down with bugs / they vary
like good news told by different people

all over the world this scene is played out
but you never hear of it
because each one sees the faces of God
and the faces of truth and no two
are alike

Wonder Land

such sense in less ness
you've probably noticed
that traitors are valued
only by the other side
the printer was once king
now it's the digital
lots of music makes for a story
all you need is pictures

Webcam Around Here

from here the view is smeared
the cars on the causeway
are moving from the sound
but they are not distinct
through the mist and fog
nearby she is sitting and writing
even though I don't know where
I believe that without the fog the mist
I would see her and my breathing
would slow and grow deep

Disquiet Always

the road will be long
as it always is
with lots of time to worry
about inadequacies
about the miles ahead
I always knew
the end would involve a new place
new places are uneasy

At the Lake One Cold Day

the old road
is still passable
on foot
by horse
with certain bikes
the old road passes
over a low shoulder
that looms over windwhipped water
flowing slowly as a smallstream
enters one end and another drain
the other

the cold wind tells the story
as the end of the day
the end of the month
the end of the year
grow near
ends do

October 17, 2006

That Man

ready to ride
to drive
I don't accept
their contention
that I am worthless

Warm Rain After a Long Drive

the drive
long
fear of falling asleep only for a few minutes
surprised how much I recall
of the details of the road
now the rain that is not cold
is not adding to the laid low
of my reveries on the drive
the hotel is though
the hotel

Party for 0

rejection bites
any hand that tries
to feed it

By The River On A Night With No Rain

in the hotel
tired and waiting for the loneliness
to kick me in the head
the streets here
as all streets are where rain is prevalent
ring with a low thrill
as I head down the hill
behind the girl fresh from Goodwill
clutching her bag but clearly
by the way her hips move
in her heels
and her hair shines
in the gaslamps
that it's a costume
in her hand
and not me in her heart
and no rain in the forecast
that could make being alone
something important

Can't Do It

I can't talk to them
can't face them really
even while sitting at a great meal
I watched outside the restaurant
as the women eager with youth
rush past
they are eager with the passing
warm wind strangely natural
for late October
even with the skies darkening
early / even with the rain never far
the river carrying its dark reflections
past steel bridges
when a kind word is said
I turn away

Last Known Photo

they had pictures
like the one of my mother
gloves / skirt over pants
(because women)
wheeling bushel baskets
in a ~~handmade~~ homemade barrow
November (Thanksgiving + post-wedding [?] pix)
I saw a camera in one photo
and it took me minutes to conclude there were 2
so where are they
burned
tossed
where I have not looked / not where I can't
if only
but I can write to know

One Times Repelling

when I repel the piano to disturb—
you look at my one
if it is
it is good with anything
is

when it starts repelling
with 1 people
you stopped directly

don't you think?
decorative diacritic
more clearly

so saying
the teacher repelling
with his own violin
after that
while you stopping finely
the time also the teacher
becoming simultaneous
repelling
the time while the pawn sounding the piano
it passed to end

don't you think?
as for the next time tempo raising
already 1 times repelling

At The

lots of bouncing
loud /as per usual... /
what they show
what they touch

News Item of This Day

with a shank!

game of the small school
which is on the reverse side of the house
is the production immediate
and it is tremendous "sound" is

especially
it is large
to be in the densely enormous thing where
you think that it is support battle

but as for this
opening the cover of the piano
whether the chance which it can repel is
(plus thought)

tune of everyone combination playing (the musical score)
which transfers?

it received

the rear many times
it encounters this situation
the shank

also new skill is appearance

with rise bow of one bow
phrase of first half + latter half
(below "new skill" you write)
this
very serious

adjusting to the melody of the piano of the teacher
when it has repelled
with 5 small turning points
the piano and the violin slipped semitone

it asked concerning new skill
"however the place where it repels with one bow is here
as for this
as for method of kind of repelling
which resets the bow doing
is not good?"
that
understanding it may not be harsh

with
you showed model

so so
the time where still
it begins compared to
although it became [mashi]
it does not reach to ahead the bow
in order to reach
it should have become.

you understood very well it
designates what as the word cup

practicing the place of one bow preponderantly
don't you think?
because next week you go to bed

me
the musical score is not visible well
the place where it is visible is visible
but it is

it probably means that the one which after all
it expanded copied is good?

I run
it is

it is the metronome
don't you think?
now heart it does not occur
can carry

it was good
it was good

She Is / Was

she is no longer
serious / she pledges
the dimensions that set her
apart / she is neat
of her refinement
she demands us
not go gentle

Hit It

somewhere along
the way the truth
slipped out the door
of our moving
fast moving
getaway car
and hit the embankment rolling
down toward the black water
you know what it is

Speech in the Paper

her words
on the page
I've photographed them
and I can read them now
I know how fleeting the experience is
of writing / how the darkness
spilling into the room and onto the page
cuts off the spirit dwelling in us
and in our writing
words are like springs
coiled and lightly pulsing
with this in mind
the small errors in her speech
the words chosen awkwardly
hint at her limits
none that mattered to him
or maybe me

No One's Club

the room is small
couples sit sipping
& watching the woman
eye them nude and spread
the music's not loud
just a jukebox up a tad
she is ordinary but
wears an expression
that breaks the bank
the place where valuables
are stored / we get it
a couple leaves
the mist up from the river
engulfs them
probably
as they walk to their car
for me the line of sight is improved
and now I am the one
stared at

After Club

talking about the mist
who else has disappeared
into it that night
which buildings took
the opportunity to drift
off while no one could
watch / and become landmarks
the mist cares little
for my opinions
it's too busy hiding
just hiding

Nothing Special

years ago tonight
Pruneface was born
I know her last name
but don't have it at hand
her first name is lost
though it's likely I could find it
it was cold that day
with a misty rain
they must have driven
from the farm
when the pain started
and when that was over
the question was whether
it would be me
crosseyed and not a good bet
or her her face scrunched
gender was the only proof
I wonder what would
have been different

Half-Day Old

the day after
whew / she
told me it was a 24-hour
labor / on top of the 8-year
stint as man of the house
you'd think WWII / it was about
the war but no
it was murder
(well that's too harsh
too false)
but a killing
that made her work 2 jobs
1 for money 1 for food
no prospects until death
provided my father
to her / and ever since
she's expected to be the queen
and who
not him not me
would stand in her way

On Fire

finding my way
looking like lots of work
not exactly what I know
but something I can do
this means not
doing what needs to be done
but only the lucrative

As I Expected

I require an argument
he is a no-brainer

In Another Dream

bad part of town
hair light but still it tangles
she disappears behind a door
and I don't want to accept
she doesn't pretend to be hidden
this is what hurts the most
don't confuse coincidence for fate

Takeout Girl

the takeout girl arrived
carrying white plastic bags
of styro boxes closed by tabbed slots
filled with greasy meat and veggie
chinese takeout / but the girl
was unexpected and handily
seductive / multitone skin and hair
a frothy skip at the tops of steps
a skirt not fit for her
and I had to choose
pay or praise her / choose
my level of lust for her
or tip her 20 percent
here's what I decided
follow the bulge in your pants

She Wrote

over a city again
I never feel at ease
looking down on black water
flashing orange from the streetlights
along its banks and bridges
the office lights / who's in there
house lights / what are they watching
my plane is bumping along
& soon will bump onto the runway
someone will be waiting for me
my name misspelled
with luck I will be snowed in here
even though no forecast forecasts it
my mother wrote of transportation
"and now we are riding through clouds,
an airplane, of which men hardly dreamed of
years ago, and at which wise men even scoffed at"
her extra prepositions remind me of the streetlights
there being always one too many
given the blackness of the water

Listening Over Easy

too many days
the story is endless and staggering
the place is full of chill air
and heartless laments
ask me about the cover intentions
the declaratives they don't shout
black river is just where is always should be
the running dog is my boss
shame on him for his me stupid

Hacking, Maybe

nights and ducks
donating difficulties
the page has been uploaded
and all / except the details / is/are well

How To Improve

of course as mentioned
he never really bothers
with the results
that those studies have yielded

which seems to be the thing
to do these days anyway

the best part is that
absolutely anyone can enter

Rosenbach and his brother Philip

in other words
only individuals can determine
their own sources of happiness

she was famous for the passionate intensity

read about how to improve
read about how to improve

what are you doing this month

do you know the author of this novel
but in the meantime
we have these debased statistical notions
of happiness to amuse us
in an idle hour

or what about the multitude
of other cases of plagiarism

however the author does not
make the slightest effort
to apply these wonders of modern
science to actually determining
what the alleged sources
of human happiness a

read about how to improve

in other words
only individuals can determine
their own sources of happiness

Though I Normally Wouldn't

meeting a random lunatic
I recited a million random digits
I had memorized from a book called
A Million Random Digits with 100,000 Normal Deviates
it went like this

10097 32533 76520 13586 34673 54876 80959 09117 39292 74945
37542 04805 64894 74296 24805 24037 20636 10402 00822 91665
08422 68953 19645 09403 23209 02560 15953 34764 35080 33606

the random lunatic spotted
the digit one off
a 4 where should be 3
who's the normal deviate
now / I ask you
randomly enough

Where No Man

story from my youth
retold with digital fidelity
but something this perfect
breaks the more readily
she is out of practice
though her sheer robe
won't permit it
the times felt cold
the roads were narrower
the cars more vocal and choppy
instead of the story it's the road
tagging along is regret
beside us the galloping horse
and dreams of sitting on the roof at sunset
looking West
I am here / with decades to spare

The Dying that Ends Tonight

do go gentle into that good night
to rage against the blaze of ending
is to learn too late that the message
of self is the paling of self

wise good wild or grave
all embrace the rest
of cramp and seizure
eyes enfolding the past

unfolding outside
the hard bright light
and its backward future
the last frail deeds
wrap up the mind going

by the name dying for a blessed curse
unpacking this and writing our own
is the meteor that's passed by and down
a gentle rage / a dancing bay

the grief cured is the curled
lip of a happy laugh
whistling a passing fancy go
into the night be it wise or wild
grave or good

Dying that Ends Tonight

do go gentle into that good night
rage against the blaze of ending
learn too late that the message
of self is the paling of self

embrace the rest
of cramp and seizure
wise good wild or grave
enfold the past

unfolding outside
the hard bright light
and its backward future
have left the last frail deeds going

by the name dying for a blessed curse
unpack this and write your own
that meteor's passed by and down
a gentle rage / a dancing bay

the grief cured is the curled
lip of a happy laugh
whistle a passing fancy go
into the night be it wise or wild
grave or good

Dying that Ends Tonight

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lip of a happy laugh
whistle a passing fancy go
into the night / wise or wild
grave or good

Surprise of Thinking

pressure fills
the head forcing thoughts
to explode / but from the ears
these thoughts burst
as listening

Purposeless and Heady

programming all day
the process is not simple
because rarely is there planning
but eventually the machine
skins its piece and throws down
but up on the ridge the horses
have stopped and the computation
and in this part of the world
the grass is unexpected
in its color and cool odor
the sun is unexpected
in its color and no odor
the process becomes less simple
because the machine is heeled
and unlike it am not

Intensively Farther

O hydrogen bonds to form
a three-dimensional network.

O hydrogen bonds to form
a three-dimensional network.

O interactions generate
a two-dimensional zigzag sheet.

The coordination geometry is based on
a trigonal bipyramid. The metal atom lies on
a twofold rotation axis.

O hydrogen bonds link molecules into
a three-dimensional network.

The coordination geometry is based on
a trigonal bipyramid.

Quickie

falling apart
the thanks life gives
nothing makes me
happier than well-
deserved misery

Do You

too much of the touching
treatments are following
me down through the glades
that make the rest restful
I won't make any more payments
in support of those treatments
therefore I expect...

when I think of the lights
going out I think of the warming
fire and the piles of cheap
sleeping bags / too many memories
add up to the black night
and no hope of going back
to that cold night or any others
like it

Other Nights

but the night takes so long
that sleep is out of the question
piles of blankets and the fire dying
down / the snow falling outside
stopping leaving room for the black
sky and northern wind to make it
all colder outside and soon
inside / next morning or afternoon
we'll go outside noticing the crunchiness
of the blue snow and after shoveling
out way out find some steaks and beer
then find our way back to the pile
after lighting the fire that is destined
to go out drawing the cold in
and our bodies together

Other Roads

the road out front
never was more than dirt
holes came and went
the road remained straight
meeting others at right
angles / springs and falls
mud summers pools winters
the snow could rise
to the banks from earlier snow
we would head there Fridays
and the two nights would mean
very hot air under the blankets
and a fire and more to make
it that way / that road
meant little until now
now that I can't ride or walk
down it

Past Right Here

one day she sat
in a chair feeding me
while I suppose
my father worked
on our first house
she was worried about me
I think because I was not
perfect and there was little
she could do / that they could do
someone snapped us
and all the debris that made
up that time / that place /
us

It's XML

in the case of XML
you "internationalize" XML
by providing the ITS
markup to people
who create a document or to localizers
people can voice their disagreement
pushing their issues
whether you're juggling with Java
or rolling on Rails
we are waiting to be wooed away
by your implementation
and we would love to list
your libraries on the validator's site
html sent back
giving the hint to the editing software
that the PUT has to be done
at this specific URI
to avoid any ambiguity

Gathering for Wet

sometimes the river flows past
even while we sit on the bank
and worship the ambiguity
of sky versus wave
the water that feeds on the sky
the leftover emotions
the depths of the ocean
that has gathered all that
for millennia

all this as latent entertainment
for bank sitters and other fretters
basking in stupor and wonder
and just imagining the heat
all this could dispel brings
fear to the brink of the bank
and all who sit
there

Point Remnants

no days are like these
the remnants are grappling
together again into wholes
like quilts of indistinct
possibilities / throbbing
with desire / watching
Captain Kangaroo
tv is the bringer of truth
and facts not stories
ny loneliness is of a car
a ride / a protest against
here / not here as usual
but here as in the idea
of a fixed point
that—really—is
the point

Fun Left in Creativity

one with rolled up ankles
and scissor wielding hands
facets of wonder to hold on to
there should be fun left in creativity
ones that swing and move in paths of destruction
the verb endings are placed at the end of the infinitive so there are
there should be fun left in creativity
the executive council was to discuss the agreement Tuesday
check out the all-new Yahoo!
one with rolled up ankles and scissor wielding hands
I've reviewed earlier versions of this program and was favorably
could the Best Actress award be awarded for a Spanish-speaking role?
it might be going to work
there should be fun left in creativity
could the Best Actress award be awarded for a Spanish-speaking role?
hell even think about it in the first place
while HP has decided to focus on proprietary architectures
HP OpenView and Mercury Interactive clients
are making the switch to the "freedom of choice" advantages from IBM software
a federal judge in Los Angeles, who previously struck down sections of the Patriot Act
has ruled that whatever is desirable is just out of grasp
these things keep me conscious just long enough
to curse their intrusive existence and slowly let my focus drift back
the distance between our palms and the wall is finite
and we know every seam and crevice
the verb endings are placed at the end of the infinitive so there are
approaching with skepticism you speculate and ask yourself
whether the truth of the matter
fortunately the concept is more straightforward than it sounds.

Untired

the river never tires
even now it is still the same
river it was when my mother
first saw it crossing from Groveland
to Haverhill or maybe times she crossed
at Rocks Village just to fish
for bass at the nice fishing
place / even then it wasn't
tired / how many times did she
visit the river / I cannot distinctly
remember her looking at it
the times we drove over a bridge
she must have / she never commented
on it / the river never tires
of being neglected

Peom

the nature of poetry
is the distended brain
the oblique angle
if it does from here to there
no poem it is
in a poem there is no
such thing as a typo

Lingualism

one of the first things to learn
is that words one after the other
aren't the center of spirit
or tree leaves or river waves
made by boats going upstream
whichever direction that happens
to be right then

words strung together
like boats tied together
heading downstream
waves pushing up against them
water slapping

too hard
face falling
dignity in our hearts

we face words
instead of facing downstream

Trip Plan

look forward to the cold
to the lowered clouded sky
to looking up and upon the wrinkled
underside of the clouds
which must be passing by but
looks like a ceiling put up
for grieving put up
for keeping a higher rain
off but it's filled with holes
too small to see but big
enough for all the rain
in the world all of it that ever
fell and ever will to fall
on me

One More Small Scene

the small scenes
hurt the most
the rusted ragweed
the browned tallgrass
the black trunk slithering
up in the background
snow falling slowly
not hard but intermittently
steady all afternoon long
my place is at ground level
having laid down before it started
and now I'm as covered as anything
by snow but the scene
won't let go won't bargain
with me and I expect I'll lie
here till the light's gone
till the scene's gone

Landing in Boston

out the window the full moon
up 12° / near the galley
the flight attendant sitting backwards
her legs crossed / her black nylons
under a blue dress / lights at
seduction level / night vision preserved
just a foot or two
away / her scent nearby / invisible
to all observed senses
the lights below the plane / deep cold
cars probing ahead with their headlights
smoking along / slow / cautious
the ride down smooth / the bay glassy
moon drawing lines to itself
her legs thick from desire and response
landing with shuddering thumps
the writer is awakened and ready to compose
she has yawned and the night is counterthrust
down to a standstill / a standoff

Cold Intersection at Night

in cold air
across the street
about to cross the street
after an early dinner but still it's dark
she is all in black
but even from the back
of a line of left-turning cars
her hip flair is apparent
even her brushed hair under her dainty hat

hurrying across makes
no difference
she is flared
perfectly while the steam from her breath
rises in puffs straight up

After The Day

they are speaking all at once
measure my mind first
send me into space
measure it again

When I Repel the Piano to Disturb

you look at my one
if it is
it is good with anything
is

when it starts repelling with 1 people
you stopped directly

don't you think
decorative diacritic
more clearly

so saying
the teacher repelling with his own violin
after that
while you stopping finely
the time also the teacher becoming simultaneous
repelling
the time while the pawn sounding the piano
it passed to end

On the Call

so I called customer support
and got a sys admin
a good one
really
the best part was she was a chick
a french chick
speaking at ease of hackerstuff like codes
a french chick chewing gum
liquid splits and snaps
chewing and french joie de wifi
picture her walking away
while the connection starts up

Cold Dinner

at dinner
in the paneled restaurant
couples involved with their food
the snow not shy under cars' wheels
I make many mistakes
and tell many stories

Idea Up

near misses at scale
triumph of the shallow
he agrees to speak for one dollar
paid in Swedish kroner at the exchange
rate in place on his last birthday
at the time of his birth

please fax the rate you are using
so we may check it

Short Walk Away

things are done
differently here

once outside the influence of the religions
the regions revert to their humanity

I can only imagine
what it could be given

the projected silhouette on the grey screen
pointing out 45° to the corner—definitely not normal

of course my plan
is to return another time

right now I'm tooling with real women
and don't dare express interest no matter how bio it is

being here is
like being here

or Nearby

Insides

the hospital is encased
in its future
or the past
is all around it
one death in that place
makes it important
just like everything
the past swallows

Cold Cold

one day the cold grabs
your clothes and cuts
into your skin
in Montréal the wind
blew into my eyes
like a headache
we went almost
the wrong way
we would have not escaped
though we were in the middle
of everything with everyone
cold so right there
it was not possible
to sense

Facts Ahoy

never can the facts
inform facts
linger but thought
pushes ahead
the creation of ideas
comes not from facts
facts just are but don't deserve
much facts are just one stone
sitting on an unpuzzled hand
at the end of a worry

The Fictional Account

when I think
to write a poem of them
I picture a sight
that doesn't exist
of the river from the hill
that is above all hills
looking down on the river
that drains all rivers
I picture too the heat and damp
of the summers I've spent with them
the smell of wet cut grass
that spews whiffs of life
drifting off
the river too wants to join in
but soon the storm will rip
down the valley and all will end
with that

Slow Down

cold night
too cold for snow
what snow's already fallen
crunches under our soles
instead I sit by the window
the heat from my stove
separated from the cold dark outside
by 2 panes of glass
cold night
it isn't hard to see why
we use fire at times like this
nearby the river keeps flowing
though it's considering
slowing down

Working Lies

watching them gamble
seeing the hope stacked as chips
rolling ball / differentiating dice
cards sliding machine like
all in all they sit slumping
except for the times
what happens is exactly
what they need

In Casino

dressed like
a woman out for it
she really is just a farmgirl
in over
her head
which aches for the shade of her apple tree
before the apples fall
and rot

Turning in the Lights of Vegas

in the lights by the slots
women are waiting their turns
they all have a look of power
but well but
the harsh lights don't help
their eyes show it all
the heavy liner with the darting pupils
they wait their turns

Even in the Bellagio

More Vegas Than That

I saw her on the mall
not a mall actually more like a museum
she was manning a booth
selling body jewelry
she was looking back behind me
her eyes were dark shadows
her lips were dark
her hair her cap
she looked behind me intently
some would say darkly
the museum though

remember Vegas in its heyday
Fremont Street
the lanky cowboy
the cowgirl who crossed her legs
they built a roof over it
and now it's a museum
can anything be more Vegas
than that

Over the Horizon

think desert think
heat / but these days
it's the dry & cold
high up & dry
high up & cold
it's a gamble here
for those unprepared
they mucous up
then shiver to the ground
where breathing
ends and becomes the gentle wind
that builds to the storm
that runs down the arroyo

Fight Why Not

the palooka steps in the ring
lights / crowd / ref / thumping noises
will there be a fight
or lovemaking
if the doors open to the elevators
the one who steps out will say
goodbye / or the leaves will blow
down the lane / perhaps the wind will
blow down the arroyo
all is the fight
we are the palookas

Giving the Community More Votes

the main point is that the size
of the XML is reduced
resulting in more optimal communication
after all who knows better than they what is needed?
2" likewise for other Java versions
provide the model's size
as part of the ListModel interface
copy the image file grapefruit
the code example shows
the old code commented out
above the new code
SortedListModel uses a java
figure 3 shows this application

When Dust is Honored

an old yoke
a carriage tongue
an iron seat the shape of an ass
these are the totems of the past
but without the stories
they are abstract
even though they are here
they rest on the grass
and bend its leaves
they are abstract
and that past is abstract
what kind of dust gathers
on the abstract

At Box No. 3286

things I won't do for love
include replacing corroding soil pipes
and trepanning at home
everything else is A-OK
eager-to-please woman (36)
seeks domineering man
to take advantage of her flagging
confidence. / tell me I'm pretty
then watch me cling

Come Out and Play

tonight the cars
are finding their ways to dry garages
and warmth from the rest of the world
the bridge is laced in ice
no one will cross over on it
the river still flows
but the bridge is all iced over
the road down to the bridge
is too slippery to travel
so children have taken it
no such thing as a moon
clouds hang low over the bridge
so tonight the cars
are all in
everyone is
but the children

Siting / Wondering

been found
the road
trees beside it
the hills define the path
shrubs beside the stones
this is just an outline
they've been found
my job
sit in the car
windows down
music from the past
playing over and over
in the past
I didn't know
there were things I would need to know
that needed to be learned
then and impossible to learn now

Unlike Other Things

urban decay
every city is dying
from the second it's started
a city like this is really
a dream that doesn't understand
that it's dying while it's being created
being torn down while being built up
down with up
creation with decreation
architects understand this
urban planners
but not dreams
they have only one emotion
fear
oh and dread

Fear Revealed

fear is interesting
curling smoky around the head
other appendages of sensing
like the heart
the extremities
fear come from the heat of danger
or despair
as the fire continues
the fear is produced
the surprise is that the fire
is in us and that it
blows away
with only a small breeze

Filling Up Books

all summer the required reading
is filling up books
plot or literature is the apparent choice
which means for now
new books or used
we are beaches
places to lie
our goal is to be out of focus
imagine a small
(I mean size)
girl's face (her
face is small not
she is young)
with a faint red
lipstick on her lips
sticking to her lips
now forget you are imagining her
and tell me
does she love you
this exercise is like a book
you read it and it's
as if the world we like what
the words make in your head
people take things in their heads
use them to fill up books
that are read on the beach
in summer and those books
make things in people's heads
which they use to make more books
this is the only part of the equation that changes
through feedback
the rest of the world in nature changing slowly
and people reacting to the stories
they read
and poems too
sometimes

What Happens on the Edge Stays on the Edge

some things are too good to pass up

when an ocean behind a tape recorder is fashionable,
a reactor learns a hard lesson from a muddy stovepipe

a briar patch over a short order cook
wisely steals pencils from a frightened anomaly

for example a foreign pickup truck indicates
that a light bulb of a cargo bay cooks cheese grits for the sheriff

the point is to see
and not insist on sanity
or rationalism to embalm
what you see
to permit the pre-brain eyes
to see only and the for the post-thought write brain
to write what is seen
nothing in between
end to end
a kind of
poetic neutrality

Metaphor Police

A Collection of Poems from 2007

Richard P. Gabriel

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How to Recall

the writing has started
the diagrams starting to be put together
in this way / by bits and pieces
the remembering starts
the explaining
the stories within / on top of / besides stories
all other stories fight their nonlinearity
this one doesn't
even though one word like this one
is followed by exactly 0 or 1 others
sequence is not story
and it's not linearity
it's a pacing and the traces
of the web being painted

Roughing It

building a cabin
alone / filming yourself
building everything by hand
even spoons and bowls from dried stumpwood
building an outhouse
and a cache up on stilts
a vault underground as an icebox
(permafrost)
all the furniture
a fireplace
and then to live up in Alaska
alone for decades
recording everything
caribou / bear / moose / wolverines / ptarmigans / rabbits / magpies
trout / salmon / sheep / wolves
all the players but could it be you
could you live this way
could you live this way
cold / alone / writing it all down
filming it
there are questions that come to mind

Travel Date

alone again in a hotel room
tired from long flights and bad food
bleary from getting up early to make the flight
in a time zone where getting enough sleep
means trying to sleep too early
and then getting up too late after not sleeping much
then required to be smart
all day / eating bad again
no exercise / bad light / coffee all day
this is why I am who I am

Blame for Life

who is guilty
the taxi driver who drops us out of town
then comes back after dinner to get us
is he guilty
the pizza was good
but too sweet
too mild
too aromatic in a nonpizza fashion
but upscale no doubt
narrow waisted women
so young they look 12
even though I was there only
for an hour I feel
I will miss them

I Felt the Cold Hand Last Night

the story takes shape
the taxi stops on the ramp exiting the bridge
that goes along the river then across
it's 50 years old or more
painted yellow
but needs it again
with rusted hex bolt heads
looking oldschool industrial
or military / rain sets the mood
this bridgework was built in the days
of the story and I've vowed to recall this
scene as I write others in that story
and why not / why not
make it like it was

Old Things In Mind

side delivery
making wind rows in the direction of travel
sulky rake
making wind rows perpendicular to the direction of travel
one was simpler
but when row balers came along
it was necessary to make wind rows in spirals
so the pick-up baler could work without stopping

these things
are the totems of the past
they ask to be stories
they say their meanings quietly

the barn for example
holds what we put in it
all winter / it is built
for many purposes
including a toilet
a workshop
a coop
cow stalls
doors on either end
space and space for hay
everything about it is dangerous
even the memory of it

Long Hours

after work
I'm in the midst of traffic
that is red in front of me
and white behind
my apartment is uneven
and leaks warm air
everything I have is cheap
what I dream of is just more
above my roof the sky blackens
mirroring me
the stars are like my dreams
everything about it is a cliché
it's a big city
if I drove for 3 hours
everything could be different

Teach Nothing

poets write of fiction
randomness and indeterminacy
as if they read mathematics
and understand statistical reasoning
like Bayes's theorem or neural nets
but it's just a way to justify
incoherence and narrative disruption
as if a poem about nothing
can be justified through an appeal
to what is not known
they speak of the theory of language
as if it weren't a system that works
well enough to have built one hell of a world
of course theories of language have also given us
senseless writing as if the two were related
so here is what it all amounts to
teach a man to fish
and you feed him for a lifetime
give him ramen noodles
and you don't have to teach him anything


Just In Case

have you noticed
that some cities
at night are bitter
that their lights illuminate
the disappointments
the woman who whispers sweetheart
as he walks into the kitchen from the bedroom
the man who watches her walk away
after a short conversation of regret
they are still friends
they think to themselves and say to each other
but the streetlights
the lights in the offices above
and homes up in the hills
and the lights invisible in the streets around them
know lies when they shuffle past
he will think of her many times
when the lights are again like this
and she too will think of him
but neither will know
will ever know
what small things only had to be done differently
what extra things had to be said
what small things had to not be said
for example how he should have surrounded her with himself that one night
it rained
but that is not why
for the city to stop being black in the night
and for the sun to rise
and for her red hair to slowly turn brown
until facing the sunset they finally knew
what love is

Up Coast

down by the ocean
in a house brand new and modern
too done but with the taste that comes from a single mind
the window that faces the breakers
is paned for the wind
and this is the window he stands in front of
as the rain slants down into the firs and sand
the wind heaves at him
trying to shoulder him aside
as the dark figures how to last longer
but even while he looks out at all this
holding a glass and chewing without purpose
his eyes are on her
a thousand miles away
where the sun never seems
to stop

Another Night of Lights and Her

she doesn't understand what I mean
when I watch her when she's not watching back
she is not used to the dark and artificial light
her color is not good under these circumstances
she loves sentences like the one I just wrote
but she doesn't know it doesn't = poetry 
but she doesn't care about things referred to by ∇ this word / see
she cares mostly about how shiny her hair is
in this light
how dark her hair looks and how long it is as I watch it/her sway
while she walks away in the cold air
she likes how her hip width and the way she steps
makes the view of her from his point of view intriguing
other things she ignores
like who she is
and what she pictures for herself
or what she likes to eat when she's alone
what I mean is that all of these observations are about
what is deserved / do I deserve this
does she
what about him \leftrightarrow her

Does This Matter

when girls
(sometimes men)
are physically capable
of separating their butt cheeks
and shaking them
there is no movement
in any other body part
not the legs or lower back
just simply the booty
it's crazyyy

Street Scenery

the perfect woman
can get any man she wants
everything about her
is heartbreaking
I watch her standing on the corner
waiting for the traffic to subside
waiting for the sky to clear
waiting for her heart to settle
on what she sees as difficult choices

but the choices she has
come so easy that they pile up
and it's abundance she faces
the cars that seem to come from everywhere
just when she's ready to make her move

instead it begins to snow
her shoulders are becoming coated
the dark deepens
I can only stand here
watching her
growing heartbroken

Does Science Change the Past

the sentry of this place
is a pillar by the gate
it is a falling leaf lying on a stone step
nearby
the first thing in the morning is the sunlight
lasering
funny word for something natural
the leaf and just after
the stone
the sentry of this place
is less than truthful about the meaning
of the task
sometimes the sentry is a bit of wind carrying
the faint scent left over from a long time ago
when this happens the birds and insects
in the trees and on the leaves of grass
pause for a second and if they could think
they would think of what that past meant
to the sunlight back then
when there was no such thing
as lasering

Both Hands Off the Wheel

I've been walking around
the edges of a cemetery
not far from the Mexico border
in Bisbee / there are trees all around
but none in the cemetery
the headstones seem about to fall
apart / there is just sandy dirt everywhere
there are small roads through it
even though it is not a place of warmth
it is hot at this hour / I feel a pull
an urge to walk the roads but
the road south beckons
or to the north there's a straight road
on the way to Tombstone
and beside it is a handmade marker
covered in plastic flowers
and shape like a cross with a star in its heart
around it are pictures of the deceased
the best time to view it
is right around sundown
there's time to head south and make it there in time
just in time for the slanted sun to make it hard
to see well
but that's the right way to pay respects
better than looking in at the roads
from the edges / better to do it
in the fading light and rising cold

This Device Again

inside this little device
the thoughts that lead to sadness
recoil / they respond to inputs
from all sides like an all-seeing eye
what is this device you ask
it is small
it is invented by a genius
it is manufactured by minds
under an influence
which can be detected
by another little device

Stop For Refreshment

picture of Amboy as seen driving west
Route 66 runs straight into Amboy in the distance
even further beyond the railroad
is the Amboy crater

the shoe tree in the foreground
is growing next to Route 66
and provides some extremely rare
shadow in the desert
a bit further on the right is Roy's

picture of Amboy as seen looking west
on the left you see the Amboy crater in the distance
on the right is Roy's

picture of Roy's as seen from the east
in the heyday of Route 66
this would have been a chance to get gas
and stop for a refreshment
or even a night sleep in one of the cabins

shoe tree in Amboy
the shoe tree grows on the south side of Route 66
tourists throw used shoes
in the tree to leave a not
so permanent mark

beyond the shoe tree is the railroad
it's a busy railroad out in the lonely desert

note the shoes that fell off the tree
the tree hides the crater in the distance
and grows next to a construction best described
as a dry channel

Late Late Late Late Late

being late
seeming to be late
some shadows seeming longer
make me nervous that I'm late
my sense is that I'm not
late but the feeling of being late
never comes late

Nowhere In a Car

I'm stopped at a stop
light on a desert road
at a crossroads puzzling
in its positioning and I see
no reason for it to be here
the desert in winter is combinations
of brown and yellow
the materials don't matter
just the colors like the red
of the light that keeps me sitting
here idly while my car idles
and no one comes down the road
from the right and no one comes
down the road from the left
oddly an empty can of coke
rolls by / I knew neither that
the wind was blowing nor that coke
cans were prevalent around these parts

eventually the light changed
and I moved on

Oh Stories

looking at maps on the net
seeing places where someone
I know had lived before I was born
I feel the pull / I can almost smell
the place / the lakes and seas nearby
are warmth in water and I can nearly
feel it / but now what's left is only
half remembered memories held together
by stories from no one knows where
the result is a nostalgia with no origins

be good and you will be lonely
the chief danger in life
is that you may take too many precautions
there is nothing worth the wear of winning
but laughter and the love of friends

Inappropriately Famous

those who look down
shall be looked down upon
they have no knack for tilting
as the wind dictates
they stay in one stance
which makes it easy
to look down on them

Pictures, Small Ones

the pictures
who took them
Nana maybe
but they look well composed
although my parents are too
close to the center
for it to be an artist
but they are not silly
the pictures aren't
the backgrounds are more important than my parents
I know how they looked
and what they felt
but the barn
the buildings
the milk shed
the house being built
the piano
the table set for dinner
the duffel I recall
from when I was a kid
these are the important things
because it's about the place
always about the place

Unproven

she is a flurry
of ideas and thrilled movement
she dances and makes light of serious
things / I have fallen for her
despite her being too other
but I'll just hover around
nothing dangerous
just her

What An Animal

the arc of the story
bends around the curve
of my skull and it's impossible
to feel any sense of personal divinity
when you realize you have one

Odd Thought

despite all their differences
the people on the sidewalks
of this block are nearly identical
same size / same hair / same noses
all moving like ballet people
like soldiers / like can-can dancers
like synchronized swimmers
cut loose from the juice
with all the sameness
what makes the mind flit
from one to another

Bottle Hunt

my girlfriend and me
hunting empty bottles
of wine in trash bins and heaps
in a town history rattled by long ago
beside a river polluted to death
fish heaped up on its banks when the tide
goes out that close to the sea was it
all / typically
we hunted in winter
bitter air rasping off the water
propelled down the main street parallel
to the river by some quirkiness of physics
and the standing of buildings
sometimes this preposterous wind
would grab a wrapper and thrust
it down the street and against a wall
if it was a newspaper we'd go over
and read it quivering by the wind
we'd hold the tremors inside our hearts
so they wouldn't bust out
and scramble the words into a poem
of rapture / later we'd pull bags of bottles
to the liquor store for redemption
yes do you hear me now
for redemption

Thoughts on Love Like Mud in a River

tired of the old
tired of new
the banks of the river
are loose and failing
black mud at low tide
(tidal river)
we parked there once
she gave me an oblong kiss
one way or another the river flowed
the sun setting might have been romantic
but there was too much happening
of a personal nature
we were all over ourselves
to protect our innocence
in the eyes the pious
I'm sure music was playing
because I noticed the radio
was on later when I started the car
again / when we backed out
onto the road it was all/most dark
the fireflies were syncing up
around the bend in the river
the green bridge glowed from the heat
of the day / the tide turned
it seemed to stop / a river dead
in its tracks / I took her home
we were both tired
of the new and the old
I noticed the river was full
of mud / hard imagine
in all that dark

For Anything

can old things
represent what's real
the first invention
hitting the mark closer
the sidewalk for example
made for living
today it's
just driving that counts

Counterexample

I saw match point on TV
McEnroe over Connors
Wimbledon and I knew
McEnroe won except
the TV camera broke on that point
and what I saw was last year's
match point

I knew the truth
I was justified in my belief
but Plato was wrong
I didn't know nothing

Simple Minds

truth leaks
lies inflate
the use of the mind
is as a patch
is as a pin

Warning

when you can't sleep
you can't dream
be careful operating machinery
watch out for drowsiness
for dizziness
for evidence of odd karma
and unfashionable bedsheets
when you can't dream
you can't have nightmares
you have no way to operate machinery

Tracings

art is a mess
paint all over
tables / floors / walls
drawn from life
using dead charcoal
a silhouette traced
light aimed straight at the heart
art has a next day
it's the day when the painter and painted
pass on the street / she in her tight skirt
and happy slip and it's up to the poets
to guess who if anyone recognizes whom

Again

nothing likes to work
when time is short
always the restart
the restart

Revision Experiment No. 1

writing is filled with hardship
writing is filled with difficulty
writing is achieved with difficulty
good writing is achieved with difficulty
good writing is achieved with much difficulty
good writing is achieved with more difficulty than is warranted
good writing is achieved with more difficulty than is worth it
good writing takes more effort than is worth doing
good writing takes more effort than it's worth my doing
good writing is not worth my doing
good writing is sometimes worth my doing
writing is sometimes worth my doing well
writing is always worth my doing well
writing is always worth doing well
writing is worth doing well
writing is worth doing
writing is doing

I Might Know Her

she works randomly
lives in Queens
with her cat and husband
or is it cat/husband
she writes poetry about plants
and cats
she believes that green things
bright lights
slinky shadows
and impending dark
are important beyond thought
flowers and birds too
and bees
cutting and gently cooking vegetables
especially tomatoes
her poetry inspires anger
in people who don't like plants
green things
flowers and all that stuff
but especially and pointedly cats

True Enough

thinking about tomorrow
tonight though
is in the way
nights these days
whisper badly in an ear
that doesn't work enough
the night is for wandering
rest is never the goal
just getting through it
then tomorrow hits
you in the face

After Hearing

wish to return
to the fog
it obscures
covers
hides
but in this it is
at least
the truth

Bridge Along

the argument
is no place like home
people come together as stories
for a reason in a place
unlike anything you've ever experienced
just like you do
their past no longer matters
this place is different
it's right here
so real
I'd let the fear in for 5 seconds
then forget it
I'm not a leader
but he is smart
we can either live together
or die alone

Gubbish

days just drop by
everyone is making
suggestions
when something frightening
makes its way to the scene
the results are undecidable
what this reminds me of
are the simple semi-groups
that pretend to be all there
when they are just filled
with holes

LA Skyline in my Best Pants

the changing colors
around sunset smears
the lost sky
between the highrises
if you look at time
the right way
or you take your time about it
the way I look at it
the way the skies are laid out
throughout the year
a dusk like this
is just one of the gang
later it's the lights
again and again
car and buildings
streetlights
the tangle of them all
dense with little meaning
or none

Sharpened Points

sentences arranged
to tell you things

sentences in crowds
sentences running
for the doors

compact in their form
they have dispersal nozzles
to enjoin the weakest understanding

when we spout mixing meaning
with spit we join the angels
on the head of a pin
where the ultimate
paradoxicals dance on their toes

the smallest marks don't mean much alone
but piled up their contributions
are lotion on dried curiosity

it takes a long time
to learn what a sentence is

at least we still
have that

On a Jet Plane

nothing open
cheap burgers / now I know why they're cheap
no stores
the country road turns into a divided highway
no way to turn around for miles and miles
the chair in room's back is broken
but I am connected
online
mailing to beat the bland
the blahs
cold / near 0
another long trip
get it

Problem Page

one-armed men rule
songs / movies / tv shows
Springsteen / Sneaker Pimps
Lynch / a list of dadaists
making time and fabulous babes
acting / dying grab a hold of nothing
like your one-armed man

Wrong Food

sick
bad gut feeling
bent over typing
head not able to make poetry
perhaps it's the big white bus tonight
not to mention the snow
sleet freezing rain
a wintry mix's all

As A Dog

all night up to the bathroom
releasing liquids my body had made
of the bad food from the nearby restaurant
and all day asleep to gather some strength
the storm was an annoyance
I had to go out to get food and something for the trip
tomorrow / still tired I hope to sleep most of the way
does this happen too often
some have said so
some who care I suppose

Another Day Waiting

damn the airlines
they try to remedy their failures
by trying more of them
they believe that scarcity
brings abundance
it is so easy to hate them
don't they know that

Here No More

clear today
I hope to return home
will my hatred of this trip
ruin my job
will I be sitting on the plane
finally
or will I just go back to Boston
to wait there
indefinitely stuck here
what a hell

Tube at the Edge of Forever

imagine keeling
over while watching
Lost and 2 years later
being discovered a mummy
the tube still running
in Queens / but why would
no one come earlier
why are you mummified
and not dessicated or rotted
and most importantly
what are 4 8 15
16 23 42

Seeming

when all the suffering is over
does it all feel good
or simply over

who would want their last minutes
to come down to a question
like that

at dinnertime the 6:05 comes down off
Tehachapi into the yards with 5 in front
and 2 in the middle / something similar would be true
at 6:20

high desert at midnight
cool not cold
in February
trains here too every 5 minutes

suffering is being sent
by boxcar / flatcar / container car
everywhere

Change of Luck

about those trains
obvious in their heavy humming
you feel their engines
need to explode
if they were people they would have blown
a gasket long ago
here the cool air amplifies the effort
the ascent grips the imagination
the weight shocks the hotel room
where the page lies on the table
laden to inspiration
maybe next time I'll pile up a quarter/penny/quarter stack
just beyond the crossing and see what the train
makes of it

Anniversary

later tonight
a year ago the worst happened
to her and her family
no one was ready for it
I stood there and everyone
but one
must have thought I was helping
but like them I
was helpless

Trains on 66

more trains
again an incline
a train town
horns because a crossing is nearby
I am worried as usual
the trip
the job
what I am able to do
though high up / snow in patches all around
the air tonight is not harsh
I am snug in a hotel by the tracks again
and as they pass by
I understand the places I could be

Tired & Rocky

up on the rock encrusted
Second Mesa again
the hotel is just barely a place to stay
we drove to Keams Canyon
for dinner because the power was off up here
the café there had a painting of itself
on its wall complete with a picture of itself
the joys of recursion / a heavy meal
including fry bread

few Hopi left though some long
for righteousness / even the divorced
we could not find the man making Joe's belt
but Joe is willing to make it charity

High Desert

exhausted
too much travel
high altitude and the dry
is getting to my throat and nose
the days go by quickly
the nights slowly
I want to sleep / sleep / sleep
so much to do when I get back
and a long drive between here and there

Caged

among the watchers
the watched watch
this is the nature of intimidation
and resistance
but the cage is a handicap
though the watchers don't know
they are less free than their arrogance tells them
when you watch back hard
all tables are turned
beware your choice

Trip Changes

you will drive far today
from light to light
from desert to bay
we can tell you what we might hate
we will be up and down all trip
joshua tree / sage / piñon / palos verde
this trip won't change the world
but the world will continue
to render its own

Kingman

except we didn't
we all broke down
we are stuck in a Podunk
awaiting parts from NY
at least 3 more days till we can leave
if everything goes well
or longer
or longer
or more
or more
my congestion got worse and may be on the way to better
this is all a version of hell I'm sure
and even Strindberg would be unusually
depressed over this

Quote This

the fountains weren't running today
"the fountains weren't running today"
I learned this at the restaurant last night
while eating a carne asada burrito which was not
too bad / the top sign said
pay phones
"pay phones"
this way
and the bottom one said
restrooms
"restrooms"
mens and womens restrooms
this way
investigators stood at the sink area
in the bathroom
and observed only those women
who entered the restroom alone
the control in this was the availability
of at least one open sink
soap
paper towels
water
only 40% of women
washed their hands

Black Mountains

most dangerous section
of 66 over a pass
hairpin turns
steep inclines
declines and handbuilt stone retaining walls
holding up the low side of the road
at the top a turnout
with an added loop that must
have been a lovers' lane
today many shrines are there
1923–1946 / dates of birth
in pairs
gone now
this was their place
now it's just a place
where love once dripped
where the view downvalley opened up hearts
where the danger multiplied
into / what else to call it /
love

10 Hours

long drive
after an expensive repair
the car stinks
from the burned out clutch
perhaps tomorrow I'll have the car washed
top and underneath
to rid it of the bad vibes
from the last 3 weeks
and I'm so tired
so weary
so out of it

Drive Around Day

slow day
all the cool air could do is waft about
errands and slow moving
the sun breaking
the bright windows
into shards of transparency
the end of the day fell slowly
early March
odors coming up
I wondered many times today
when was the last time I had
a really good sleep

In the Bonds of Life

the story happened
traces were left in the world
that I could find with enough
patience / time / luck
one good idea is that what
I believed was the opposite of truth
that her family was rich
that his was poor
from these small facts and knowing
those I know I must piece it together
to explain
understand

Communicating Integration

currently the effects of technology
are apparent to all of us
integration
although a lengthy process
the transition is least in our privileged
neck of the woods
taking this course console
giggle stick ling cod
twenty-three purple perches four lives
a technology this pervasive must surely be adopted
by the essence
convenience and efficiency
are the driving force for produce
a cleaner more precise product
in a fraction of the time
although the service has
automatic translation of different languages
for users of the make a difference I guess
I like seeing it work though
in explanation for this
I can't understand how people can rely so
pass by children will lose touch of reality
communicating

Titanic Discovery

the question of the tomb
is asked

statistics based on names
taken in clusters forms part of the reasoning
on faith

and DNA applied to prove
no relation

consistency with
is taken as evidence for

nothing is wrong
so it must be right

and then the curious symbol
a curved peaked inverted V with a circle within
does it mean a thing

and so what if God turns out to be a man
didn't we think that all along

Fear Itself Fear

one thing leads to another
tonight it's fatigue
leading to fear of travel
it will only become worse
as the hours go by
good bye

Lineman

a day in the air
music bubbling away the hours
threat of snow drives me to undivulged paranoia
the light on landing is the deepest part of twilight
trees dark and complex against the thin layer of snow
someplaces there are whitebarked trees
with extravagant crowns and explorations
next to me on the plane a man was trying
to write a poem called SF
short and clipped phrasing
it looked naïve when viewed naïvely
without a turn of the head
while looking into the bright white
sun on clouds over Wichita

Blame Is For...

I blame life for it
the turns behind
the forgery of truth
that people could
believe so deeply
in things made of sharp edged marks
on a page over
the pingpong colors
of a spraypainted night scene
illuminated by a ring of halogens
I blame life for inventing abstraction
in the creases of our brains
my god which species was it
that invented this
and gave it to us

By the Way

Ron Goldman and Richard P Gabriel
have published some articles
(principally original wharfside jn
price range wharfsider nj price range research
wharfside nj preice range wharfside nj price
ange finding, wharfside nj price reange)
but there was an unintended side-effect

Writing on the Wall

when the city fails
its goal of making things new
at the same time it wears out
itself and its denizens
the city is defined by its potholes
repairs and patches are about rest
the poster doesn't reveal
more than a line in a play
no more than the small music
behind the heavy static
little more than the heat of graffiti
the chick in Oakland

Low Flying Black After White

nothing like it
first warm day
(suddenly) buds appear
leaves bop up
grass on speed
instead of this
workload of allday variety
do you remember the time
two ravens chased the egret
none were panicked
but it was
nonetheless
hot pursuit
in slow motion

Look Close Down

big house
not worth much now
faulty / falling down
dream of it / what else
the songs trickling through the tubes right now
remind me of the warmth of the sun
in early spring even with the ground
still frozen / and it's all frozen
to me now / no going back
no telling who the unsatisfied girls
might want but I can tell you
this / not me / not ever again
the past is a train of cliffs
falling over one all you can do
is fall over the next
from space it all looks green
till you look close

South Boston

this part of the city
is vaguely familiar
on Thanksgivings
we would go there to eat
the food was cooked on a coal stove
I spent many hours sitting
at the front bay window
or at the kitchen table
looking down from the third floor
where on usually cold days
nothing at all happens
there is nothing on tv
the apartment is small
there is nothing to see
nothing to do
and dinner always seems
hours away
I wish I could go back for just one day
with a camera and a scanner
to learn

Really So Slight Stupidity

not much point
really
in spending time on these poems
so slight
and beside the point in their blunt
stupidity
there is no beauty of language here just
plainness
nothing here to win contests
or even
be published for real
no
not for real

Thunder and 1965

rain in virtue wipes
down the windowsides
wind trying to twirl the candlepines
leaks through the storm windows
lightning surprise then we count
every 5 we count a mile
3 miles or less and we begin hard fear
this can mean we sit in the car
our secret
sitting in the car in the garage
mother me and snooks
1 of these three has programmed
the fear in the other 2
subsiding the storm has produced
a green lingering odor
in the fields and lawns
the oaks are relieved

A Kind of Blind Art

something off on the colors
the ocean a blackened blue
it's hard to imagine it's
the same ocean
the sand is the color of ripened wheat
carrying darker wells of water receding in waves
up the slight slope of the shore
odd bolts of ice all snow colored
but one that in the light which is low on the horizon
is of the form of a thick shard of glass
behind a brown breakwater
across the exiting river
a lowlying spit of land echoing the wheat
and a white block building with red roof
a flag and tall antennas
the sky is egg robin w/ faded cherry low clouds
a picture I took when young and discovered
again after being discovered again
I look at it now and think
I once looked at it then

Pray for a Rerun

what do you do
when movies from 10 years ago
show love much more than now
my answer
just watch them

Greatness Never Ends (Supposed)

the great man is losing
his mind bit by bit
a bit of irony for someone
famous for trying to turn
computers into faithful servants
of human brilliance
we had met 3 times
and I am memorable
but he remembered nothing of me
when we had dinner
he and I and 3 others
he divided his attention
the little left I suppose
between the salmon and a little girl
outside his window
making finger puppets for her
and moving the food rapidly into his mouth
the great man knows it's over
except for the dinners
bought for him for being great

Float Off

the writing's on
the wall is crumbling
down the hall annie
waits and shimmers
like sparkling dish detergent
a substance used to enhance
the cleansing action of water
a detergent is an emulsifier
which penetrates and breaks up
the oil film that binds dirt particles
and a wetting agent
which helps them to float off

Un-Heard Of

it's a form of tourette's
provides out-of-the-box
functionality appropriate
for most scenarios
then they raise their salaries
because they've been soooo
busy awwww!

Not Only Quick But Lousy Too

they are all versions
unheard of diversions
someone wrote today
poetry is about rhyme
well it's about time
that's what I say

More Like Woods

there were three fields
the large one
more than 10 acres
in front
then a stonewall fence with 1 gate
the second shaped like an L
for a reason I never knew
then a short road through a pine woods
through a gully usually wet that drained
a fourth field to the north
into the third field
abandoned before I was born
and so partly filled and filling
with saplings / birch and such
this field was sandy and the most congenial
it's where we buried our dog
after my father put her to sleep with ether
I was upstairs in my room in bed that afternoon
he was down by the door to the cellar
and I heard the struggle
the dog I'd known since I was 3 or 4
now she was 15 or so
I helped him carry her across the street and through those fields I described
I helped him dig a pit in that sandy field near the back
a few weeks later I went back there and she was gone
even after that short time
the field had shrunk
and had become more like woods

No North No South

funny what you don't notice
looking out from the living room window
across the street and toward the big field
at dusk the remnants of sunset
which I took to be the glow of California
was down behind the tall oaks and pines
but not until just the other day did I stop to think
that therefore the street / the road really /
was a north-south affair
as if those directions didn't exist
or exist enough to make a difference
in any thought I had
only looking at a map did I realize it
was half the world not important
to me then
and if so why

Walking It Is

“I made it on about the eighth of October ‘38.”

“I was fixin’ a puncture on a car.

I had been mistreated by a girl.

I just felt blue, and the song fell into my mind
and it come to me just like that and I started singing.”

“There’s been some blues played like that.”

“This song comes from the cotton field
and a boy once put a record out—Robert Johnson.

He put it out as named ‘Walkin’ Blues.’

I heard the tune before I heard it on the record.

I learned it from Son House.”

Dynamic Languages Thomas

rage rage against the dying of the snake
do not go gaga into that good lake
their frail o-line might have danced in green bay
because their coding had forked no emacs
rage rage against the buying of the cake
do not go go go near that clam bake

Carla Curtis

waiting for the reply
eager to write right back
it is always a woman
who might as well be the muse
of the day or week month or year
when you cannot reach the hers
any other way but the written word
the invention of email and the technology
means all that / remember Carla
Carla Curtis who moved away by the 9th
to Maine and I would watch her direction
on the drive north to our place
I wrote to her before she left
did she never know it was me
did the fact it was words mean
just that little to her that it made her
think / made her wonder
now I see she moved from Maine
to just near her
kept her name and had a daughter
and died just 2 years ago
I wish I could write her once more
only once is all I'd need now

Temporal Madness Through the Same Old Things

not that sickening beauty again
how often do we need to read
of the saplings and blossoms
or dough rising or the seeds
of tomatoes smeared across the counter
or the vegetables that spring up each spring
in the compost heap
the slick water sliding over slime smooth rocks
or through the bitterly green moss
down to the western sea where the sky
seems to plaster the reddening sun
yup I see all that stuff
and so did the great poets once
and the old lady ones just down the street
baking doughy cookies and eating only salads
while listening to Mozart because that's art
not that sickening beauty again

Because Explained

the passion leaks out
like the last of the water
from a split rock in the red desert
beneath other rocks bugs love
and the desert goes on
this is the essence of by cause

Restaurant Scene After an Expensive Meal

they ate quietly all evening
in the thickwalled asian restaurant
mussels lychee drinks pineapple prawns satay
quietly and she was not pretty but something
more vital than that to him
as we ordered dessert he moved his chair next to her
by the time we stood up after paying
he was unaware

Quux Reads As He Was Asked To Do

while quux read from his bible
and the warm ... hot actually ...
light breeze rustled through the beech's leaves
above where the 12 of us stood
listening but not paying attention
the men who would fill in the small
open hole stood by about 100' away
waiting with all the politeness many
decades command

the reading complete the grandchildren
lowered the urns into the square hole
and the papers we read from were placed
there for the reverent ones who might find this place
one day

the 12 of us dispersed and most have not
met since

12: a jury sized group
not counting the two men
who worked
but not hard
after we left for burgers and ice cream
after the bible reading
the ordinary returned

66 Tears

the road winds upwards
narrowing toward the top
skirting rocks
the old old 66
between Kingman and Needles
going through Oatman
where people live who cannot be allergic
to silence and heat
where there are only two things to do all day
play dominoes and eat great stuff
like cold canned peaches and sauerkraut on ice

the time
the place
the night
the guitar
the beer

once I paused for a second on the instrument
and Glenn blew a massive beer fart out onto the wind
I followed it up with a hoarse rendition
of "Blue Moon of Kentucky"

at the top of the hill there's a turnout
where many crosses have been placed
and other remembrances
I make it signs of love

after dinner
and a bath
and a few beers in the bathtub
the sun is down
and the stars are out
and I can lay back
and look at the satellites going by

great stuff

Out North

he's away on business
his wife is out all day at work
I'm guessing neither of them
has much of a clue
of the right way to go about it
any more than I do really

in our past parking deal
Out North agreed not
to have events on Sunday
so that churchgoers could use our lot
during daytime and evening services
now that this agreement is no
longer in effect we will look at
adding Sunday events
our first will be this Sunday
with local band Stubb's Crack Co.
headlining a concert of work by young musicians
as part of our Alaska Artist Access
program

<http://justin.tv>

10:45 omagah: yay
10:45 omagah: !!
10:45 foshoman: <http://www.Proxyture.com>
10:45 omagah: PPg
10:45 estebansjo: VALENTIN DE DONDE ES?
10:45 foshoman: USE A PROXY to come to Justin.tv <http://www.proxyture.com>
10:45 estebansjo: SOY DE TAIWAN
10:45 valentin: YO DE JON CON
10:45 ppg: :]
10:45 ppg: pipe
10:45 ppg: hehe
10:45 omagah: haha
10:45 omagah: powerpuff girl
10:45 ppg: yo were both green
10:45 omagah: XD
10:45 ppg: NEON!
10:45 omagah: =O
10:45 ppg: i dont hear ghetto music.
10:45 ppg: -hmp-
10:45 valentin: Y Q HACES EN TAIWAN ESTEBANSJO?
10:45 omagah: well it's over
10:45 ppg: DAMN.
10:45 zuzi: that bitch needs to shut up
10:45 estebansjo: SOY TAIWANNES
10:45 foshoman: got some hot bitches here
10:45 foshoman: haha
10:45 foshoman: nice
10:45 megaone: love some feedback on the song Old School at <http://www.myspace.com/moontrent>
10:45 valentin: TE FELICITO
10:45 valentin: CONGRATULATIONS ESTEBANSJO
10:45 shoobedoo: wOOo
10:45 valentin: HEY EBERYBODY
10:45 estebansjo: COMO?
10:45 valentin: ESTEBANSJO WAS FATEHR
10:45 omagah: who saw i NY?
10:45 omagah: lmao
10:45 collin: hey
10:45 valentin: HEY COLLIN
10:45 zuzi: hey collin
10:45 zuzi: asl?
10:45 valentin: Q TE PARECE EL EXPERIMENTO ESTEBANSJO?
10:45 collin: whats up valentin and zuzi
10:45 valentin: LOL COLLIN
10:45 estebansjo: EXPERIMENTO DE QUE?
10:45 zuzi: watin for someone interesting to come on here

10:45 jakemarsh: <http://entercourse.tv>
10:45 valentin: THIS IS A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT ESTEBANSJO
10:45 megaone: <http://www.myspace.com/moontrent>
10:45 zuzi: how old are you
10:45 valentin: (YO PARTICIPE EN EL DISEÑO)
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 collin: read abt justin from the papers in singapore
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 bigjoe: <>?:"!@#\$\$%^&*(>?:"
10:45 zuzi: cool
10:45 valentin: ESTA PATROCINADO POR EL DEPARTAMENTO DE POLICIA DE NY
10:45 zuzi: how old r ya and where u from collin
10:46 estebansjo: PERDON....
10:46 bigjoe: speaky speaky english
10:46 collin: 30 and from singapore
10:46 omagah: lol
10:46 valentin: EN EL FUTURO UN POLICIA USARA LA GORRA DE JUSTIN
10:46 valentin: A VER Q SUCEDE
10:46 zuzi: finally another adult
10:46 zuzi: to many fucking children
10:46 collin: yourself zuzi
10:46 valentin: YOU UNDERSTAND ESTEBANSJO?
10:46 foshoman: hot female adults ROCK!!!!
10:47 zuzi: they seem to all be annoying ass 14 yr old
10:47 estebansjo: SI
10:47 aaron: 1:43 aaron: you all need to watch this if you did not see it live. Justin got kicked out of the gap.
It was funny! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oekjf9cy0IU>
10:47 valentin: OK
10:47 zuzi: im 22 from mo
10:47 ppg: IM BORED
10:47 artielange: VOTE FOR SANJAYA
10:47 valentin: ME TOO

Impress People With Symbolism

I don't try to impress people
with symbolism
and unlike other poets
I don't use ants and flowers either
though I once did because that's what they taught me
I am writing this because I just read this
"Ants have razed the paradise of the pear"
this is from a real poem hailed as pretty good
on a website of pretty good poems
I have never had one printed there
and now you know why
a well-known writer wrote of the writer
above that he "is using all kinds
of poetic arms
to convey a complex
ambivalent vision
spun between the joy
of an afternoon in Greece
and the dying of a cat
why is it always cats
and haven't we heard plenty
about the afternoons in Greece
maybe if there were more car accidents
in them
or
oh
something

ignore

~~~~~ Our noisy mobile phone spits.  
Her daughters white sony snores.  
Any bluish small beautiful book is on fire  
and perhaps any given white boot calculates.  
Any noisy bicycle is on fire  
as soon as our children's purple mp3 player smiles.  
Our children's green mp3 player is thinking;  
however, his brother's well-crafted round-shaped camera stands-still.  
His shining soda calculates.  
Any bluish soft bra sleeps.  
His silver bottle looks around.  
Our red carpet smells.  
His smart expensive bra show its value or  
maybe our red exam book adheres.  
Their golden mp3 player falls.  
A given beautiful tall glove adheres.  
Their silver eraser adheres and still  
whose little green little small cat snores?  
Whose bluish t-shirt falls.  
Our soft sofa sleeps while my sloppy boat is thinking.  
Their hairy dog smiles or her bluish umbrella stares at the same  
time a green beautiful bra calculates the place that our hairy forge smells.  
A given hairy cat is thinking.  
Her daughter's small bottle is angry however,  
the round dog is angry.  
A sloppy mouse is thinking.  
A smart small eraser lies.  
My red shining silver mobile phone falls.  
The shining forge is angry.  
Any noisy glove smiles.  
A given odd shaped dog is thinking.  
Their stupid mouse calculates  
as soon as our children's silver bottle calculates.  
Our white camera got an idea.  
My odd shaped mp3 player show its value.  
Her fancy shining tv snores however, a given golden umbrella smiles.  
His well-crafted door arrives.  
The white book makes sound.

## Changing Font Size

testing the limits of silliness  
programs written by people who  
I don't know  
I mean I don't know the people  
and I don't know why they are so clueless  
clueless and how wow

## How Much Suffer

“Here is an entire life  
distilled to a lovely  
celebratory essence”  
wrote Ted Kooser  
of a book of poems  
73 one for each year of the poet’s life  
how can it be  
a life worth only the time  
it takes to write 73 poems  
or read them  
or is this longer  
deeper than the water  
dripping off a plastic topped table  
out of a glass broken on impact  
after a short fall as something  
hard grips the heart

## Scrapyard Hustle

fire crept through the tangle  
of discarded parts and undriveable reminders  
of thrills hardened to form the past  
smoke found the wind that had just whistled  
through the wind gap coming from the open sea  
where memories sink  
smoke as remains flew downvalley  
where the resting were awakened  
and the fire itself had its way with the past

viewed from above all that is visible  
is the fog smudged through the gap then downvalley  
where it thickens and blackens  
and spreads becoming the general haze and clouds  
that chill the anticipated afternoons  
just another day  
at the scrapyard changing  
today into yesterday



## Emergency Hah Call The Doctor

there are many ways to characterize  
love / metaphors say like the warm  
room with dusky light smoking off  
a candle by the mirror  
or like irc i<3u  
or like a story  
of opening a can of cool peaches  
on a hot day to share  
but I used your uncle's old navy  
opener and sliced my hand  
but you <3'd me so much  
you drove me to the emergency room  
instead of punching 911

## Light Remarks

she is never sultry  
walks quick or jerky  
even with the tropical asian  
air blending with her dark dark hair  
she is a geek but can have something  
picture her with an armload of flowers  
walking back to her flat  
from the market  
half maze half skyscraper  
the day rains  
haze but not too warm  
cars drive by white and halogen headlights pointing ahead  
red in retreat  
communication  
it is my feeling  
is essential

## That Never Thought of Place

sometimes I live in dreams  
like last night  
she came around  
strange town far away  
the streets were lightly snowed upon  
and only the night trucks  
put down their imprints  
crisp / it was that kind of snow  
that kind of temperature  
she came around and I  
not expecting her  
thought through a new thought  
what if I didn't aim for her lips  
but between her jaw and ear  
so anatomic  
but these are the words  
in my thinking mind  
my planning mind  
I saw the place  
saw her faint hair  
the hair on her face that all women have but faintly  
and looked just behind  
there  
there I thought as if in a sentence  
but at the same time I moved toward her there  
and she relaxed  
and I did too thinking it worked  
and why hadn't I thought of this before  
when I was young and it could have made a difference

## Did It Snow?

I recall a day it snowed  
it started early in the morning  
and built  
I went into the woods under a rough  
circle of old pines  
an oasis of autumn  
a warm barren circle  
of needles with a granite stone  
just off its center  
I lit a small fire in a fire  
pit I dug last summer  
but went back into my room  
to read when the snow picked up  
my looking-forward mind  
imagined the digging out  
the trip to the big hill  
the snow day off from school

next morning all was barren again  
the air had warmed and snow became rain  
it started upvalley and the rain softened  
and grew steady all night  
while I slept  
while I dreamed  
when I woke all was barren again  
as if the day of snow never happened  
except for the ashes I left behind  
in that little fire pit  
I saw them and for a minute I thought  
the day had happened

## New Bum

sitting on the bums' usual bench  
waiting for the guys to show  
it felt good for 20 minutes  
to a bum / just watching the draining day  
the casual lovers / the other bums  
suspicious of the new guy the  
slightly  
well-dressed new bum

## Webcam Rearrangement

viewing the webcam  
that looks most nearly  
at my favorite's apartment  
I notice another woman  
approaching in jumps  
to another apartment  
and since her hair jogs  
one frame to the next  
in the best possible way  
I am now viewing the webcam  
that looks exactly  
at her apartment

## Faint Echo

the false hope of fair weather  
that light winds and sharp skies  
have something to do  
with fleeing failure  
today the gracious green  
of spring is beginning  
to brown / tomorrow the sample  
size will grow  
the wind may pick up

## Road as Road

this town is about traffic  
slowing to merge  
speeding up to merge  
the offramps are blackened by rubber  
the sky rarely adds contrast  
to encourage autoists to stare down the road  
when I drive here I am wary but eager  
the roads are concrete but not everything  
can be perfect  
without luck it will be sunny  
but not bright  
this is the beauty of LA



## Saturation Under the Influence

extra color  
film or maybe some digital hack thing  
especially blue  
the water  
and yellow  
the hot sun  
these are Miami  
there is no point to this movie  
just these colors  
just Miami  
just a hazed but stunning vision  
where have I heard that before

## For A While

many hundreds in line  
they are from the group  
I am with  
it's cooling in LA  
as the sun does its  
going down thing  
they will wait for nearly an hour  
to load onto buses  
go to a theme park to eat  
for an hour  
then come back  
taking hours  
for now they don't move  
because they are too many  
and the buses are weak  
in their numbers  
there is no point to it  
in the end  
so it's the veined river  
instead for me  
running down to join  
the sun for a while

## A Little Nothing

nothing like the truth  
to paint an underpicture  
I feel alone in this  
but the facts in the newspaper  
say no no no no  
somewhere the r.gourmet is saying  
yeah yeah yeah yeah

## Learning Center

the hard wallop when I heard  
nothing prepared me for it  
I can imagine harder songs to hear  
all that time lived and it ends  
and without grace  
probably  
there is nothing for me to judge that by  
only stories told by people  
who are trained to be careful  
where can I get trained

## Yet

with satellite photos  
anyone can see the fields  
the woods / even probably  
the very spot  
technology as noggin nudger  
seeing even the barest outline of the farm  
ravaged by suburbanization  
the whatifs  
the lasting longings  
the words not on the page

## Belied Strangeness

if I were the view  
I would cover my eyes  
if I were the crowded halls  
of a new and exciting but dingy school  
I would retreat beyond ignorance  
if I were the child of parents who never spoke  
would I never speak  
or only speak  
if I were to pick a new life  
I would select a dozen  
if I were to speak only  
I would be careful  
to be careless  
in my choice of words  
and that way I would  
appear wise and poetic  
then I would duck

## World Away / 2

in her town  
right now the streetlights are lit and most sleep  
here it is that uncertain hour of unfathomed dusk  
when skycolors are invented for fractions  
of seconds & the clouds and possibilities  
of rain engage muses like her  
she has no time for sleep for all that  
yet she sleeps each night deeply and all  
the way through to afterdawn  
it is this way via denial  
she does her best work  
for instance she's told  
me to never speak to her again  
is there anything more dangerous

## More to the Story

no one tells the story  
like the one who was run  
over by the story  
not the protagonist  
not the antagonist  
none of those  
the one who was hit in the back  
by the story  
the one who fell flat on her face  
the one the story never noticed





## Different Times

sometimes there is a hanging breath  
left in the air when the talking stops  
sometimes the look is turned off  
rather than delayed by an extra breath  
mostly the skin of breathing life  
in the field is about to be flaked off  
by an overzealous raking  
mostly the look of beauty is for someone else  
because every time you deserved it  
you were looking away or in the mirror  
always the last two words you say  
are the least important and it's the third  
from the end that counts

## This Is About Deserving

blonde and blackhair asian  
two women at our elbows  
at the highstool overflow tables  
eating slowly and with light lifts  
food to mouth and eye to eye conversation  
but eating heavily and heartily  
more so than us each  
twice the size of each  
of them / sometimes they would  
look our way one at a time  
and wanly smile

## Road Badness

under fire  
the road wavers not the tiniest bit  
cars move with bravery  
not knowing that though the road  
sits firm the destination is wagging

## After Reading Another Shepherd Poem

like a breeze after sunset on a hot day  
like two cool drinks in a row after a long run  
like only the first time can be  
like fishing off a boat over a blue patch  
like licking the warmest thing on a cold night  
memories are not more than 1/3 the truth  
and the rest is debris  
people who think like machines resist this thought  
they rarely remember it  
they are like the sheep under the watchful shepherd  
who are puzzled each time by the road

## Reality Versus Truth

the truth is that poetry as reported on a daily basis  
is going down the drain  
hardly anyone puts in the little edge that would make the poems fine  
instead it's all word noise and faint praise and reference to the woods and lakes

read this

“As a girl I learned your metals  
by heart: copper from Isle Royale, iron ore  
staining the harbor red.”

was this a schoolgirl letter to the local paper  
plainspoken is fine  
but really  
really

## Abstraction Again

modular scalable seamlessly integrated  
characteristics of insect bodies  
and human made (artificial) bolt-ons  
all of it dictated by our elders from Europe  
now we're screwed

## Little but not Nothing

little point to it  
the machinations that result  
in the day to day  
extending to the month to month  
or more and more  
nothing special need happen  
no great deeds or statements  
no great loves or even meals  
tending to the routine  
naturally no one learns of these things  
quiet is quiet  
quiet is quite  
quiet is not quit



## Surprised Probably

once or twice the bell has rung  
and no one has woken  
this is not surprising  
but it's improbable  
much needs to be explained to reconcile  
the math with the facts  
in cases like this  
I find this surprising

## Art Not Hard to Master

there are no standards for dingy  
thinking / for varying degrees of oil slick  
unlike the view outside my window  
of the art museum and the dark seductiveness  
of Montréal wrestling itself out of winter  
into France filled with women hoping for warmth  
but dressing for winter to stave off the disillusion  
unlike the view outside my window  
I was saying  
unlike the view

lost that thought

## Tonight and Speaking

what is the circumference  
of your pie  
silly phrases mixing realms  
bring us food  
now

## Is What I Heard Tonight

tonight  
watching from the other  
side of the room  
it learned that the hooded  
evening dropping and encumbrance  
are not happenstance  
nor hearsay  
I am not anything  
it was said by the quicklydarting eyes  
I am not the object  
it was gestured by the falling in front hair  
I am not

## Waiting in the Bar for the World to End

what's changed is the unchanged  
unchangeable / the topic is influenceable  
or sometimes influenced by the tide of the talking  
as I watch from her in formless purple  
to him in green / this experiment is right  
up her alley / right up the wrong train of thought  
we fought overly hard  
opposition is stiff / the path from tonight  
to yesterday is familiar but erases itself  
she will disappear and our connection  
is words alone / marks untidy  
as they are for being

## View from Out and Above the Sea

left behind  
the fx of the days are fixed  
who is allowed to know what it meant  
will finally handle  
the stinging fairy

## No Moon Rising

she of course never feels  
it the shower of emotion never falling  
on her plain she is drier than Atacama  
she never feels  
let alone it  
she is now part of the disappeared  
she is like a poof  
in a sidewalk magician's act  
she is like the moon which is high here  
but nowhere near up  
where she is

## Walk One Night

the walk was short in life scale  
cool night but underpowered  
narrow streets but carrying heavy loads  
in one second story apartment  
in the window up there as we walked by it  
a woman sat typing in front of her screen  
talking to someone on the other side of the world  
that person call him a he was no doubt  
in a sunny warm place while here it was cool dark  
she was here she was just up there she could have easily  
turned to her window opened it and spoken down to me  
instead those around me kept walking without speaking  
heading for a place well defined but unknown and unknowable  
soon the woman was left behind she is still typing



## Gutter Life

regular way to watch  
working girls walk by  
lean against the wall and wait  
listen to the gutter scratch of leaves  
go by  
imagine the man two streets over  
leaning and watching  
he is waiting for the revelation  
that animates and calms  
this is regular  
unregulated  
unrepentant

## B Woman

sitting beside me  
6 hours plus  
bos to sfo  
she tapes her receipts to pages  
fills in spreadsheets  
moves neatly lined up files on her desktop  
into interior folders  
afterward she puts on makeup and walks briskly  
to baggage claim where in the heat  
and waiting her makeup runs

## Notes / Notes

notes she might have sent  
might be drifting down  
the lightwinded streets  
might be making their way  
to gutters which might take them  
down storm drains to the listless  
stream that joins the river that eventually  
rages toward then broadens to gently enter  
the sea which is like the blood running  
through her right now as she does something  
other than send me notes

## Important Things

the sunset that illuminates  
the river from behind the hill  
behind the clouds  
this is what to look  
forward to from the day  
you're born  
nothing is more important than waiting to see it  
nothing can compare to its frightening truths  
it really means nothing  
we both know that  
but it's equally true nothing is more important than it  
or was it the sunset tomorrow

## Love on the Run

no one is ever  
far away enough  
from themselves  
and the things they make  
no one wants the sign to point one way  
but no one wants the choice  
I've fought for the distance  
the distance between her walking ahead  
and me behind toward the cold river  
following / almost falling to the sea  
if one of us fell in there  
it would be like the first kiss  
that suddenly ends the romance

## Outrage Given Color

nothing more than the odd shade  
of lavender or pink on the ripple of river  
at the time of the setting of the sun  
the contribution of that color to the beauty  
and stillness of that scene is no more nor less  
than the contribution of the extra words  
in line three to line three

## Three Places

take us there  
to the outraged passion of the new  
the ideas that plate the hardest ground  
the ground pounded into dust  
under the trees whose leaves are the dust  
take us near there  
to the soft grass long after the last rain  
but before the contemplation of brown  
find the insects who like us lying there  
to the logs of their youth  
take us to a place like that one  
where with the addition of the sentiment  
of our war songs we can remake it to the real one  
with only an extra dab of storytelling  
or forgetfulness  
take us there  
is the war cry of those who have abandoned  
their own interiors

## Crossing Boundaries

the trip looms  
to places that expand  
with fear into my sense  
of destiny  
with this trip I miss  
what's grown as favorite  
will this be the end of imagination  
will the strange leaves fall  
strangely down on my inquisition  
hard to know  
but I'm paying for it



## For Marianne

poems for trees and flowers  
birds and cats  
tomatoes shriveling on the counter  
seed sprouting unexpectedly  
(but what **did** you expect?)  
yep old ladies writing poetry  
and the girlimen who teach them  
my o my how they labor over those syllables  
counting them  
or slapping their knees to understand the rhythm  
vis-à-vis what they were taught  
their poems are brave  
when they speak of real people  
who could be relatives or lovers  
especially when death is hovering  
what blowers  
bagbiters  
but then  
this is a poem for old ladies  
and their teachers

## Cry Along

tonight is a night  
before a trip  
this one long  
not just to another part of the country  
not just to another country  
but to the other side of the world  
in a way I've not done before  
I'll be with a close friend the whole  
way once in Chicago  
but even that doesn't calm me down  
I love to be places  
but I hate to travel  
what does this mean about how  
happy I was as a child  
it's the being alone I'm sure that  
starts it  
like the time my mother dropped me at Steve Kimbrell's  
for us to walk the 3 blocks to dance class in 5th grade  
and he wasn't there  
how hard I cried until she magically appeared  
somehow knowing something was wrong  
what does this mean about  
happy I am with myself  
I remember that twilight walk alone like  
I remember the line above that starts I remember

## At the Pizzeria

engaged  
just graduated  
whether from highschool or college I couldn't tell  
she looked so young in a blue wrap over a beige blouse  
and black pants  
when she leaned into him for a self-administered  
photo the curve of her hip opened up  
lit from the side by a light coming in from the window  
I hadn't noticed before  
her friend two over half the time made  
her comments in song  
pop musicals  
she sang quietly but engaging each listener  
Haley was quiet this her day  
the gift she received was a painting sheep  
with a poem on the back speaking of their journey  
it all happened in St Paul while the sun should have been setting  
but was hovering instead like the sun does in northern plains  
later after eating I stood outside the window  
watching without sound  
as the sun dropped  
and her smile went along with it

## Lit Building

plain buildings with celebratory lights  
pointed upward to hint surprise  
near the top the well-off live  
large windows looking toward the river  
what they do there  
what turns them on  
no one cares but them  
from my room I can see those lights  
green at the bottom of their range  
lighter upward and white at the top  
very pretty they might seem  
but all around know better

## On It

night before a long trip  
and the edginess sharpens  
there are things to fear  
work to do  
I am ready to quit and write hard  
as it is  
writing is free

## Cloudy Prospects

cloudy / windy probably  
perhaps I won't make it  
prepared for it as best I can be  
I await the time to flee to the airport  
while waiting I've been thinking about  
writing without vowels  
t crtnly frcs ppl t thnk dffrntly  
bt wht thy rd nd wrt

## My Bed of Solitude

here in Sao Paulo  
the crux was out  
and I followed the markers to the south  
the moon shadow was reversed  
the north was in the warm part of the sky  
tonight is the coldest night of the year here  
and I am alone again in my room  
writing / listening to the sad songs  
and tearing up from a sad story  
sadly alone

## Choro

after the concert  
at the urinal  
done peeing  
turning around  
I see the woman  
washing her hands  
as if pants were skirts



## Porto de Galinhas

the roads are barely paved  
the streets join in Ys  
the same dog is everywhere in 2s and 3s  
the rain stops everything when it starts  
they say the sharks are here for revenge  
they rarely kill but bite in records  
the mass is covered live in a horn-covered blast engine  
the priest is whispering inside the church but here we cover our ears  
the smell near the icecream stand wrenches flavor from our mouths  
the night time is rain once again

## Southern Cross

the moonlight hitting the puffed clouds wrong  
the ocean sanding down the beach  
the frogs gulping behind us  
a breeze unheard of by the green atlantic  
she walked slowly toward her room  
glimpsing back sometimes  
he didn't notice

## Dressed For

beneath her cotton white dress  
loosely wrapped and almost formless  
she wore turquoise thin and shaped  
in a feminine Y  
visible to the male mind  
not perfect  
though every urge was directly engaged  
her face shined in the image of a child  
her dress  
her walk  
her ignorance of glances  
she never looked back  
but I was just one turn behind  
her when the door lock clicked

## Yes Her

not the usual  
fruit drink tart and bitter  
meat salted and thinly sliced  
the warm sea from the East  
off the Atlantic  
at home the new moon  
here full  
there was this woman here  
whose shape was like a pear  
but when she walked  
when she walked by  
when she walked away  
the white night clouds stopped shifting  
the sea breeze froze

## Samba Club

undoubtedly beautiful  
young but not too  
she moves well even though a mother  
she is disquieted by the thought of questions  
but she makes half her fee  
she is not the one I want  
that one is more sensual and like  
the older woman on my favorite tv show  
but she is too beautiful and the temptation  
would be too great

now back at the hotel it sets in  
how far away from a life like this I am  
and how different are the lives of girls  
like these / and these are how they think  
of themselves / I miss her already  
and maybe I should have paid  
perhaps we could have just been here in this cold  
and darkened room together just clasping at  
each other in basic fright of the looming darkness  
and the bitter cold that each of us and everything faces  
regardless of our morality

## Paula in the Car

we picked her up  
and she was intimate right away  
happy to be away from the club  
in the streetlights she was less pretty  
but pretty / I sat next to her like a shy boy  
sitting next to his father's date  
she wore less makeup but good clothes  
she went into the hotel with my friend  
while I went up and lingered face up  
on the bed until the night took its toll

## Leaving Brazil

so now she's gone  
forever and wondering  
I suppose what it all meant  
the educated talk and unimpressive  
passion / she of course has her kid  
and occupation which occupies her  
I suppose day and night  
I can see why some would rent her  
for a companion / for shopping  
for trips / for restaurants  
can I see why she does it  
I suppose the answer has to be  
either why not or  
what's it to you

## After 26 Hours Coming Home

home but not remembered  
small consolation in being alone  
in a day away I go again  
tomorrow it's the cleaning and repacking  
yes what a joy  
if only my ear would clear



## Bound

trip / another  
how boring and unlike the life  
of a writer and bicyclist  
in some order or other  
the living Brazilian poets laugh  
and salute the sunrise with mango drinks  
spend the day contemplating sugar  
granted they live in warmer wetter houses  
greet most unusual animals when the fluorescents  
come on / but another trip  
so soon after drifting by  
why not celebrate the wrong language

## Crossing the Mind

Colonel react well since held belief fought altered there.  
Building viruses, explode macintel dell buys sells, dog.  
Rawlings, sam betalinux ipsec interop.  
Tag keyword photo ndash account guidelines send, save report!  
NRA upset bolton alexander hill crook clive experiment.  
Vsnet aspnet, vb community iis dev, sys mgmt.  
Pattern, abnormal escalate tumor healthy.  
Languages connection build, whereby, bootable include perl python.  
Sneezing skin rashes roller, coaster seasons season triggers, instances.

## Oh Foo

like the old days  
hacking halfway into the night  
near to dawn

## Best By Far

as I was not known  
cool wind out at the picnic table  
as the sun seemed not to set  
wrapped itself around my legs  
and walking back to the car  
became tedious and unnecessary

## I Greet You

a beautiful woman is writing you a letter  
this woman is me...I will  
tell you something sad  
about myself I am a woman  
who lost all hopes and dreams  
to be happy into marriage life  
I lost belief into attempts to find  
my rue Love

## Pure Practical

long trip  
still working on the talk  
need to sleep to be ready

## Afterward

good response  
he gets the credit  
I walk away down the hall  
it is always this way  
because all I have  
is not revered as all  
he has

## Alone Some More

nothing like the cool night  
the filled up feeling after a too-large dinner  
the sound of mariachi still ringing in the ears  
the closest companion days away



## Pools are Next

the day twitters down to a foggy  
pool / the girls who walk by are tired  
of buying / I wished for more heat  
but the light clouds didn't play along  
the crushing fatigue is lying  
on me like a fat man is his wife  
tonight it's not right

## All Wrong

another day of things  
gone wrong  
how can this happen all the time  
why me / why me again and again

## Not Your Father's Thought

get lost  
discovery points this way  
learn something new  
get lost the philosopher says

## Cloudy or Bright

clouds loomed ahead  
the ship quickly specifies  
the keyword used to retrieve Help  
when the user invokes Help f  
or the specified control  
after death we went further  
we wrote a test application  
that called the canibutton control  
which worked perfectly  
I didn't notice the teleport pad  
until I'd stepped on it  
if blocks are used by another file  
"recovery NOT possible" will be printed to  
the screen when nature completes

## Noise You Call

how many middle-aged parents  
now gripe at their kids about  
that “noise you call music”?  
unfortunately being a workaholic  
my idea of recreation is to write a gonzo Pearl  
instead of cranking out yet another high falutin’  
economistic development jargon laden document  
many search engines do not show local websites!  
many search engines do not show local websites!  
slowly she pulled her skirt up to her knees  
tell him silly Milly  
sends her best respects

## Ars

give it all  
don't forsake the bitter  
promise of fame once  
you have the chops in your hands  
in your heart even  
let go of the reasoning self  
enough to let what you've encouraged  
to grow be itself / produce  
then trust it until the passion  
is too much / then reel it back in  
take the sander to it  
take the wax / take the scraper  
and work until the tender shine  
is scraped away and is replaced  
by a bitter

## Recursion Like Many

play every night  
the same songs  
not always the same  
passion of song  
harvested from chaff  
thrown off and sprouted  
overnight as if the darkness  
were the brightest wettest daylight  
watch the pie singer  
as her toes swerve her hips  
in first-time tempo  
like children listening to the same story  
every night and geeks watching Lost  
over and over the wavefronts  
favor repetition  
yes favor  
repetition

## Life All Over

when you arrive  
everything is awkward  
the place doesn't teem  
not much happens  
people olá you  
they wear their penises  
sometimes erect  
some have wings but all can fly  
they say it's a different place  
it really is right here  
right close  
closer to ourselves than we  
like to say



## Like a Flyer

she is glorious  
divisive hair  
red with a black understreak or two  
butterfly wings  
(different colors day / night)  
long dresses flowing when she walks  
and flowing in the ever flowing breezes  
her figure is perfect  
but she types awkwardly  
and laughs in keystrokes  
were only she real  
or real enough  
and I weren't bored  
we would fly away  
as everyone there can

## Lost on Me

yeah summer soon so what  
here the days are tarweed infused  
the ones who will always turn away  
have already done it  
many weep when there is no need  
the dark edges of your vision is the plump  
heart of reiteration / but why not  
you say and hit the far air sly lit  
taken as wholes the rational part of statements like this  
are not worth the crumble they engender  
speak lightly / mean hard

## What A Day

nowhere to go  
the light down the hall  
means only that someone is reading  
not waiting / not eager  
no one there is ready for me  
not ready for what absorbs me  
how about you?

## Town Thinking

the old water pump on Newbury green  
I'd stop there riding back from my friend's house  
the water tasted of metal but cold metal  
perhaps gunmetal I always thought  
it needed no priming but seemed to push  
the water up from deep  
that pump is gone replaced by a WWII tripod gun  
a machine gun / it is pointed coldly at the road  
I used to bike down / it gives me the chills

## Love Type Shuffle

types of love multiply  
as technology marches on  
at first the presence of the beloved  
was required / how physical  
immediacy became valued  
then writing made presence  
optional / contingent / second / secondary even  
then email via internet increased its pace in absence  
and a letter a day became a letter an hour  
or a minute / IM increased it even more  
and with webcams there is the possibility  
of simultaneous release (followed by  
tenderness in the local bedroom)  
virtual worlds make lovers voyeurs of themselves  
what once was wet is now just the heat  
of cpu cycles / but types they are  
and type are just generalizations  
and generalizations just abstractions  
and abstractions just the ignorance  
found in caves / and as you can see  
balance is everything

## The Practicalities of Poem Writing

wither / ask whether  
inquire after the weather  
wander the litter riddled sidestreets  
wallow in pity directed at the mirror  
wonder what sound shapes signify  
waffle at the answers  
waddle past doubts and objections  
think more slowly when your brainheat welters

these are the thoughts that engage the mind  
after paying bills all evening

## Littlefoot

and so and so  
the warning of the ill  
is not taken seriously  
or at all / the mention of truth  
is bespoke as vulgar  
but instead of nonsense like that  
let's talk about a bird with long legs  
walking in a shallow pond  
shaking its wings / but  
let's use poetic language so it sounds  
real purty

## Sentence Death Match

the question of sentences  
comes up whenever writing  
is a serious subject  
sentences have just 1 characteristic:  
one word after another  
even women write this way  
theorists describe language as trees  
but sentence are flat  
just one word after another  
our memories hold our expectations  
for what will come with each new word  
hierarchy is the realm of militarists  
and catalogers / some would say scientists  
to write a sweet sentence drowsy as a sugary drink  
on the breeze-cooled porch on a hot day  
takes a well-worn path through unknowable territory  
or a confidence in the sand drizzled behind  
as we think / as we feel / as we pretend to see



## **Exhibition**

long time waiting to see it again  
that porn flick dubbed from French  
that opened many eyes  
in the world of science

## Your Disquiet

I have no relatives  
just my 2 children  
who are off on their own not needing  
me for much of anything  
I actually have some  
but I'm not sure how to contact them  
some big bunch of them are in a part of the world  
I can only guess about  
in this I am as devoted to incompleteness  
as to self-estrangement  
myself I am minus reason and affectivity  
whatever we renounce  
we preserve intact

## False / Person / Real

from distance  
without interpretation  
after the sailing ships  
have passed out  
to see or of existence  
I dream of everything  
made easier by being nothing  
or pretending to be  
this is my way to be alone

## Kid Band

one friday night  
1968 ?/? 1970  
Rachel was playing  
at a kids' hangout  
in Beverly  
upstairs / we hauled out shit  
up there and played as lou  
as we could / during keep  
me hangin' on we hit a new loud  
my ears  
(and their's I hope)  
are still  
ringing

## Observationally Old

seem old  
speak slow  
the observations render a hazy  
but bucolic world  
filled with spritely leaves  
and curious butterflies  
flat language but flat observations too  
the room flares with rare applause  
at the expected times  
unexpectedly the fiction writer pops up  
and throws off a real one

## Derelection

no one prepared me  
for the act of contemplation required  
to find the prettiest words  
for the simplest things  
this is important  
perhaps what's important is finding  
these words / if so the task  
has grown beyond the simplicity  
I own / if not / if it's important  
no one prepared me  
I am prepared  
to move ever onward!

## Care in Choice

what can it be  
the reading  
the performance  
where can the leverage be  
the heart places itself out front  
but hidden  
held close but vital  
like an animal that always  
moves forward  
what can it be  
the reaching sideways  
grabbing not picking  
gulping not distinguishing  
I am alone with only the uninvested  
to choose from  
what can the best  
end result be

## Writing For Fireworks

today we drew  
tonight we listened  
in the evening just before  
we watched the tops  
of fireworks lunging  
above the far ridge  
from the road to the cross  
(the name escaped us)  
but the cool type wind from the west  
surprised us with freshness  
after the day of hard heat  
writing is never a pleasure  
because the difficulty of hard language  
is more than information can handle



## At The Reading

the readings are terrible  
people read their works  
really slowly and deliberately  
like water sloshing in a pan  
like crosscuts cutting up a log  
like lovers pumping up a storm  
I hear it / wish it  
but none of them can reach the mic  
or think it has to do with them  
they clutch the sheets up to themselves  
and us be damned for our not hearing  
what they practiced hard at home  
to croak and whisper here tonight

## No Writers After Shakespeare

conference over

people dancing

eager to leave

I am always stunned by their readings

and what they consider contemporary art

here is what it would be like

I walked into the Sneaker Pimps dressing room

and found them reading Shakespeare and looking

at Titians despite the otherwise contemporary

art they otherwise love and make

## Progress is Our Most Important Problem

having spent the last  
15 years trying to become  
a good poet / I must now  
conclude I've failed  
though people praised  
me early it was for good achievement  
for how long I'd been writing  
not for how good I was  
and the ramp of improvement  
has been slow or flat  
or worse  
am I ready to give up

## Last Poem #1

she rubbed deeply  
into the tendon that connects  
my groin to my kneecap  
rubbing toward the groin

just as I sat on the toilet seat  
he shouted fuck fuck  
as if he had to go bad  
I quickly wiped off  
but when I went to the living room  
I found the writer had a panic attack  
instead of bowel pangs

an old woman whom I had just met  
in a class on self-portraits  
commented on what a nice  
man I was / I tried to think  
of why she would think  
that but the church bells  
started to ring announcing the end of class

they called themselves  
the yellow jackets  
and showed me their handsign  
which was a hippie peace sign  
with an index-thumb J at the elbow

for breakfast a bowl of yoghurt  
and a cup of coffee  
seemed like a lot

## Snake No Snake

the first rattlesnake  
in the town showed its head in 1932  
biting Peter Torres who worked  
for mosquito abatement  
Torres was taken to the local hospital  
fellow employees killed the snake  
nobody knows how long the snake  
was because when the employees  
finished working on the snake  
there wasn't any snake

## By the Sandy Road

sitting by the road  
made of oil and sand  
the side of the road  
an oily sand  
a strip about 6" wide  
erupting anthills  
and small / only small /  
weeds / sometimes  
a car goes by  
a truck / a tractor  
the air is infused with the humidity  
of the river valley  
of the sea just to the East  
of the cut hay and mowed grass  
of the sawed timber  
of the flowers planted in farm gardens  
all that happens happens in my head  
no one is around  
I am either always  
bored or never bored  
doing everything  
or doing nothing  
walking from favorite place  
to new favorite place  
like a panther pacing  
behind bars  
the bars here being my dependence  
sitting is the big adventure  
today and for many days to come

## Reading of Success

tired of the duties  
sick of working hard on irrelevancies  
I long for the narrowing  
how long will it take to get there  
like a good gig you try to figure  
the way back before the fingers  
cramp up / before the voice can't cater  
pausing now to read the accomplishments  
of my contemporaries / it becomes clearer  
and clearer that I have fallen by the road  
unable to move now that the spine of the will  
is broken (at last)

## Life Taking

of the poet they once  
said that her death was tragic  
a suicide / it was expected  
only by her / she wrote  
tangentially about the names  
of madness in scritch scratch form  
and painted her head as a jelly donut  
with a red hole in it / and someone  
has been making the case this is mere  
coincidence / and they use phrases like this  
she took her own life  
they never think  
it was in her possession the whole time



## Remarks

experiment failing  
what to try next  
enters the mind  
the hard case  
(at first)  
seems easier  
than the easy case  
this means intuition is wrong  
too inside the box  
maybe / let's try harder  
tomorrow / the frightened  
scientist always remarks  
this

## When Night Times Out

photoshopping today  
important project  
perhaps it will work  
but my skills are weak  
though my endurance is high  
late too late for real art

## Art On Top

art has won  
the work is satisfactory  
and displays the perseverance  
of a bon vivant  
whether it works  
is a matter not for me  
nor the audience  
nor art itself  
nor god wherever  
in fact  
we need to figure  
out who determines  
whether it works

## Losers in Arms

at baggage claim  
we were told before  
we could start to look  
for our bags that they would not be there for us  
the liars in Miami said the bags  
get to the plane before passengers  
during a tight connection  
yet we barely made it  
the teenage girl calling on her cell  
wouldn't get out of the way  
of our wheelchair  
I was happy when we clipped her  
she said we were rude  
and I was reminded of how people accuse  
others of what they are guilty of  
or is this one of those too  
everything about the place  
was diminished and decaying  
and little did we know  
what would soon not work  
welcome to losing

## Beginning

on the jetway at the door to the plane  
blocked by people packing slowly their things  
unaware later passengers will jumble their order  
looking toward the back of the plane  
through the gap between the jetway collar and plane skin  
a slice of the wing and tail seem to be over-real  
in the harsh morning light rumbling  
from across the runway from the sun not quite  
behind the hills / another time / this time  
I wonder what it's for & when I can stop this part  
of it / be lonesome and forlorn the way  
artists are meant to be

## Revisitation

the fog  
mist  
light rain  
cool not cold  
new benches to eat the burgers at  
after dusk before dark  
the same old  
all over  
again  
again  
and again

## Get Lost

the way a thing is discovered  
is to look for something else  
and just when your eyes cannot be expecting it  
to pass your eyes over it so that you  
don't have time to accidentally  
permit your mind to decide  
to not see it

## Right

6 hours of driving  
tired beyond tired  
for some reason  
the urge to write  
is wrong



## In What Life?

want to have sex  
she asked  
wings waving  
sure

he paused  
her wings wavered

but I don't know how

do you have a penis  
she asked  
...wings wavered

he paused  
her wings

how can I tell

they wavered  
she said  
be right back

## Lots to Clear Up

she drank  
mother didn't  
but hers...

yelling heard out the windows  
"another of her fits"

while they said this  
the sky cleared  
all the clouds  
all not very many of them  
dispersed just beyond the horizons  
perhaps they were just beyond  
perhaps way

she and the bottle  
were very good friends

## Baz

a beautiful zebra  
zerored a buffer  
and...

## More Cemetery Men

imagine  
they've bought their headstone and  
had it carved with their last name  
their first names and initials  
and their birthdays  
just 6 months apart 73 years ago  
carved on the front  
tastefully where it can easily be overlooked  
is together forever  
forever includes right now  
I'm walking by slowly their black stone  
slightly wet from a heavy mist  
turning light rain  
behind me two off to the side  
two men are resting on their haunches  
under a towering maple after manning  
the backhoe shovels and rakes the task  
this black stone eagerly awaits so it can  
start its duties

## Like a Clock, a Simple One

nothing like the words  
simply put together like concrete  
from sand gravel and cement  
or a drawing where you've  
pretended the pencil is your index finger  
tracing the contour  
things simply put together simply  
last as long as they must  
they do their work exactly as they must  
nothing beyond that  
partial to above average  
the typical mind revolts  
but after a few that feeling breaks down  
and it's time for another snack

## It Is Where We Are

the air is different  
heavier more filled with the odors of mown grass  
laden with river air and ocean air  
the light is different  
less bright more compacted  
the horizons are different  
narrower but not as to limit what's possible  
as much as focus attention

more intimate  
less dispersed  
more inward  
less diverse  
more intense  
less intense

## Long From Here

just one clap of thunder  
some rain  
a bright flash / I saw it  
no one awakens to this  
as those who die from the fear of it  
by bits I learn more  
the facts are not facts  
just whiffs of what  
someone was passing  
by after they're long gone

## Like Tonight

when the moon is near full  
some birds like mockingbirds  
rattle and sing their large disturbances of peace  
sinews of cool ripple through the night  
disturbing the long settled heat  
in my room I nevertheless  
toss from one damp place to another  
in my feral bed so fetid it seems  
in the still air of my room  
discomfort and disturbances  
gather like quills around me  
aimed at me  
points toward me  
the moon simply does its reflection thing  
lighting the night  
dampening the life  
I have left



## Like This Evening

if the moon is in the proximity  
of the completion  
united birds like mockingbirds click more  
and their large disturbances  
and chords like fresh rippling peace  
by the night sing  
the long heat furnished in my chamber  
disturbs me nevertheless  
I throw myself in the air  
from this damp place to the other one  
in such a way  
my stinking wild bed seems like a Malaysian piece  
in the moveless sky  
the collection of disturbances  
like coils around me (me! me!)  
steer toward the moon  
in consideration of the thing  
—the night writing-off of the life  
calmly simply sounding treble—I left

## Collapsing in Budapest

in the breakfast room  
overlooking the square  
overlooking the river  
the Italian biologist  
sits down and begins to speak of phenotypes  
as I butter and jam up a warm bun  
the coffee is quite hot but not strong  
the biologist continues his elaboration  
while I sip down to the grounds  
and re/prepare the second half of the bun  
later that night I will collapse  
to the floor and be unable to continue  
at the symposium because the Italian  
biologist and all the rest are all  
in leagues leagues above

## In Florida

recall the heat and damp  
of the days near swampland  
not even summer but some fragment  
of winter / I could tell  
because the nights became  
cold / outside the window  
the coon dogs bark howl growl  
into the night stopping only  
when the coldest moment hits  
them in their enclosures  
sure the hunt is not on  
or that the bear has slipped  
bumbling away into the swamp  
or a place near it

## Story Through Facts

who knew who  
could tell of the trains  
that must have come and gone  
not far from the farm  
looping around it at quite a distance  
the trains must have been apparent  
in the air / the noise / the smell  
little facts like these  
surely make a difference  
to the story

## History by Facts

that which that of the  
trains could explain  
that knowledge must have come and gone  
its farm grinding  
should not have been around him  
completely at a distance  
the trains in air / in noise / in the small facts  
of the far odor like those obvious  
surely differentiating history

## Two Ways of River

I can never love her  
her head is only partly what I need  
her fears are overfull  
by the running water  
we talked tangentially about this  
she floated hints  
I let then wash down the dam sluiceway  
boats came upriver and tried the locks  
to get further up  
this was what she watched  
I watched the parade of branches  
and plastic bottles cross the threshold  
skim down the sluiceway  
get lost in the foam  
and head their 10-day journey  
to the southern sea

## Timing Affair

far away a cold light  
wanders from your reading room  
falling snow is illuminated  
in the shaft the light makes to the ground  
it is warm enough that the flakes  
have congealed to the sizes of small moths  
at times the snow seems  
or is it?  
stationary / inside your room it is too warm  
to read properly / so you doze  
my message has arrived on your machine  
but the sound is off / the settling snow  
has demanded it / I am sitting here  
waiting for you to answer  
but you won't until  
the snow lets up

## Case of the Synchronism

faraway a cold light  
wanders of its room of the reading  
the fall snow is illuminated  
in the axle the light makes to the land  
that is warm sufficient that the flakes  
congealed to the sizes of you trace small  
to the times that the snow seems  
or is?  
stationary / inside of its room you correctly are too much warm  
to read / as soon as you level  
my message you arrived in its machine  
but the sound is is... / snow establishment  
itself excuse me / I am here sitting down  
waiting to answer  
but you until  
the snow do not leave above



## Sullen Physics

atypical and a long way  
drive or fly  
many particles wave bye to me  
as no matter  
how fast I go I go  
the same speed  
this was all set in stone  
but the stone was jiggled  
into place

## Sad Girl in Montréal

there's a v.sad girl in Montréal  
trying to stare out her window  
but her inward gaze gets her twisted  
from out to in to out to in  
even though it's raining  
the people walking beneath  
on a night such as...  
are worth being melancholy over  
and they could sure use  
her gaze

## More on the Girl

like a bug not yet  
discovered the street  
along the river has a steep  
bank to keep away the scouring  
glances / along the bank  
is a promenade and on it  
couples walk / this scene  
repeated over the millennia  
when it was my turn to replay this  
and my attention and gaze should have been  
well you know  
I instead turned like the aforementioned bug  
in fear of the rushing river

I talked about a bug  
and I'm sure you got the connections  
throughout / nothing subtle about  
this sort of making of poems

but the fear  
the sad girl  
it's more connected than that

## Until Now

the sad girl in Montréal  
looks with wide  
open eyes at the approaching rainstorm  
her tears will mix with its tears  
she has read  
when the rain hits  
the streets will become a different  
sort of black  
an inviting black that welcomes  
the chance to comment  
on what reflects off it  
the sad girl in Montréal  
doesn't care about the world  
because she is part English  
and part French  
she will not leave her flat  
let me try now  
with my computer software  
to erase the gray around her

## Sad Girl on the Wall

she's on the wall  
she is inspired by the red brick  
that lies 90° to her plane  
her red hair 90°es around the building  
and flows down to a swath of pipes  
she's above the cars in the lot in front  
she looks so French but this  
is because of her sadness  
the chips in the brick  
show her age though it's not her's  
let's praise the artist for her  
he thought (I think  
it's he) of the woman in the window  
typing as if a reader were waiting  
that and the rain in autumn  
and cold in winter  
are why she saddens  
day by day on her wall

## Blandness of Tuesdays

mowing the lawn  
I know  
what a blandness  
but I was 16 and riding the mower  
Tuesday / every Tuesday  
my part was the acre excluding  
the trees house garden  
which my parents quickly did  
some other time  
like maybe after work  
it took about 2 hours  
then I'd ride across the river  
to see what's up  
all summer  
every Tuesday unless it rained  
but even then  
I'd ride across the river  
to see what's up

## Memory Bank

in the hotel  
on the sloped bank  
down to the river  
that slope now terraced  
the slope where the drive-in used to be  
I am fully fatigued and cannot  
bring to the surface the feelings  
as a kid of watching a movie  
until I must have fallen asleep  
one of my favorites  
about a yacht converted to a warship  
I can find nothing about online  
when a memory like this fails  
what of simple men

## Walls Gone

over time  
the stone walls come down  
an erosion it seems  
but the stones don't wear out  
the integrity of the form falls apart  
as I guess the stones are removed  
for other purposes  
the effort to put them together  
how straight  
how formed  
when there was no time for that attention  
each stone should cast a shadow  
one over two two over one



## Confusing My Understanding

upriver the bed is rocked over  
pockets formed near the banks  
are crowded around by fisherman  
who cast their intentions for stripers  
tall trees along the river and the early sun  
confuse my understanding  
the river seems not to move  
the tips of poles flick  
the men adjust their caps  
but I'm on my way to the cemetery  
which is just uphill from this same river  
but down there the water is deep  
and the water moves steadily  
in bright sun downriver

## Heavy Dinner but Late

write it or give up  
short or long  
the structure of the narrative  
is to be layered  
instead of writing this  
we sit outside the café  
eating a sprightly calamari  
melon proscuto & chickpeas  
grouper & clams  
black fettuccini  
and in the middle of it all  
a fire across the street  
and the big horn calling the volunteers  
then the crème brûlée  
the theory seemed unimportant  
and the writing far off

## Elegant Angle

the road is cut into a small pressure ridge  
and up its banks are smears of green  
grass kudzu weeds small bushes  
through this insult  
cars act swift  
the cut is curved  
the modern mingles with this green  
the drivers pay none of it  
any attention as they sing to their cars' songs  
or phone ahead for supper  
to be warmed

## Listening for Rain

the kiss  
the rain running away down the small stream  
by the side of the road  
where we're  
parked and perky  
from looking  
forward from the past  
technology doesn't hamper us  
glasses and clothes  
the car that took us here  
the words that disappear  
as the day cools and darkens  
as the remains of the rain disappear  
down to the stream and then the river  
then to the sea we suppose  
using our knowledge of physics  
and fluid motion  
but soon she is nothing aligned with technology  
and knowledge considerations  
and nothing but a moaner  
while the moon rises  
and rain clouds rise  
just below it

## Appearing Lowlands

recall the lowlands  
where after a hot day  
a humid day  
when the sun drops  
and the cool rises  
a light fog does too  
highlighting the low  
spots / not a dense fog  
but something light  
translucent / enough  
to trace the mental line between the acid fear  
of the familiar murder story  
and the romance of the moors  
the lowlands are not everywhere  
you learn and neither the fear of them  
nor the rest

## Timely Deductions

you can plot the growth  
of a cemetery by the dates on the headstones  
the oldest date is when it was erected  
and even with the more or less  
you can get the vision of growth  
once you start seeing it that way  
the meanings history can reveal  
emerge / decisions made  
become apparent / the way  
it was opens

## Information Indirect

the cemetery grows  
but mapping it is hard  
people buy before they die  
to coin a phrase no ad  
person would ad-  
vocate / assuredly  
you could look at death dates  
to get an idea when headstones went up  
but many erect  
them earlier  
perhaps to visit their own burial spot  
to know it  
to see it as others will  
to judge its daylight  
nighttime rainbound burning sun  
snowbound hailpeppered  
hot cold warm etc  
demeanor / to see what can be read  
from how far / what the aspects are from angles  
of all sorts / and this makes it hard to know  
what one day must have been like 70 years ago  
because all that's left are the headstones  
never intended to provide clues

## Crypto Poem

keep the surprise surprising  
let the heat heat it up  
let's not worry about our legacy  
it's just the future looking at the past  
how abstract





## When I Step Into The Light

Patrick snoring beside her  
turned over and groaned  
she began to notice  
the odor of poultry in the apartment  
on cold mornings before the heat came on

she always made a new mistake  
and so I lie awake at night listening  
to his gentle snores

then as he inspected  
his hopelessly cremated poultry  
with a rueful acceptance  
a chicken borrowed my underwear

this seems unlikely

I just don't feel close enough  
to any poultry to lend them  
my intimate apparel

## Science of Sweet

the pace of eating candy  
increases over time  
as new sources of concentrated  
sweetness by delirious scientists  
are discovered or manufactured  
at an explosive rate

## Left Behind

thrown into lost places  
with only stories and speculation  
to guide / to lead  
being trapped in dark  
the only light is the light  
of a new story creating  
new light and illuminating  
however hallucinationally  
the walls / the floor / the ceiling  
the pages of the book strangely  
left behind

## Tangential Viewing

sitting on a bench  
overlooking an inlet  
the wind blowing past  
makes the water look as though it is  
passing by quickly  
with the sun in the right position  
the person can look a ghost  
at least unreal  
or alone with the wind and water  
with the bench and the sun  
and only by guessing  
can tell his is filled  
with the wrong emotions  
for a man of great success

## Before and After Pictures Available

ladies always shrieked at me  
and even bucks did  
in the municipal toilet  
well now I hee-haw at them  
because I took  
M\_E GA D IK  
for 3 months and now  
my pecker is excessively largest  
than world

## Not Much

the night grabs my eyelids  
slaps them down  
soon I'm out  
what happens next  
is a variant  
of nothing

## Sad Girl on a Rain Night

she waits on the wall  
looking out all red and languid  
her downturned and thick lips  
boasting desire and consummation  
she craves longing and searches  
who might stop by on their way  
through the unstopping rain to the dark  
parts of town where fires in hearths  
warm the waning hopes and hot drinks  
are passed around against the clutching  
night and hampering mist that rises  
up in the rain from the river rushing past  
faster than the sea beckons it  
across the street under a slight eave  
I wait with her



## Mystery of Grafitti

rain and wind  
colors giving up  
leaves and debris  
the longing  
the liquids mixing  
languor on a brick wall  
she is not my idea  
she was someone's  
who knew how to do  
something about it

## Mind Stripped of Ticks

the clock makes its little clicking sounds  
as a continuous motion somewhere inside  
is broken down into 1-second chips  
flung out onto a second hand  
lying here at the front edge of moonlight  
coming through the skylight  
I can either close my eyes then open them  
to see the moonlight draw nearer to me  
or pay heed to the clock that is nothing  
but a fool-made machine made by someone  
who believes in time and so can make only machines  
that confirm it 1 second at a time  
others more clever make machines  
that reveal the same belief with the dredges  
of physics but always it's the clicks  
that give away their step-by-step thinking  
and who ever wonders what the smooth moon  
motion means when the mind is stripped  
of its fantasies

## Only the Few Can Parse What is Seen

are you aware of it  
the headless expectations  
the bar that bars the best view  
with webcams we travel  
to places worth only imagining  
because the fares are too high  
those who explain through rationality  
and economics the ways of the world  
have missed the boat  
when it is scarce the thought of that scares  
and the price is inflated even more  
meanwhile it looks like supply and demand  
only more and the real winners in this game  
know of the emotion amplifier  
are you aware of it  
the heartless explanations  
the bar / the fares / the views from afar  
all of it too modern to live by

## Animosity of Story

you tell the story  
it contracts as your memory wears down  
it expands as your emotion fills it to its original size  
you know what the metaphor is then  
you forget what metaphors are  
you tell the story  
one fact dominates  
the wrinkle of one listener  
makes you say more  
than is true  
but consistent with it  
a story that could be  
you don't know what you said isn't right  
your grasp on people and other stories  
tells you it could be  
if you think that horse kicked you hard  
take this / take this / take this  
you son of a bitch

# Hey

writing writing  
writing writing writing  
more ways / more times  
more venues / more approaches  
I wish I were better  
but all I've got is what you're reading  
man

## What is it for?

what she felt running down her legs  
what she felt as the thunder crinkled  
what she felt as she sat  
    worried what could be happening  
what she felt as her head stopped its unstoppable monologue  
who or what did she think last  
    me / my father /her father  
her mother / the hot day they were or will be buried  
the lightning / the closed windows / the disconnected TV  
my father taught her about which she disconnected  
as her life ran down her legs

## Essence of It

strong talent  
writes with grace  
an elegant ear  
the assets a writer would want  
but what of what  
to write of  
this floats away at each grab  
not like talent  
or grace or the ear  
that never fails  
once something is

## In Heat

Allerton again  
bugs and humidity  
large room second floor  
with cold cold AC  
connectivity sucks  
the work starts  
more work  
always more work



## Until After

shout the expression  
of belief  
or disbelief  
whisper congratulations  
only when  
and after  
it's expected  
praise if you but don't  
brag concurrently  
fill your mouth with fleeting  
words like spit  
treat them like spit  
rustle up sincerity  
like a quick stew  
of old meat  
shout if that helps  
but only when  
and after

Oh?

after the long brisk walk  
past the sunken arena  
the musicians lane  
the centaur  
past black oaks  
out to the sunsinger  
and the just as brisk  
but strangeloy less long  
walk back I was drenched  
by sweat from the head  
dripping down on my shirt  
so that when back the conference goers  
all asked whether I had been caught  
in the storm

what storm?

## Lecture #23

same world  
world of business  
from a database point of view  
they all have a tendency to get  
hung up on detail  
a little bit more complicated  
he ends up with something horrendously  
complicated  
why don't I use the simplest one  
I can get away with  
pass all these books around  
products you manufacture and sell  
with a purchase order you are  
making an agreement  
sometimes it's called a rental  
sometimes it's called a cellphone  
contract  
let's go get more business over there

## My Only Poem Mentioning These

dawn's a long way off  
but time to shower  
time to finish packing  
the air outside  
under the sky starting to lighten  
clings to the car and me  
fog hovers over the roads  
over the fallow fields  
traveling time is tired time  
don't eat time  
driving I pass homes  
with sleeping people  
in the disappearing shadows  
cats assess things differently

## That Girl He Talks About

slow day  
listening to a country song  
a girl laments  
the boy she loves  
doesn't notice her  
but she's just a girl  
just a girl  
and there's no way to relate

## Driving Around & Around

driving the road  
that loops into town and then back  
the radio cycles through the dj's  
song cycle  
I drive past farms  
then long low apartments  
into the beginnings of town  
town square red-brick and other century  
the road heads toward the larger town to the west  
and a fork bends me back to our farm  
in 40 years I'll be able to play my own loop of songs  
as few songs as I want  
so that my moods at different stations  
remains the same from one iteration  
to the next

## Crossing That Bridge

every day there's a step  
taken that cannot be untaken  
we know only one  
way to find our way  
the road down to the river  
is rarely repaved  
it has grown rutted and pitted  
deep depressions  
the bridge is worse  
once you start across the bridge  
the other side is your only destination  
not even the river is a possibility  
did you expect a choice

## Past the Sad Girl

this year the special event is mundane  
we will glorify it  
we will draw from the outside  
and merge with the commonplace  
while creating a sense  
of transparency and interface  
we will leave from the Hyatt by bus but  
walking is easy enough  
the place is ordinary but we'll fill it with us  
with some this and that  
some music maybe (some "music" maybe)  
some curiosities some films  
it will stay open late  
most of us will walk back



## The Chair-Caner

*(adapted from Guy Goffette)*

Whatever the cost, the old farmer folds—he  
who rejected leaving the earth of his fathers,  
and for the sand silting sump and the field attenuation  
and for the receipt of the high dignitaries, he ignores it.  
The painter of the Sundays dedicated to the flowers  
in the cat eyes is breaking the young girls open  
on the devised dune exactly the same as those who ignore it.  
The Gods of this palace smoke and speak about art  
with gestures of Greek statues. He knows  
only that in order to paint a sparrow in the sky  
a sunbeam on the straw of its chair is sufficient,  
provided that deep in the silence one moment separates  
grip from shade. This lets the eyes tremble.

## Don't Go

simple truths  
like spreading cemeteries  
swallow up lives  
though trees are left behind  
something makes the less  
though groundhogs and squirrels frolic  
their eyes watch for your passing  
driving into one  
you find it harder and harder to leave

## Again and Again

the nights spent writing  
like this / sometimes  
there is a warmth to the work  
other times it's the just get  
it done thing / writing quickly  
thought like the mist outside the window  
with autumn arriving  
I feel dead

## Go In

the camp looks good as ever  
the brush is growing up around it  
it feels more and more closed in and over  
parts of it are beginning to fall down  
decisions will need to be made soon  
for now it's a pretty memory  
my only link  
I still can't go inside

## Simple Life = What He Wants

Ray Boucher  
built a hutch  
for Baxter the bear  
small but tough  
like Ray  
like the bear

## Man to Hell

work like hell  
hell will work you  
over

## Again

when work is over  
the urge is strong  
to become weak  
let the remainder  
take over like a  
box filled with toys  
or bonuses / but  
just when you think  
it's over it starts

## Mind is a Razorblade

that one night  
in the bed where the stairs  
would be  
next to the fireplace  
with the wood stove in it  
the other in the other  
corner each covered  
with cheap sleep-  
ing bags  
we slept one night  
then the next  
she asked me over  
somehow soon  
her tongue was there  
soon somehow  
her nightgown was on  
the floor  
the night air was confused  
by the waning fire  
but soon that passed  
we never left  
that bed until the day  
after I changed the oil  
for her and our son  
so she could drive  
safely away down the street  
facing sunrise and  
I never (really)  
saw them again  
it was that night tonight



## Wouldn't Be Good Enough

the color of the time lost in the sparks  
of the space lost  
it dances internal  
red of the walked ones  
for the railroad in brilliance  
of youth when our stages  
had liberated the creaked ones  
of the shots that reach for the light  
scarlet of sin  
crimson of the cool blood  
ruby and garnet of the jewel lodge  
light of the advanced sun  
vestiges of the behind  
sun as funny  
the green disappears  
to be calm  
not to give inside  
to the red throat rabid of age  
in a red world  
imprint valentine and blush of romance for the blackness.  
lode  
you redden  
it will not be this fast forever  
you another time will be green  
repeated times.

## Driveaway

it was time for her to go  
she thought just before she packed  
she asked me to change the oil in the car  
I had already signed over to her  
she didn't want to break down  
on the way to Albuquerque  
she thought I didn't want that  
too  
that afternoon I found someone's  
lap to cry on  
my wish  
is that she still honors those tears  
and doesn't believe them just sentimentality

## WWII

during the war  
she kept the farm going  
alone  
does it make sense

## Place Storms

the thing about the past  
is how sad it seems  
how drizzly the evenings  
how cloudy the mornings  
the past is back there  
a river is important  
here it's Sunset Drive  
in autumn the air smells sweet  
the air feels warm  
the special weeds by road  
in the fields  
the eucalyptus dropping its bark  
nothing can prepare you for this  
the thing about the past  
is things are triggered by  
little looks little  
sounds and it all plays  
back the parts that matter  
all of it covered with weather

## Not Much

making the farm work  
with no man around  
cows to feed clean and milk  
chickens to clean feed fetch eggs from and slaughter  
geese to fetch eggs from slaughter feed and clean  
turkeys to feed clean and slaughter  
hay to mow dry and bring into the barn  
repairs to make to implements machinery house barn and out buildings  
gardens to till plant nurture and harvest  
berries fruits apples pears tomatoes plums and grapes to pick cook and can  
snow to shovel  
grass to cut  
cars and tractors to keep running  
axes scythes sickles knives to keep sharp  
milk to cool and deliver  
septic tanks to clean  
wood to cut and dry  
coal to buy  
food to buy  
trips to the big town  
clothes to make and repair

much of the year is coated with the dark  
the work can never stop  
she can never stop  
and her hatred of she who made this all required  
grew until the day of death

## Long Hauling

the long ride  
another one  
then another  
the air seems not to move  
so the wind is at my back  
the water tastes of plastic  
but it all keeps me going  
learning the way  
crack by crack  
tree by tree

## Bridge Picture

the old railroad bridge  
thick logs whitened in the sun  
grayed in the rain  
delicious weeds in the gully  
indistinction in the background  
at the start of a humid day  
in central Illinois  
my camera tries to do its work  
but painting is the only way  
to make the picture say what that bridge  
said that day

## Over Work

the liftoff of melancholy  
of the dark & holy  
she wheels the baskets  
between the milkhouse  
and the house being built  
behold the cows  
behold all the work that needs to be done  
from these snapshots  
build the world you need  
to make you able to sleep  
when the threats of work  
work on



## Ride Through

what are all these buildings  
torn down between 1946 and 1956  
or burned or fallen down  
why / what were they for  
what are all these rich things  
that fell away before I knew them

## Standing Firm

one day in October  
she walked past the milkhouse  
and came to face the old tree  
the burned tree  
that didn't survive the fire  
the old tree couldn't look back  
it had burned to death  
and only its long branch pointing  
away from the burned out / down  
house looked like life  
she stood facing the tree  
and what it meant to her  
family in the times when nothing  
went right / and she would have kept  
standing and thinking  
but work called / as always  
work called

## Worry About Me

what looked like decay  
and decrepitude  
from far away in age  
looks super different now  
that I'm among it

## Dark in Fall

it darkens quick now  
how dark it will become  
is a problem  
lights are needed  
streetlights for example

there is a grave near my parents'  
and also near my mother's parents  
with a solar panel to gather energy  
for a battery that shines a light up  
on the headstone  
to point the way  
or to point back  
or out  
one day the sun won't be here to power this contraption  
then it all  
all of it  
will be dark

## Not Her Thing

her grey eyes kept watching  
and she and her friend kept talking  
to me about cameras and the way to find  
truth in rusted fire escapes  
and odd light in narrow alleys  
she was nearly perfect  
with just one  
temporary  
flaw / her friend exactly her age  
dripped like a little boy next to her  
her grey eyes kept watching  
sometimes me  
sometime him  
but mostly the sad girl

## Bad A Bing

why won't  
thoughts stop  
why don't  
we quit  
finding out is hard

## In Hours

soon I will practice leaving  
don't I have enough of that under  
way and plenty of energy  
left for leaving

## On Examining an Old Photo

from a distance  
the cemetery looks like a city  
broken down after its people  
have gone  
are no longer living  
in its buildings  
the question comes up  
of what's different between  
now and always



## On Looking at an Old Photo

a small building  
with three stores  
and three apartments above them  
horse and buggy in front  
as I look at the picture  
that time breaks apart  
some of its things are still here  
others have flattened out  
I'm not sure I would be in the picture  
were I there / there seemed  
no place that would be  
where I would be

## Tonight In Town

the square is the same  
the church is almost  
the rails under main street  
have been ripped up  
the Locust Street Cemetery  
is warm in the cold light and air  
as the sun fades  
walking through it is a drain on the psyche  
the river ran in eddies  
the world seemed like it was indifferent  
regarding going on  
or ending

## At the Bend

when the river is perfectly  
balanced the water doesn't move  
not out to sea nor  
up toward the mountains  
this point  
in time and in the river  
lasts just a minute  
exists just one place  
when it does  
and the light is perfect  
the world freezes into a sheen of blue  
and wandering thoughts  
huddle close by  
out of the corner of the eye  
is a slim network of green  
that breaks us free  
for a time

## Couldn't Go On

every attempt to capture  
the place founders  
on inexplicable awe  
to those who came before us  
this place was harsh and meanspirited  
take the river  
now painted steel at dusk  
then it was frozen into the shape of waste and distress  
pictures poems testimony  
all of it failing on the fallen  
leaves that pile up on the mind

## Lost by Design

they define their buildings  
by color / color from  
lights on and inside them  
this city has swallowed me  
she with me has become satisfied  
with my art though her beauty stuns  
all who walk past / we are buried within  
this city where the many who seek  
me can't imagine to look  
this place me my work  
these are she needs and her downcast smile  
lobs that judgment to all who pass  
the buildings in yellow near the streets  
viewed vertically  
respond best to organ pedals and piano keys  
singing in a speaking voice  
did I mention the melancholy  
or did you not need to hear that

## My Song

some songs are too hard to sing  
even fewer too hard to hear

## Dark in a Northern City

the dark in the streets below  
the tenured lights in the alleys  
the fire escapes twisting upward  
the rust waiting for winter to brighten it up  
these await me in the dark autumn of Montréal  
where bright thinking turns inward  
this is the where I've been waiting for

## Alley of Art

the problem of describing Montréal  
at night deepens after a long snowfall  
the slippery surface of the river  
passes more slowly than the urgent core  
just up from the river in the alley of art  
footsteps prepare to echo and re-echo  
but snow has ideas and acts on them  
above the street in a blank apartment  
a woman with serious eyes is photographing  
herself and once out of the digital realm  
even when taken in the wrong light  
the pictures she took while I was within the circle  
an echo could make would torture  
the eyes of everyone in Montréal  
on a night a little below 0



## Cold Schooling

the water must be cold  
moving past the quays  
it moves quickly past  
from one cold place to one  
only slightly warmer  
as I observe this  
I and someone  
from Montréal  
are learning  
again  
the art of the soft kiss

## Side Street Time

the sad girl waits  
her red fades  
the bricks fade  
she is auditioning as a dairy queen  
the photos of night revel  
in the glow I write about  
but I've don't recall seeing them  
because today is still in the future

## Could Happen

she worries  
in a disguised dialect  
that I am about to die

## After a Warm Day

in a heavy rain  
pushed about by heavy wind  
we found our way to an over the top oyster bar  
and ate lots of things from oceans  
later walking out we walked right  
into a cab while the rain  
which had politely waited while we ate  
continued or perhaps resumed  
for us  
the waitress beautifully darkhaired  
in a black dress looked out the broad window  
as we moved away into the mistshrouded dark

## After Our Visit

still the sad girl  
no way for her to smile  
no way to force things  
the light in her eyes  
neither fades nor lights

## Or Is It Lovers

with little to go on  
the foremost statement  
is backwards looking  
and former winners  
look like live losers

## Tailor It

the last player is floating past  
the life of the party parties hardy  
one of the wonderful things about life  
is the partial visibility into it and out  
live like 14%

## After Nighttime

she wrote  
it ends



## Prescription

sometimes regardless  
of what you believe  
you must pray  
to live

## Over / Over

over  
over and it hits  
the sadness that pervades  
until it's over

## Appreciation of the Argument

a good way not to  
forget is to write

## On Her's

on a birthday  
we celebrate the differences  
of weather from what we've  
imagined that day  
the real one  
to be  
today it happened to be raining  
and the trees were yellow and red  
the maples I mean  
late October  
what a day to welcome a baby

## Integrity of Time

in the rain  
on the wet road  
that leads into and out of  
the cemetery  
shadows play tricks  
on the remaining stories  
and what we have is a failure  
like the leaves now red and yellow  
that not long from now will fall  
fall wet to the ground  
act like nourishment and redemption  
meanwhile nearby a house tries  
to fall down and apart

## Fall Scene

the song plays  
in the background  
a soundtrack not soon forgotten  
the soft sound dust makes sifting to earth  
somewhere words burst above the background  
precise and cool but made from heat and throbbing  
back there the special greens and yellows wait

## Of Existence

when I left the city  
every bit of the small scope  
I knew of it became nothing but nothing  
the sad girl has been left behind  
and face it  
she was / no she is / nothing  
but paint on a brick building  
in a while she will fade  
or someone with no respect for her  
will paint her over  
the pretty girls there  
the real ones  
and the oddly warm cold northern light  
that washed the buildings in a clear light  
will be just an effect apparent in the photos I took  
and not real / no—real but not present / to me  
anymore / and whatever love I had for the place  
and the people there and the people who came  
there will not be real but just parts of thoughts  
as I try as hard as I can to fade myself out

## Everyday

suppose a world made of dots  
small ones  
& close together  
with uncrying one could wedge  
between them and see real  
coating the back wall  
then what if that back wall  
were bricks  
small ones  
& close together

on this day when I was 8  
so 50 years ago  
I got a tlr camera  
that I looked down on  
to take photos  
the crystals and other molecules  
on the b&w film were like those dots  
and soon I learned to look  
down on the world



## On Every Street

searching the streets  
the yellow sodium lights  
make my hands look orange  
so I stuff them in my pockets  
after pulling up my collar  
against the fog rising from the river  
as the cold air falls from the hill  
the city is named after  
nowhere can I find you  
with just a photo and a guess  
though the city is small  
when I sleep I dream of her  
standing over my bed  
standing over me  
praying for me  
the one place I don't  
look is the wall  
the painted woman there  
her sad eyes and mouth  
are her prayer  
does she look for me  
which of us will find the underground  
passage first

## Farm Day One At A Time

that day  
I sat in the passenger's seat  
of the jitney which really was  
a tractor made of 2 year's of fords  
it had 2 transmissions  
my mother drove and my father  
operated the converted horse-drawn  
sickle bar mower through the mixed rye  
and timothy being careful to raise up  
the sickle bar where he knew the remaining rocks  
were still in the 10-acre field  
I still remember the writhing snake  
chopped in pieces by the hard sharp blade  
which my father had just filed  
this little death nothing new to me or us on the farm  
time covered over by the mufflerless jitney  
making noise louder than the world  
for me this was that 50-acre farm

I pray  
make me remember

## Under a Sky

days slide on  
a long flat plain  
with only one line of like-sized trees  
the earth plowed to uniformity  
a red/brown haze lifting above  
in the downcast sunlight near dusk  
the sky able only to wish it were blue  
it's like I'm driving a car through  
with the windows up and the ac on  
I can't tell the heat or cold  
I wish only that one  
thing could rise above this wash  
before all the days slide past

## Kharma Reiterated

when technology  
aims to duplicate reality  
in some limitation-based way  
the expense is unbelievable  
imagine trying to reproduce  
the sound of a light wind  
through seaside grass with 1' waves just offshore  
about 1/4 mile away with a luxury  
sailboat of 80' passing by  
in a room in a house surrounded  
by walls and guards  
this should cost a lot

## A Story of Illiteracy and Cuckoldry

came home from work at 11 pm  
my wife welcome me with "pssst"  
David her boss has fight with his wife  
so she let him stay in our guest room

I just shrug a shoulders  
ask what's for dinner  
"take something from a fridge" she replay  
watching some stupid show on teli  
presence of strange man and my wife  
ignoring my needs pissed me off  
took a quick shower and crash in the bed

my wife came a few minutes later  
press her nude ass against me  
as I was tired and piss of I told her  
"go and fuck your boss!"  
to my big surprise my dear wife slip  
out of bad and said "you ask for it!"  
and nude walk cross hallway  
to guest room, leaving doors open  
I was in shock!

in the moment I heard  
my wife giggle and mans voice  
"you will got ride of your life" .....

I did not know what to do  
laying in our bed and listen  
pleasure sounds of my wife  
fucking in other room with her boss  
it was not pleasant but somehow exciding  
in about a hour of their intercourse  
I heard how man had his orgasm .... it took him a hour!  
while my dear wife finished  
several times judging by her screaming  
than was some time silence  
after that I heard male voice saying  
"what about a cuckold?"  
my wife with smile said  
"I will take care about it"  
they were taking shower in our(!) bathroom  
I was laying in the bed pretending to sleep  
don't know how to react

after that my wife slip in our bed next to me  
in half voice said "you have what you ask for"! ....  
she fall sleep  
I did not sleep whole night ...  
in morning I hear as my wife night fucker  
left house without saying word  
I was going in the shower  
(where I saw "rubber" in the waist basket)  
in that time my dear wife was already  
in the kitchen making breakfast  
I peek in the guest bedroom  
which was in good shape  
no track of my wife and her boss night tryst ....  
my wife in the jogging suit handle me cup  
of coffee and greets me ...  
"have good sleep dear"?

this is not a fantasy it happen  
we never talk about it  
but it stays with me for several years ...  
I am cuckold and stupid one!

## Alongside Truth is a Pretty Song

forget the melody  
harmonies too  
the things the wandering notes  
enough for the mind to follow  
bit by bit  
one at a time  
randomly  
think about what chaos means to order  
what the disordered means to rationality  
what has truth to do with fact

## Offtune

the liquor store  
a family around a table fantasizing their legacy together  
a liquor store  
an unpleasant stop light though it's not raining  
a 7/11 full of people after a big drink  
some worklights coming in through the side  
a tv turning a room and its people blue  
in the end  
be alert  
stay aware  
if things look wrong  
it's cool to be square



## Etc

through the night  
backroads  
the only kind  
in high western Kansas  
driving with the lights out  
guided by the reflected light of the moon  
on pavement ahead of me  
and the lights of a town between the two  
as I reach toward the one  
it becomes less real and reach toward the other

## Important Quote Number One

Keats and the difference  
is the issue of port workers  
a drop of blood to his brain  
or the skull  
or something like  
in shape

## Important Quote Number Two

most people reading poetry  
are listening to the echoes  
are closer to reverberating  
their road to wade through  
the same water the boy wades through  
he feels for a bottom under his toes  
echoes are at the bottom

## Important Quote Number Three

style is not  
or will be applied  
it is something that permeates  
it is not at all unusual  
it is found  
whether or not the poem  
is God bearing a man  
dress it is not

## Hong Kong First Day

a vertical maze  
redolent with incense  
an automatic stair  
from bottom to top  
the double metal whap then whomp  
of a pile driver  
the large tree outrageously shading the courtyard  
cats with tails and ears missing  
a traffic jam with only taxis  
the embarrassing harbor being slowly  
filled in  
colors of vegas in the financial district  
hard to believe this is civilization  
and an old one

## on the train

she stares downward  
her voice wavering or singing  
like the parody of kung fu  
she covers her mouth when she hears  
I think  
something funny or over touching  
her dark hair falls in cut layers  
down to a place where I guess  
her breasts would be  
or are  
when the call ends  
she remains fixed on the phone  
thumbing buttons  
until she toss the phone to her lap  
and stares at her shoes  
me looking down  
on her as the train slithers underground

## Our Motto At Last

what are they advertising  
skinny woman in a small bikini  
all in Chinese  
with lots of phone numbers  
and a railroad symbol  
her arms are raised  
and her name is Jill  
it makes me think  
you Macao big tail

## How I Wonder

how can it be  
that every single one of them  
every woman in the train station  
all hundreds of them  
can wear any fashion in the stores  
and look good  
are they that thin  
or only short  
they like being spun around  
when I decide to not step aside



## Wild Food

the white boots  
the dumpling mohawk  
taking back uneaten food without charge  
a tank with 2 groupers  
some black crabs  
a bucket of whelks  
every waiter in waders  
this is Hong Kong on a bad street  
in North Point  
do you get it?

## Way Up A Hill

kitsch monastery  
barrels of burned debris  
a barrel hauled around the monastery deck  
smoking as if from incense  
the monks singing their prayers  
and finally the ceremony  
white flowers and a gathered family  
smoke from incense sticks  
rise toward the old monastery  
up the hill and in the bed  
of a stream or is it a gully  
the 10,000 Buddhas seem happy  
even the ones with arms in place of eyes  
when the sun sets  
even the chintzy monastery  
looks good and the Buddhas' smiles  
make sense

## Tai O in Nov

was it a quaint old town  
on the edge of a modern city  
or a contrived tourist trap  
was the old woman bent in the slight doorway  
cleaning her teapot top in tea  
an actress or just old  
and what about the aluminum  
houses on wooden stilts  
(you read that right)  
and the little puppy who  
stared in the one small crop of grass  
along with 2-person wide lane  
for 1 minute before seeing the cat  
sitting there and yapping/jumping back  
was that an animatronic device  
from Disney's labs on the other side of the island  
and the smoke that made all the photos hooded  
and ethereal / was that from a real fire  
or a set one / if you know what I mean  
and the hills too steep for a sports car let alone  
a bus discarded by the British when they were kicked out  
and all that dried and salted fish  
who needs it except tourists  
I mean really  
really I mean

## Not A Thing

did I see the sad girl tonight  
kissing me goodbye  
as the taxi chattered under the surge  
against brakes in drive  
in Soho ready to take us to Sha Tin  
tonight and then the airport tomorrow  
this could be the last time  
in years / or ever / for us  
fog/mist over the harbor  
the green laser show solitary but bright  
she was perhaps thinking of crying  
this is what thinkers do  
instead of linger we were eager  
to hop in the cab / scoot off  
pack to leave because she can never  
be anything

## Away Or Far Away

that scene  
beneath the flashing buildings  
the laundry out the windows  
blowing in the harbor air  
then today the haze as always  
shrouding the harbor  
making the island hills  
look like the Smokies  
where I learned to write  
this terminal is just one big tent  
and holds people who are the same  
travelers used to the same rituals  
of security / luggage / wrong food  
she perhaps realized  
just as we left  
that I would be one less link  
between her and the life she wishes  
and isn't that enough reason  
to snifle

## Little Memories

too many people  
in the way  
out of the way  
little / they are all little  
they come at you  
and rarely veer completely  
if you're huge  
then just keep going  
watch them spin and wonder  
if you're not  
move

## The Road

the road by the river  
catches the wind and windblown light snow  
off the lightly frozen surface  
which is just a façade for the river  
up north the snow deepens  
in a promise to the road  
that the winter will deepen  
that the ice will thicken  
and everything will be  
back to normal  
after an autumn too warm  
and too welcoming

## It's Those Parentheses That Count Most

now is the time to fade out  
the time for fame is over  
being out front is all over  
time to write  
to get it all down  
time to focus on myself  
but not as an object of adoration  
but one of healing  
time to explore my past and get that tidied up  
not very poetic  
but practical  
(and healing)



## In This Way

poets savor  
what bees' wingbeats do to pollen  
in small flowers  
so much more  
the strange attracts us  
after an encounter like this  
think of the long drive  
and the music played repetitively  
people in trances  
appreciate the oncoming  
many wish for eternal life

## Winter Terse

winter and the terseness has arrived  
hot breath turning white  
on the walk from front door to car door  
I'm reminded of the hunt for christmas trees  
heading through our woods  
the blueberry bushes  
the swamp iced over with thin ice  
then over the stonewall to Sam's woods  
angling to his road out to the cross-county road  
then over to the Merrimac town road  
into the forest they kept for christmas decorations  
we time it so it hasn't snowed yet but is about to  
and before or after the town has done its harvest  
we bring a saw and a toboggan and rope  
everything from that time is gone  
no parents no house no farm no woods  
no Sam no Sam road  
I guess I lied  
the county road is there grown over and an ATV/snowmachine road  
as is the Merrimac town road and the grove of firs  
but without those woods of ours and the farm  
the family and friends  
who needs what's left  
any of it

## Odilon Redon

the head is made of metal castings  
an ordinary hero of the head  
a metal muscular speckled fat head  
that automatically adjusts to its jobs  
now it's on the tip  
driven beside the river  
as an early winter comes  
and it is from all sides  
on a pyre of truck tires  
pallets and jumped up to joiners

## This Is The Biggest Surprise

the tragedy of exploration  
the world throws its experiences  
at our wicked brains  
and those things + dreaming  
+ the clutter of discord  
from the part of the mind that jiggles  
constantly and orgasmically  
forms the sentences of the essays  
we spit out out of order  
and fragmented as our ordered  
thoughts and considered speech  
the more randomly we select from those essays  
the more rational we are applauded

## Actress or Role

her voice sometimes soft  
always modulates  
even the writers  
know this and write in a scene  
where she plays at phone sex  
she displays a wide spectrum  
and is curvy to boot  
listening to her voice  
is a module of softness

## After A Month I Remember

I met you in Montréal  
alone on the street  
your tricolored hair  
a confusion to me under the sodium light  
just a rain and a strong wind a bit ago  
there is no narrative in play  
so the city and wetnightdark is infused  
with my own willowing and mechanical melancholy  
when neither of us looked away  
we merged enough for the blue  
of the city to pop  
it wasn't long  
until at the edge of the river  
you edged back into me  
and I chose your innermost  
and probably almost  
naturest color

## Costain's Basement

the basement has red and pink lights  
the record player playing  
long dance songs  
sometimes the slow dance  
back then the basement  
was filled with women yearning  
for lust to overcome them  
for the meaning of night  
to become clear to them before  
the latent dawn  
now they were only girls  
their ankles barely able  
to support them  
their skirts with nothing  
to cling to  
today if they are still alive  
they sit and wonder about those nights  
why their melancholy is not redeemed  
they are so afraid of dying  
as if those night will not  
live on forever in the hearts  
of poems and their poets

## Ship Ahoy!

so I met this girl  
who worked at starbucks  
I worked up the courage  
to ask her on a date  
after a couple of conversations  
at the register  
she was a month older  
than me but I didn't really care  
she was fun to be around  
so we took a walk along the beach  
we kissed in the pale moonlight  
a full moon  
it was really romantic  
we started really getting into it  
she slowly unzipped my jeans  
she reaches inside and starts kissing  
her way down my chest  
she finally gets all the way down  
looks up at me with the most seductive eyes  
I've ever seen and says  
"No thanks, I had Reese's for breakfast"  
and I'm like  
"No way, you had candy for breakfast?"  
she replies  
"Not candy! Reese's puffs cereal!"  
so she sliiiiides me a bowl  
I crunch into it and  
WHAM!  
my mouth goes crazy!  
that smooth combo  
of peanut butter and chocolate-y taste  
attacking my taste buds!  
she zips my pants back up and says  
"it's part of a complete breakfast!"



## Plains Song

a place where wind  
is significant  
where a fire in the fireplace  
wavers from the wind outside  
breathing through the house  
where you can see the weather  
arriving for hours or days  
where you can watch her  
drive away for as long  
as it takes for the memory  
of her kiss to fade  
the wind lately  
has been blowing in snow  
along with spring's seeds  
one for the burial  
the others for resurrection

## Lost Trinket

greed's partner is revenge  
who is happy to wait  
many decades

## Why Not Now

it is hard  
for an idiot  
to write

## Unhinged

it gets worse  
the only way  
for there to be no incorrectness  
is for there to be no correctness

## Where Next

well each day is like the last  
the connections to the past  
severed one at a time  
this way they slip my grasp  
I become more of an island

## Winter Process

somewhere tonight  
it is very cold  
ground covered by snow  
wind smoothing everything down  
every detail is being blown away  
tonight tomorrow the day after

## She Come

—suddenly the room where I sit  
it feels emptier than before  
if I see so far  
I see standing in the open door  
endoscopy to my question  
and I am less because of that here  
not more

## And Now Again

today a miracle  
on a hunch I asked her  
to help look through the vacuum cleaner bag  
she took it outside and 15 minutes later  
came in asking  
is this it  
it was  
back then it seemed  
that now was so  
far away



## We Endeavor to Destroy

when the first Oppie recruits came in March  
few knew that we work  
rumors piqué a bit  
the parties to the case purely conjecture  
radium-closing toxic  
rocket electric wiper blades  
for submarines  
thus Oppie had me write  
some discussions for our colleagues on the move  
we have unfinished laboratory employees of the library  
when dialogue and the workers rebounded  
I started my voice about their sound absurd:

“the objective of our work is to  
a time-bomb”

## I Am My Rust

nothing beats a small town  
going dry  
imagine the excitement  
when the roads were first paved  
then electricity zipped in  
just think of the advance  
of a central dump  
behind every house I've ever  
lived in but ten  
that is three  
out back  
down a path that led  
just into the woods  
we piled our trash and garbage  
animals and bacteria took care of a lot  
the hard stuff rusted nicely  
I'll bet if you got back there today  
even after 50 years  
you'd still see our old stuff

## Photoing

looking over photos  
looking at the past  
wondering how the people I took  
could by accident look  
as memorable as they do

## But It's Cold

we went tobogganing  
I would replay my youth  
for her / walking through the woods  
to the hill / driving down to Hoyt's  
road and hill / we liked winter  
sports because of the need  
later to warm up  
she likes it  
when she has her  
clothes off  
she would swim sometimes  
in the lake in winter  
would crosscountry ski  
naked too / you can see  
why I grew to like winters

## Pining for Montréal

down the street  
or in this alley  
bouncing off walls and windows  
bricks and metal lacework escapes  
recently painted remarks  
and portraits bedeviled  
by sprayed acrylics  
wanders a voice  
lost in song and lament  
in the foreign language  
of the place we're in  
did I mention the cold

## Paradox in Two Parts

beneath the snow  
and above the pavement  
sneaks a layer of ice  
made by compression  
from the wheels of cars  
trying to find their way home  
or going off to work  
to the emergency store  
later I'd do the most insane thing  
put on my skates and skate from the farm  
up on a plateau down to the river  
which is too worked up to freeze over  
but this is all an internal state  
because the road appears more worked up  
and it froze over  
didn't it

## Voting For Everything

what happens when the winner is voted  
on / when you're asked to justify yourself  
to answer why when for whom against whom  
is it fair to fall back on art  
say it was all a canvas and everything you did  
was to make the picture be what it most  
wanted to be / or is art the answer of evil  
of little spirit / when you think of your answer  
think of the thousands coursing through the central hall  
of the largest mall in Hong Kong  
after the 6pm train has come and gone  
a potion I had too much of

## Apply Finally

How to interpret the final bytecode?

Well, as CBS News notes,  
a new report recently brought this issue back  
into the spotlight: The U.

So what am I doing at the moment?

Conversely, if you have a story to tell  
or a comment to say, we welcome and appreciate  
any additional elaboration.

If token is an operation,  
pop needed operands from stack,  
perform operation,  
and finally push result onto stack.

At the same time, I hope people can respect  
my opinion that there are different ways  
in which social scientists can apply  
their expertise to help solve social issues.

“The Rise of the Nguyens” Asian-Nation:

The Landscape of Asian America.

How to interpret the final bytecode?



## The One Who Won't Be Taken

the time of year  
for forgetting leaves  
for waving to the grass goodbye  
for waiting for the first ice to flow  
down the river from one of its tributaries  
for pacing about the headstones  
over frozen ground  
past where the dripping faucet  
has grown a shaft  
under the icy light and moonlight  
every year this time of year  
prepares the world to be broken down  
and some would say rebuilt  
but I say reinvented  
because the outcome can never  
be certain / can never

## Gig and Dance

the cafeteria is maybe 100' by 150'  
the wall with doors to the serving area  
is where the band from Haverhill sets up  
all Fenders and Ludwig except the Farfisa and Leslie  
they wore suits and played with their backs stiff  
tables and chairs folded up along a side wall  
Meredith and Jim dancing close  
Sally and Grandmaisson  
Chris and Glenn (now a producer in Hollywood)  
the music has a ringing quality and is slow  
(and maybe sensuous)  
my place is a chair by the wall by the windows  
so cold their smell has a taste  
my job to watch  
to be somebody else  
to approximate as best as is humanly possible  
nobody

## Under

the computer believes  
she's alive  
well I mean one of them does  
and another doesn't  
after she moved away  
I would look down the road  
that led to her  
when we passed it  
after 40 years  
how can I still miss her

## Bad Occasion

the night is here  
and cold  
the lack of thought  
and passion  
is like a desire of loss  
not a desire for it  
but of it  
one day soon  
and all of it will wash away  
like oil down the St Lawrence

## Beaten Trace

music stumbles  
fragments trembling down the sidewalk  
like leaves leaving the city  
for burial in the country  
perhaps under a tree  
mistaken as their mother  
perhaps at the bottom  
of a small pond that is taken  
to be a depression  
aching into the woods  
like the depression of mistake  
that overtakes the wind  
that blows over your mind  
and down the sidewalk  
to the studious beat  
of an unconscious song

## Bad Alone

I was once married  
on this day  
not in the state but the start  
possibilities sure  
I once thought I'd be the youngest novelist  
now maybe I can start  
finally now that what would have played out  
has / all the clever possibilities  
distant dead ends  
ones I'm glad to have missed  
ones otherwise  
what a detour it's been

## Was This Love

Christmas Eve night  
trying to sleep upstairs  
the colored light from the bulbs  
on the tree pastiche the ceiling  
I throw myself from one side  
of the bed to the other  
walk out along the balcony to the bathroom  
when my mother has been in there  
it smells of smoke  
I can't help looking at the tree  
then and now I can't imagine  
how easily the sure yes and sure no  
are kept in the head at the same time  
every possibility just as possible  
and out front  
I never saw anyone leave presents

## Stories in Ink

when we meet  
there is a past  
you have and I have  
that were never twined  
case to the point  
when I was hoping for Meredith  
you were somewhere  
maybe in this house  
with your heavy dark hair  
and hidden smile  
a little girl I suppose  
everything about you to me  
is a story  
and same for you  
the past looks  
so in black and white



## Sad Girl of Montréal

on a street under a streetlight  
where else  
on a night bursting into mist  
the sidewalk is shining all the way  
up to the next intersection  
where it disappears across the street  
which is level or worse  
I'm standing wishing for a hat  
when a woman in a fake fur  
slows a step or 2 before me  
her eyes scan up from the sidewalk  
to somewhere above my eyes  
I hear her thoughts drying the mist  
nothing you have  
she is saying in her thinking voice  
is deserved  
you are here not up at the intersection  
or better  
you have no hat  
the mist is all over you  
beyond all that  
I've entered your circle of sad  
and now I must  
I really must  
keep walking  
all night if I must

## Why Not Cry Before the New Year

The Bud uncle who will make each year the map  
does not know a holiday to hazard it.

There is a door and the Scrooge  
which it does not search but is positive  
and—or

that it sees to get near.

It will be wrong in the table

and if it welcomes,

he, the futures, or ...

will be extensive in 2

and it surprises;

he does not know.

## The Day Before

the day done  
remains cold  
the warmth once felt  
while wrapped around a lover  
is sometimes long past  
when I think about this  
the range of possibilities  
is too limited  
as if a program committee  
had selected from a menu  
of simple topics  
not the ones whirling around

## How Many

and why shouldn't I finally  
just be mad when I'm humiliated  
all but one or two  
have made the effort  
and now maybe  
this one is one too  
many

## What an Early Morning Teaches

we can be at ease  
with the discrepancies  
the shade of rust on the peeling red paint painted manure spreader  
the yellow seed buds on the one tall strand of grass in front of its  
metal treaded wheels  
the rotted wooden impellers that transported the manure  
from the bed to the dispersing beaters  
it's standing on its tail in an unused and soon to disappear  
field by the swamped over pond  
by the side of the gullied asphalt road  
from the forgotten town to the park with the last  
piece of Illinois prairie  
and classical sculptures in bianco cement  
just the way Brunelleschi  
or would that be Ghiberti  
would like it

## Shared Fraud

with age  
people detoxified apparently their regrets  
reframing like shared frauds  
a retrospective a tocando-acima  
that in many cases could have been  
more exact  
touching up is a touching sentiment  
the year is about to start that is beyond  
any I had imagined  
planned for  
tonight a man will try to jump  
via motorcycle  
the length of a football field  
I can remember lying in a small bed in my room  
with a TV that barely worked  
decades ago  
and I can't recall thinking about  
motorcycle jumps  
this is how the year ends

# Shared Fraud

*A Collection of Poems from 2008*

Richard P. Gabriel

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## Delete the A's

the year starts  
it seems to start each year  
about the same time  
outside is a tree a tree a tree a tree...  
I (one) could go on  
in the background a sad song plays  
through the expensive DAC and a small tube amp  
some old almost audiophile speakers  
almost is a word of distance  
meaning not much of it  
in the room upstairs  
the curved in part of her back  
is a field of light short hairs  
insubstantial aside from their meaning  
she consults her crossword page  
before wondering whether a new year  
represents something new  
or just the repetition she repeatedly regrets  
for me I hope this is a year of writing  
that the past will finally be wrapped around  
and now become  
that ago ago ago will just in time  
go go go



## Roading

below my stopping point  
gulls storm the reservoir  
today a sheen and reflection  
paired hawks knot the air  
one plunges and one wonders  
whether a life has ended  
up here I sip from my camelbak  
stretch and watch  
this is my halfway point  
harder low hills  
but the initial climbout  
is a cooling descent  
the stopping point though  
combines highways  
roads dirt paths  
the longthin water  
birds the rising hills  
fog and rest  
it would make a good last stop

## Throat Surgery

she is jerky  
when she sings before audiences  
her left arm signals the pitch grossly  
she bends  
her voice growls along the stage  
her voice smears its way through the songs  
she is a bundle of ogres  
always a piano  
at least once she was seductive  
in profile her eyebrows raising  
at the seductive moments  
while she sang a song  
from sound memory  
in another language  
barefoot though Japanese

## Replacements

writing by candlelight  
makes me think of infrastructure  
how it needs to age quick  
to be always fresh  
from replacement

## Fear Reenvisioned

sometimes it hurts to write  
night is really the culprit here  
it takes hold of the day  
points it away  
night greets you with that rictus  
you've always read about  
I dread the reminder  
looking back ever grows  
but then a smart song comes on  
the volume up because the DAC  
likes it like that  
now on to writing that's fun  
(in another file  
I'm afraid)

## Stared Down

storm crossing overhead  
thunder overheard  
shouting surprise après lightning  
downpour so thick  
no downspout can stand it  
through this I sat  
staring first outside toward the hiding bay  
then toward the dead tv  
nothing passing through  
but a highwind regret  
a longing for a cold dark fog  
early v.early in the morning  
in a northeastern city  
it felt like sadness  
only sadder

## Short of It

sometimes I think I have ideas  
when I look back though  
the few have been small  
the impact less  
I inspire though  
and dream in a newfashioned way

## Woody

previously unreleased snow  
dropped from the tops  
of the stubborn pines out back behind  
in the woods but beyond  
the small maples and the swampy part  
the ground is a needley bed  
most literally with a small granite boulder  
in its middle near where I would lie  
summers like a pioneer or explorer  
camping in a congenial convenient place  
will anyone ever know that beneath the floor  
of the teepee-like hut I built buried in a tin  
and in there wrapped in plastic are some pictures  
only a teenage boy would covet  
because how decayed must it be now  
and I know you won't tell

## Why Do the Houses I Dream of have Unused Rooms

suppose  
I suppose I  
could try harder to remember  
the details of the look out people story  
or the floorplan of the barn  
whether I ever went upstairs in that one house  
but truth is bricks  
and the fiction of the stories I'll tell  
are the mortar holding them up  
making them clear



## Solitary Driver

grasslands and low very low hills  
rolling west into the sun  
into the teeth of the mountains  
but not yet  
little song playing over buzzing speakers  
dust from roadside oiled sand  
and wheat dust after harvest  
kicks up a seethrough rug of pinkred  
blown through by the foregone sun  
I'll stop at the first motel next to a steakhouse  
pull a book from my bag  
read through it all  
sometimes a girl will notice my book  
see me writing sometimes  
see my car and its faroff plates  
sometimes I'm not alone all night  
when you think of the words  
never

## Windsor Hotel

in Garden City the streets  
are wide because they can be  
everything here being wide  
nothing is tall  
the wind  
why bother  
even a lot of cars is not many cars  
no one walks the sidewalks  
built wide to accommodate multitudes  
the old hotel where the Writer stayed  
is just a historical spittoon now  
there is a steakhouse next to the Wheat Lands  
why not there

## Wind Voices

standing next to me  
cottonwoods the only thing  
between us and the sun  
in the high western plains of Kansas  
her long honey brown hair down to the small  
of her back facing into the green shadows  
if only the light let us see them  
everyone we ever knew wondered  
where we were and we washed each other  
every day in a love that was like the wells  
of water beneath our feet  
this is how I dreamt it  
in 1977 and instead  
places like that  
places exactly like that  
I've only passed through

## Two On One

mindless hacking  
no purpose at all  
I guess that's what the mindless  
part means  
maybe the hacking  
part too

## Parent Thinking

dirty farm  
no place for privacy aside from the woods  
or maybe the barn  
down by the river might be  
the beach  
movie theaters  
small places on back roads  
cemeteries are good  
funny to know all those places  
the same way they did  
maybe it was to gain privacy  
he built the house as quick  
and haphazardly as he did

## Singularities One by One

we have it from authorities  
the cold wind is here to save us  
the rain is just a sideman  
the hard ground is advance fieldwork  
this means those buried are locked down  
there is no real reason for this  
it's a mirror of old writings  
when everything is ready  
the singing will start  
or if already underway  
grow loud then quit  
this I know from a recent telegram  
from the upper atmosphere  
written in the form of a foreign poem

## Neighbors Till the End

across the street  
something alive is disagreeing  
with something else alive  
one might think  
with such articulation to the screams  
it would be people  
but the ferocity  
is beyond everything

## City Throughout

we walked toward dinner  
past dark in a northern city  
late winter but still cold  
we walked past the block of flats  
where I knew she lives  
as we went past  
she looked up from her laptop  
and out her window where the wind  
was making a statement on my behalf  
and she saw the back of my coat  
and lackluster gait and knew  
(the elements believe)  
we had reached the restaurant  
and ordered heavy meals  
when I noticed our path there  
rehearsing the cold wind before beer  
and remembered I knew her once



## Bad Visit

the drive back to Rochester  
from Ithaca  
in a borrowed car  
the night cold as usual  
before Christmas  
the snow dried from the cold  
blowing across the road like desert dust  
after each good song on the radio  
I punch seek to find another  
ball games come in  
static and phasings  
stations from Canada more accustomed to the cold  
the visit the air the wind the memories  
all bitter  
when I got back I read about the bomb

## Cold Night

the why of it intrudes  
on the why not  
she gets up out of bed  
the warmth  
the smell  
the regret

## Loop

walk my bike back through the rain  
a small shack with a woodstove waits  
take off my slicker  
hang it and my gloves on a rack by the stove  
feed the stove the last book read  
enliven the coals to catch a wet piece  
a green piece  
slice warm bread and smear cold butter  
watch boots steam off  
dark never gives up  
without a bloody fight at dawn  
always losing  
getting even later  
go loop

## One From One

out of the shed into the snowdrifting evening  
no one to watch to see to notice  
they expect me elsewhere  
they will wait  
watch the roads up and down  
they will wait  
only a while  
until the need rises  
I will walk to a place with tables  
get one order read eat  
many that night will be sure  
we talked  
and for a long time

## Order In

Because it fouls the order in which people normally read.

Why is top-posting such a bad thing?

Top-posting.

What is the most annoying thing in blogs and e-mail?

## The Rope Knot As Indecision

the knot at first simple  
reveals complexity as it tightens  
what I thought was a careless twist  
grabs the strand I thought over-constrained and fixed  
but diffidently slipping until mr careless twist  
steps up to the plate  
what role do the loose whiskers  
from the fabric of the rope play  
bunched in like the unlucky  
in straitjackets  
making this machine so neat  
sprayed to mess

## Losing

failure is where we all end  
shutting down  
nothing to be shown for it  
every day we contend with it  
the little pains that grow sharper and deeper each year  
each year something else is lost  
and little gained in return  
when will it be time to give up

## poor health because of overcrowding

after a rough mix into song  
while waiting for the magazine  
by reading a coma for a brief recess  
two lie on a lounge sofa inconvenience  
of a central body and mind just to loosen up  
then we will confabulate  
or try to stretch the light or eating rice



## Meaning in Sync

many times the clock has ticked  
sometimes words forget their meanings  
in the cold winter air  
every time the clock ticks  
the words regain themselves  
when it all comes together  
the words all pulse  
warm to cold  
meaning no meaning

## Middle then Late

bugs and things on the pond  
heat adds to the bubbles and disturbances  
reed and pads  
frogs at the edges waiting  
dragonflies hovering and waiting  
midday is not a time to do  
it's a time to wait  
it's a time to read  
everything is still at midday  
except pages  
except words  
the surface  
the waiting  
later the sun will give in  
drop away and the bugs  
and frogs will move  
in search of their nourishment

## Giants Whichever

the greatest minds are tested  
against their need to be right  
with it the temptation to skim  
to lightly touch the facts  
before remixing  
shallow thought  
without the mood of depth  
like giants they secretly  
pine for trampling and tumbling  
they are ready to go whichever way

## Comparings

ahead the tangles and unwilling comments  
hard descriptions and predictions  
growing like brambles like nettles  
the pretty stuff is pretty  
much over / kaput  
so much chum  
like a moss / a fog / a hanging flag  
a cloud bank coming down the ridge  
chimney smoke rising to a low level  
forming a paper like thin coverlet  
over the valley / a ghost watermark  
nothing above it  
cloud folding down over it / through it / into it  
like a thicket the wall impending  
is like a death to strong behavior  
or only like a death  
or like death

## Liquid Exposé

indigo . nice color for a sky  
auburn . color for sweepstakes  
turquoise . fiddle color  
goldenrod . in a bursty sunset colors shade to dramatic  
wheat . what the last whisperers saw but they heard more

once the tale's tattled  
whisky's sipped  
or bottomed up  
the ooos and ahhs pour in

mix and stir for color effects

## Finally a Thought

synopsis opens thoughts  
simplified observations  
make the overall reappear  
like standing on top of a wave  
in a jungle of emptiness  
which each open space crowds  
the next or two others  
perhaps the biggest difference  
is difference

## Beach and Others

they were lost  
flummoxed and intertwined  
too of several things each  
scratched starcrossed messed up  
wrongly pointed everywhere  
landed in a land that forces polarization  
some become more  
they will be they  
some will settle  
the rest will rest

## Seen Unnoticed

her hair writes her face  
black ink mixed blacker  
her innocence is her  
shroud of thought  
she thinks when she must  
be / all around her stutter



## Loss

it can happen only once  
it doesn't  
like health

## I Could Use a Hero

a hero now that's appealing  
better a clear cut genius than a complicated  
story with lots of parts coming together  
better to say  
ooh look  
how smart  
because then maybe you could be smart too  
or could have been  
or lucky and then one man can turn  
that into riches  
just one shot  
in the bull's eye  
ask why are you rich  
and the answer is always a life story

## A Hero Could Save Us

a name and story are less abstract  
you can learn  
you can do biography  
make it come alive  
inform give people  
something to copy  
it gives hope  
invention is like luck  
luck onto something  
grab market share  
be wealthy famous whatever  
we crave heroes  
maybe we can become one  
or because then we don't have to  
it's not our fault  
a hero should have  
a heroic excuse

## Choosing to Walk Back

sun on basalt  
obsidian chunk on it too  
in the sunken light  
a sound repeats  
the sky's dome is pricked  
white sand stands out  
footsteps and shooshing underneath  
I should have asked the way

## Light Travels

exhausted the whole trip  
constant strumming of the wheels  
the road  
however it is made up  
is not a friend  
it leads away pretending  
to lead to  
in a before after setup  
after is more like a potion  
before is like a first date

## Suffer Then Suffer More

dulled by bad news and weary  
from a tough ride  
not absolutely but  
being ill

bad news is like a panacea  
in reverse in a gear higher than low  
weary from bad news and then more  
the same news with different names  
all bad

ride till you stop

## When Everyone's Left

why shake in fever  
why sweat when cold  
remembering yourself young  
when you're ill  
a chillout song playing  
over the overs  
now all's old  
all's left are stories  
the chillout songs help  
with them

## Storm Front

barely a year  
into running the farm  
without warning the big blow  
hits winds up to 120 trees blown down  
barns blown down  
animals killed  
started as the most beautiful day of the summer  
the radio saved the farm  
news spreading north faster than the storm  
the Long Island Express  
one more bitter log  
on a badly smouldering fire



## Walking Back

certain to succumb  
to winter be it  
snow rain wind sleet mournfulness  
once I felt a cold wind  
so cold  
so strong  
I could feel every abrasion of bone on bone  
walking uphill into it  
trying to find my way back to the hotel  
with wrong advice emerging  
from the fog of the voice next to me  
would someone ever look out their window  
down at us

## Lies and Their Falsehoods

mirrors and cameras  
satisfy the lucky  
when I see myself  
the site is more than anyone can take  
at more than I can  
frame full of ugliness  
camera expensive but must be broke  
but pix of the family farm  
the cemetery  
the river and its bridge  
all accurate and beautiful  
too much smarts in those digital cameras  
eh?

## Un Comma

the bay below  
the lights outlining  
water roads rivers streams woods  
all porcelain layered  
I suppose the air we breath  
contributes beauty  
haze and smoke add  
on this hillside  
I'm walking down  
this carpet is jewelled almost  
beneath my feet  
people in their homes  
are cooking by their tvs  
what might have been seen  
has long ago passed into lost memories  
like love only the new awakens the eyes

## Iconoclastic

sometimes some places  
rise up / become iconic  
like when the back sweats  
becomes caked with hay dust and pollen  
like when the sun stares a hole in the sky  
and sunburns were more rare  
working this way / then / the horses  
knew the routine / would look back  
stop start move on to the next bales  
without intervention / without  
I mean with  
only themselves and the task to guide them  
how unlikely one of them would kick to kill  
how young of me to believe one would

## On the Day I Must Imagine Only

the line of cars and carriages  
came in from the west  
hooked around the entrance hill  
and came to rest by the part least filled  
the family not large and friends  
knew only a good man had died young  
that the modest funeral was all that could be afforded  
only five knew the truth including  
the one  
after / they returned to Auntie's to eat  
watch the priest and cantor  
place incense in the censer  
censer those present and begin as usual  
to sing

## Back Home Cold Time

the sky all gunmetal and grey  
pink porcelain shading gradientlike up from the horizon  
one splotch of cloud backlit  
looking like the remains of a recent explosion  
tree branches backlit form tracery and measure  
all these highlight how cold it really is  
how winter is more than the name of a season  
more than a season / more like the main course  
day passing to day  
imagine the rivers and sea / how cold they  
how strong the dark can be  
in the face of light

## Bad Writing Night

misting up cooling off  
soon the snow  
a light wind growing confident  
doglikehowling past my window  
looking down to the street  
I search for a companion  
someone walking by who might look up  
me writing looking down  
such and only such a connection  
might be possible tonight

## Hard in the End

nothing is like the rain in the dark  
nothing to highlight the drops  
just the wet in hard spots  
now add the cold  
each drop like a pin  
like a small knife  
now the weariness  
late after hard work with no breaks  
too filling a meal eaten quickly and alone  
the road not lit not marked  
curves under trees  
in the end  
going to no one  
more words in containers that look like sentences



## Glass Cold

something to suppose  
long road to negotiate  
old fashioned ways of communicating  
I once wrote beautifully  
but now the fear and sloth takes over  
over the air tastes of cold glass  
like the cold air that falls from the top  
of the winter window  
to the floor  
let's praise this cold  
this taste unlike the pulse  
the warmth  
let's praise what we shall all  
become

## Change Prone

the air never cooperates  
too warm too cold  
change grates  
predictions of changes  
bear the same  
the thinking of  
the wondering of  
lights pinpointing off cars  
in the lot sparkle just a little  
in the air tonight  
the cold air tonight  
the air aiming for colder  
predicted they predicted  
my eyes feel the looming dryness  
and weep

## Marketing Sir

the poor  
hunger  
civil liberties curbed by our government  
war  
fear  
torture at the hands of those running the land of the free  
serious research  
hard work on our failing infrastructure

the woman  
a wife and mother  
well dressed opens the door  
for her friends over for a chat and cucumber sandwiches  
she feels proud of her choice  
to purchase the scented candles that make her house odor of baking apple pies  
she watched the commercials and decided  
this small bit this small touch would enlarge her life and her family's

people in jails while innocent  
passion for executing the guilty (even when they might not be)  
genocide  
epidemics of death  
planet death

the smell of apples blushed  
by cinnamon

## Work Word Work

cold wind cold rain  
then snow then rain  
freezing in the meantime  
the roads not slippery at all  
but people packed with caution  
I used my suave use of words  
to shortcircuit the meeting  
and spent the day planning  
how to eliminate writing about a poem  
nothing like the thrill of revision  
applied to not just the words

## Universal Appeal

moon  
light and alighting the sky  
the possibility of other worlds  
with moons of their own  
the question of poets arises  
if such worlds are  
are poets along with them  
what loves abound  
what's univesal  
where do the words go  
when the moon sets

## Writing Dizzy

no one in town this morning  
but nothing is there  
the roads are clear  
but snow is piled at the edge of the curb  
and caught snow in branches falls onto cars  
I'm the only one in the deli  
expecting good pastrami but hoping  
it's not piled too high  
all day it never warmed though the sun  
whispered it's trying  
to me  
looking through the screenlike window shade  
there are two red and two blue dots  
as if produced by selected parts of a prism  
I'm moving my head side to side  
to see where they're from  
and this makes me too  
dizzy to

## Quick Back

all the world is thinking  
of coming to the end  
in a paradox of time or death  
great geniuses plot their own ascension  
to greatness based on derision and tough angles  
when we drive too fast we must trust  
our sense of good place for traps  
and funny cars  
tie the ends off on lust  
with the plus of light off snow  
the cool is not reflected in the brightness  
we are ready to slip  
into a higher gear

## Word Dance

they danced  
without grace or timing  
the music meant nothing  
just the execution of the calls  
properly but not musically  
this is what happens  
when words are just information



## Dear

here for days  
but no time to visit them  
snow on the ground but drenched by rain  
miss them is not quite right  
nostalgia for place perhaps  
habit probably the real answer  
the river I suppose is still flowing  
one way or another  
the bridge is still green but rusting away  
the leaves are all gone I suppose  
the stone still remains  
perhaps stained by winter  
wishing to visit  
I write instead

## Wasted Time

I planned the thing and it went well  
though I dropped my life and things went poorly  
recovering is taking a while  
and the pace is picking up again  
of things that can invade time  
naturally my fear rises  
the cruellest month is coming up

## Cranking Out Reality

the beauty of it  
the contrast  
the colors just as they should be  
making beauty requires a sharp  
critical skill and fast convergences  
or else slow reflection  
and many nights of contemplation  
I wish these all were available  
when there were things I wished to remember  
so that my memories now would  
be like this

## After a Long Climb

gathered on a porch  
infused with incense  
standing before a table  
covered with food and photos  
looking ahead then down at their feet  
while saffroned monks chanted  
the group was not just prepared  
but fully engaged in the beginnings  
of mourning which will persist despite  
the teachings that say don't  
look back but turn your back  
and while this small group  
fell into its ritual my friend  
and I stooped nearby in front of them  
to pet the temple dog  
who drooled its happiness  
onto our hands

## Sad Girl Never Off My Mind

why do my poems of Montréal  
speak so often of rain when most of my time there  
it was dry and warm  
there were no girls walking past  
or typing at computers in their windows at night  
as I walked by  
the painting / graffiti though  
was real / she was sad beyond human sadness  
many evenings I would stand across the street  
and look at her with love in my thinking  
nothing changes her mind  
not like me  
nothing changes her at all  
but the wrecking ball  
and a spray can of paint

## Yes Finally

the difficulty of weather  
phones not working  
ceilings too low  
the other things that go with it all  
flying into that famous large city after dusk  
the lights doing their heat rising thing  
and after a long effort to be thoughtful  
to be thought thoughtless  
makes me want to go to sleep  
finally

## After a Party (after O'Hara)

I do not always know what I feel  
last night when the air was warm as spring  
my people were not opposed to intense tirade  
interested?

I? it is your love for me that sets  
lighting

and is it odd for the entire room?  
my most tender feelings for a stranger:

torture and  
scream bear fruit let me hand it to you  
there

an ashtray all of a sudden there? next  
in bed? and somebody who loves you enter a room  
says not as follows:

would you like a little bit of egg on his mind  
today is different?

and when they  
scrambled eggs just plain warm weather  
the landowners

## No Wonder

every picture of a foreign city  
has a lamp post and light  
demarcating the quaintness of the place  
its strange nature  
its deceptively other  
women / many remark  
on their selective charms  
the hold they have on their hairlines  
and the oldlooking but newly fashionable  
dresses made seemingly to melt away  
at the right glance  
should I muster one  
all the above + the hefty price  
of a fat-laced meal will buy  
me a night cut short just short of second base  
especially after an hour of explaining it  
with the wrong tongue  
or with babelfish where it will come out  
*cherish or seek*  
*particularly centres*  
*sometimes recapitulated as "hands in the shirt maker"*  
*and probably the stimulation*  
*of the genitals of the outside clothing*



## Supper Of the Family

scene of hunting painted in wild boars  
and the plate dogs with a castle  
on the back  
the cut pear does not bleed  
nor not white  
its pulp moans under the knife  
we are these that  
on the plate  
on the pear  
on the blades  
smile ferociously  
our teeth snarl in the old hunting  
of the family at the table

## Once More

outside the sky falls  
snow and the like  
long trip ahead  
and eyes full of tired

## Rainy Snowy Afternoon

some of the places  
are received by purpose  
we sit with our hands cupping cups  
of coffee while what we say  
makes not one bit  
of difference though we plan and plot  
each word as the other  
speaks / and this is how  
I mean why  
we make it mean  
nothing

## Do It To You

they spy on us  
because they can  
but we have the Net on our side  
let's pick one of them  
not them directly  
but one of their relatives  
a cherished son let's say  
find out everything  
post it  
oh what fun  
oh what fun  
make them cry  
over the horror of exposure

## Thinking of Digging

beneath us the ages of past  
await the crush that will make them  
mere geology  
history has nothing to do with these bones  
the skulls and shinbones or maybe fibulas  
and metatarsals and not to mention the utensils  
and bowls carefully made and lovingly used  
filled with warm food prepared tenderly  
by women for whom they hold dearly  
but you see this latter stuff is history  
and the rest just matter becoming geology  
with few remaining whiffs of biology  
where's the soundtrack?

## Facts Found

lefthanded?  
his handwriting on display  
perhaps or maybe  
an official though  
his signature looks the same  
as the rest  
tall / slender  
a piper (makes pipes?)  
Teremcy  
Kamenec-Podol'skij  
Panevėžys on the other side  
with a scar in the centre of his forehead  
he changed his name  
Grinkewicz Grinkevicius Grinkaitis  
finally Gabriel

## Wedding Flush

the fascination of the toilet  
seat / no worry one would fail  
to find one in time  
and with a lover to bring food and drink  
every need is right there  
the toilet door keeps away  
the curious / curiously  
her lover doesn't stop  
to think why she's in there  
perched with her sweat  
pants down around her ankles  
for years / though the unswerving  
sameness of the situation  
eventually burrows down  
sufficiently for him to phone  
the police who arrange for the toilet  
seat to be removed / though  
she cries it's the ring  
she's wanted all these years

## Who is Who

finding clues  
data and information  
nothing is more important than the photos  
some I've lost because  
well because  
the tall grass being cut  
by the tall slender man  
I wonder though about the man  
with nearly the same name  
from roughly the same place  
living originally nearby  
who ended up in the home  
for the insane  
makes you wonder about more  
of the story



## Destiny in Old Town

water  
cold water flowing rapidly  
past the concrete retaining wall  
eddies here and there filled  
with debris  
plastic bottles and chunks of wood  
swirl  
the sky wants to snow  
it's that cold  
that warm  
back a couple of streets from the river  
a girl with dark hair under a wool cap  
stares through the fogged window  
of a French restaurant as two lovers  
put the first forkfuls of their first meal together  
into their destined to kiss mouths  
the crotch of her meeting legs warms  
she and I are separated by night

## Long at Riverside

her hands in her pockets  
her hands in her gloves  
the eating lovers on the other side of fogged glass  
raise glasses to honor their first meal  
together after a long online flirtation  
she turns into the wind  
heads uphill to her unheated room  
the piles of blankets and sleeping bags  
there she'll poke just her eyes and nose  
out from the coverlets and her sweatshirted arm  
read three chapters  
not knowing I wait by the river  
the dark flowing its long flow out to the far ocean  
where she's waited before  
cold in her blue coat  
the coincidences that fail  
define us

## Cold Night Seat

after reading and dropping  
into a deep dream she woke  
covered in blankets and sleeping  
bags the windows open and snow  
accumulating on her floor  
and threw the covers off  
to pee her panties sticking  
by sweat to her rear  
by the time she reaches the seat  
she is shivering again  
by the time she's back to the bed  
she's unable to remember that dream  
by the river he thinks of heading to  
his flat but the darkness reminds him  
of warmth even though the river  
shouts cold

## At the End

eventually the sun begins to reveal  
the cold is breaking too  
the river is unaffected  
she will rise soon  
out of her heat & sweat soaked bed  
it's time I'm thinking  
my hands lift from their pockets  
my legs start lifting their feet  
I can repeat this story  
for every player within a hundred miles  
and the conclusion will be the same  
time to go home  
no one will be there  
ever

## River Ended

walking home  
behind him the sun eeked  
above the low distant hills  
creating a light tunnel  
in front of him  
the wind eased down different  
streets from his  
and up the hill but  
on a small alley no  
one can see she  
is pouring hot water  
into a cup of crystallized  
coffee and the radio  
is stating the morning's case  
the hill's before him  
the wealth of streets  
meetings are off the table

## Hot Night in Globe Arizona

those kids riding up and down  
the sidewalk near the corner  
dark tees down to their knees  
on bmxtype bikes  
they tell me  
nothing  
when I ask what's exciting about the town  
and nothing  
when I ask what's exciting about them  
but they buy Bergin's my dad and 95  
doesn't he look good for that  
sure does  
they photo like good old boys  
but neither is about 14  
with the theater burned down  
they answer what's to do in town  
nothing

## Long Day

the dust is nothing for us  
people who lived here hundreds  
of years ago might be part of what coats  
my shoes and other artifacts  
this is the nature of things  
not dust to dust but life to dust to shoes  
and stuff

## End the Ride Soon

fade out  
slow down  
let the pack move ahead  
up the next hill and over it  
they might make it to the next stop quick  
but you're the one who'll see the sun drop  
below the hills  
maybe you'll stop to rest  
take a long pull from the water can  
watch the riders on the road  
pass by  
you shouldn't care  
you can't care  
sit down  
take off your riding shoes and close your eyes  
you've earned it



## Turn Off

gazing into the crystal ball  
lying cracked and cracking more  
on the concrete sidewalk  
above which sits the languorous texting woman  
and the news is bad  
everything is passé  
the music is too out of fashion  
legacy language turns them off  
so hip in its day  
not it's a turn off

## In a Small County

town running to mush  
people around town  
nothing to do but wander  
watch wait succumb  
nice bikes are about it  
the only theater burned down  
now the lot's cleared and awaiting developers  
don't they know  
capitalism doesn't really care  
about those who need it  
only those who don't

## The Last of the Laughters

the poet has gained  
a real job  
president no less  
of a great foundation  
that rewards creativity  
but they choose the winners  
without creativity  
the tears of sadness over this  
would rust the irony  
so better skip them both

## Hauling Away

carload after carload  
we packed her clothes  
appliances new enough to run  
dishes and cutlery  
took it to the town nurses  
serving all as nurses do  
and served it up to them  
day after day  
until it was all gone  
we watched each thing be not  
there the next time or time  
**after** that we drove to the lake  
where behind an arm of her favorite  
mountain the sun vomited orange  
pulp up to the brittle blue sky  
as we sat there in the car  
not speaking many  
passed by many did

## Told To Me Before a Joke

big fat  
big old fat cat  
what do you think  
she's named what name  
was she given in a fit  
of misdirection it's  
mistwiggy

## None of Them Along the Line

in a strange town  
just back from walking to the store for drinks  
hot wet air / dried hay dust trying to stick to my neck  
locals in cars ready to drive me over  
in the room the air conditioner likes to drool on my rug  
the toilet craves its handle held down or else it won't flush  
that rug has stains like fossils of love affairs sprouting of it  
my computer has a place to plug in and a table that can face the tv  
I can watch and write multitaskingly  
the silver bridge perhaps or the mud beneath  
the drugstore that certain of its demise worships decay  
Taosian skinny dogs hugging cornered shade  
the last fab babe unable to catch out / not marriageable  
like breathing the words must eventually exude  
music / I can be completely satisfied for weeks  
by the simplest four-bar phrase repeating over and over again  
strange but typically so let's see what I wrote

## Of It All

stale walls stale floors stale air  
the toilet is a conspirator  
its water a grey that highlights itself in the bowl  
the coffeemaker pot is cracked though it's designed  
to resist heat to the death  
the tv gets 9 stations but I get only 3 of them  
the others biblical propa g  
three doors down my tormenter  
is unwrapping a shrimp sandwich  
and popping a pepsi poptop  
watching Bergeron host Hollywood Squares  
each time she'd tell me he's from Haverhill  
this reminds me of Skip's where he eats each year  
back in my room the antenna cable falls off and  
the toilet won't stop flowing  
time to sleep and a long drive tomorrow north  
toward the cold and end

## Safer More Reliable

writers make up  
friends again  
or a new plot  
when character fails  
try killing them  
safer and more reliable than sex  
which always sells  
but not on tv where the uptight rule  
writer make up  
and the world revolves  
when there's too much to do  
push the carriage return bar  
start a line afresh



## Too-ish

too much  
too fast  
too internal  
too infernal  
too last  
too such  
too too

## This is Taking Me Under

maps and the strange  
finding a way  
to find a way  
there is no reason now  
to find your way to the top  
of the nearest big hill  
walk across town  
the map knows the way  
in its quiet née silent way  
apartments of crowded stairs  
laundry hanging to dry  
but there is no reason to dry  
I'm alone on this road  
that makes no directional sense

## Artistic Naturally

go to nature  
in a perturbed state  
see how fabrications  
of it can be made  
and into labs  
to investigate making  
extrasensory colors  
the movie is the thing  
the music that the video  
is a music video of  
is the thing  
the diva holds at bay the businessmen  
the diva holds at bay the nature defenders  
the mystery is  
what's the song  
when will it be written

## Stopping By With Help from the Lisp Function Poem1

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village—ask, though.  
Though he watches he will not see me  
stopping here to see his woods.  
Fill up with little snow, my horse.  
My horse must think it queer  
to stop between the woods and frozen lake  
without a farmhouse near.  
If the darkest evening of the year  
gives his harness bells a shake  
there is some mistake.  
The only sound's the sweep  
of easy wind, miles, and flakes.  
Downy, the woods are lovely, dark, and deep  
but I have promises to keep,  
and places to sleep before I go,  
and miles of go before me.

## Love Song of Lisp

and would it have been tea  
been worth it after all  
after the cups the marmalade  
among the porcelain  
talk among some of you and me and the dead  
would it have been worthwhile  
to have bitten off the matter with smile  
to have squeezed the universe into a come ball  
to roll it towards some overwhelming question  
say to me I am Lazarus come from the back  
to tell you not all I shall tell you all  
if one setting a pillow by her head should say  
that is not what I meant at all  
that it would be all and it would have been worth it after it  
after all it would have been worthwhile after the sunsets  
and the streets the dooryards and sprinkled after the novels  
teacups after patterns  
the skirts that trail along more of the floor  
and this so much is impossible to say just what i mean  
but as if I threw a magic lantern  
it would be the nerves on not a screen setting  
it would have been worthwhile if one pillow  
thrown off or throwing a shawl  
would turn toward the window and should say  
that this all and that is not what I meant at all

## Out the Window

driving to South Boston from Merrimac  
Thanksgiving 1958  
the road's not finished all the way  
so we take Lynn Street to 99  
all the way to downtown  
Haymarket then over to Seaport  
to D to Broadway to N  
off 1 where it's about to go elevated one day  
to Mystic River Bridge  
the start of Lynn Street is into Holy Cross  
Cemetery and maybe my mother asks him  
where is he buried  
your father my grandfather  
and he says I don't know  
but in the middle of the cemetery  
we never watch him close  
and he turns his head to the window  
a clue for me to decode

## Fly In

heavy weather  
forces us down  
the wrong airport  
the screaming babies warm up  
fueled up and cleared  
we take off head back  
to where we should have been  
lightning's still licking  
but we land no problemo  
then everything that happens  
when you're late happened

## Plot Synopsis

today doing what she did  
the shopping at different stores  
the banks the gas stations  
the camp the oppressive humidity  
even on such a cool day  
but the plot synopsis is empty  
people living on the very spot  
my father died  
not the same land  
but the same floor  
the same room  
it takes a stranger to ignore death



## Cat Metaphor

how is the cat like a fridge  
both of course make ice  
if you stroke a cat it meows  
and if you freeze a cat in the fridge  
for a month it will when sawed  
by a band saw go MEEEEEOOOOOOOWWWWWW  
four feet whiskers  
(in the ice cube maker for measuring)  
both pretend to be your friend  
but it's the sinuous up and down  
encircling greeting that marks them  
most the same  
that and the defrost cycles

## Down Roads

it's the nowhere of it  
that hits me  
every place in fact  
was a no place  
you would not stumble  
on any of them without  
a God's bucket of luck  
this isolation is them and me  
bad roads and many turns  
in the right weather  
great gifts or great fears  
two are sandy dirt  
I wander down them  
wrapped in the air they breathed

## Metaphoria

unlike the parallels  
the real thing is not an unwavering rule  
or line or sympathetic ditty  
the parallels are pretenders  
or the laggards rushing up on coattails  
but off to one side by errancy  
or maybe two  
nothing beats the crowd of sycophants  
the first thing to think about then  
is the fact of nonconvergence  
is the essence of parallelish metaphoricis

## Big Pretend

the philosopher  
retired to his cabin far in the woods  
with only exactly his needs' worth of stuff  
and no way and no inclination to talk  
enjoys an early death and all its rewards  
he is able  
to pop back to life and see those around him  
weep and wonder  
all he needs is his tombstone  
and a blind nearby  
to watch those who miss him  
walk up and place their stones  
on his

## Craftsmanship

we are the product  
of the skills we develop  
transforming observed criticism  
into embedded practices  
we don't know what we will face  
so we load up on these skills  
when the world explodes its imperfections on us  
we pull them out and get to work  
until we've fully exercised our craft

## You Are Everything

Rapid City  
1972 / drove there  
she transported me  
from my childhood home  
to my home today  
3000 miles  
36 years  
at that time Rapid City  
had partly washed away  
yet we visited like tourists  
the Black Hills  
the Badlands  
all that  
driving past all that  
looking at pix on the Web  
I remember the places  
looking out a car window  
love at that time  
was avoidable

## Crazy Horse

we slept on the floor  
ate late breakfasts  
drove out into the Black Hills  
to see sculpture and black hills  
the best were the busts  
with broken off noses  
a witness saw the perp  
dump a bag with hammer and noses in the lake  
they recovered the bag with hammer and noses in the lake  
but not enough for a conviction it was  
through the hills  
past bison  
twisted railroad rails  
motels on cars  
homes on roads  
wandered from home  
I'd never wander back  
like a busted off nose  
at the bottom of a lake  
fails to be evidence  
of mischief

## Dakota

nothing like the diversity of South Dakota  
the western part I mean  
Crazy Horse  
the prez  
the surprise love gave me  
the wrong trip  
the little hikes  
big flood and the search  
Badlands  
Wall Drug  
all packed in a part of the world  
of obvious poor taste  
and light interest  
some say  
it's spiritual there



## One I Imagine

starting to write  
one image always comes up  
the cemetery  
and the camera facing west  
with the sun over there  
sometimes I hope a jet will fly by  
break up the image  
into the shards that feel like  
the inside of my chest breaking out  
then it's night  
lights out and the record scratches more each play  
the amp glows each back beat  
I'm on the couch watching the music glow  
when the song's over I get up  
and move the needle back  
one image always comes up

## Coincidence

who was John Gabriel  
my father's name  
but he changed it  
he said  
the last name was his confirmation name  
but living a block away when he was 8  
was John Gabriel age 34  
and his son John Gabriel age 8  
my father at that time age 8

## ph ez ysi me cal la fla rf ws

VUnlike pumps, wei zud ghts and surgery, V cbl P de X jc L  
delivers res xkr ults that are safe and per xzc man lz ent!  
when you reach the growth si vc ze that you want t o achieve  
you no lon ck ger need to take V hw P cd X fe L  
GRA wgs DU lp AL p ngx en edu is en idg larg pil  
eme rz nt is the key to ef vcg fect gzx ive, permanent  
res how ults other forms of p ywj en hy is en puq larg  
dm eme zbz nt can't deliver permanent res wf ults  
SAFELY because they go against the ph ez ysi me  
cal laws of the bo yj dy the bo ax dy grows and develops  
GRA fo DUA qx LLY, not over night! this is why V mko  
P ijz X dd L is the greatest breakthrough pro nz duct in  
the history of male enhancement! P xcd en oq is en jkm  
larg cm eme zyb nt, as we know it  
will never be the same

## A Mighty Prison

the wall between generations  
stories leak across as across  
a tall thick wall sandbagged together  
by a change in language  
by a change too far from feeding and diaps  
intellectual exchanges beyond the simplest  
of stories too extreme too close  
if only I knew what to ask  
there would be no clues now  
only facts and opinions  
stories of speculation and guesses  
coincidences and the eye openers  
the generations walled in like prisoners

## Project Forever

in Montréal I began  
my great photo series  
of beautiful women  
walking away  
it would continue for decades  
and beyond that my children  
would continue it by advising  
the subjects of my project  
and they would willingly  
walk away as if it were I  
right there before them

## Stand Off

nothing is bigger right now  
than the wake  
behind the boat about to dock  
running upriver in a strong current  
standing by the riverwall  
snow coming down like reasons for leaving  
in a bedroom not far lies a warm woman  
under piles of blankets and more  
her head on feather pillows  
and heat from a woodstove  
invading her repeating dreams  
of her riding upstream in a boat  
about to dock as it snows  
her reasons for leaving  
and all that's there to stop her  
is me on the quay

## Ground Pearl

the pearl not on the ground  
where no one really looked  
but you / she asked  
and where is she  
same place as the pearl  
did you look at her  
did you look under your shoes  
like Simic did  
she was made valuable  
by a quick lie  
same as the black pearl  
but she never said  
black nor white

## Time Walk

long walk  
the river to the art museum  
snow made its appearance  
the sidewalks aren't shoveled  
down on the streets urgency plays a role  
in the warm apartments there is time  
songs on impressive but cheap stereos  
this is a place where old words catch  
hold burring onto the words of the night  
long time  
between warmths and reading lights  
attracted back to that place  
how long till the cold catches on in me



## Phantom of the Night

alone I play like God  
playing along with records  
I sound like the guitar players of old  
the screaming sound  
the indeterminate bends  
I picture the dancers  
the undulations  
the stamping and swaying  
then anyone shows up  
and I sound like the stooges

## Oh She Is

she doesn't realize what's ahead  
at stake it all about  
with adaptive seeing  
stuff looks always normal  
so her future is looking after her  
for now she walks  
from quay to alleyways  
to her trojan bed  
she is like a film  
not yet edited

## Time Lapses

first to fall  
frightens watchers  
first a few but  
the more we walk  
the more the fallen bunch around

## Light Lesson

cold water requires  
short exposure  
unless it's black  
or the sort of green  
that frightens the sky to clouds  
the forces of clarity  
and restraint must battle  
the result always open to revision  
and edition

## No Poem But an Idea

too long a trip  
to be able to think  
but I have a good idea  
for a poetry of matrixes

## In Kobe

the light here  
is funny  
always sullen  
off angle  
back hurts  
feet hurt  
all is not well

## The Bring Back

instinct to live in the city field  
provide a thing in the back of the heart to the table  
it is supposed to be able to live neatly

## Kobe Laced

endless haze  
and 0-taste or all/only fat  
food and falldown stores  
you'd think the fish would fly  
into mouths with sweet  
relish or young taste  
but Kobe is old or forgotten  
miffed or muffled  
spited or spit upon  
the Feel Kobe sign  
shows allure through innocent stares  
but nothing here feels back  
it is a town displaced  
by 7.3 on the disdain scale



## Kyoto Developing

though the rest of the countryside  
is barren the temple grounds are a green  
rarely seen in nature  
so green  
incense perhaps is the answer  
or the ringing of bells  
by the penitent  
sweat on my back  
proves the challenge of capturing it  
both in the mind and the camera

## Flower Road Side

this work is Esky of "the sea in a cloud"  
which Sannomiya center street installed  
in this place as an environmental  
monument to think about garbage  
dispersion of a cigarette butt  
an abandoned mouth of garbage  
was established in the lower part  
and an abandoned mouth of a cigarette butt  
was made with intention that we closed the mouth  
when improvement of morals was seen  
and it was completed by the upper part  
to be seen in the Esky at first  
those mouths are closed two years later  
with understanding and cooperation of many people  
it is installed in center street the first order  
east entrance as a completion work now

## Dear Park

the girl snores  
her tee shirt says  
while eating a dog  
on a stick in the park  
with the largest wood  
building a temple  
housing a big Buddha  
along with lesser ones  
and two generals stomping  
demons / I pass her  
and her beret  
she is bereft of good teeth  
and speaks in a squeak  
like everything else  
in this tin foil land

## Now?

never good enough  
think of the bike ride  
with fire in the legs  
you can keep up for a while  
fall behind by just a little each mile  
you believe you could sprint to catch up  
but at some point you give up  
is this that some point

## Program for Life

simple calculation  
figure the ratio of win to tries  
when below .3 quit  
no exceptions

## something story

memory: mine about Daniel raising  
his brother's illustrated charcoal reader  
the-colored angel her fingers brought to a lion's lip  
about and-clouds: something  
forgetfulness pouring coffee over the mountain's leaves  
flashing their pale undersides on and on  
the covered porch he spells  
out-words lips twisting  
with this new problem of closed letters  
with my book I'm watching him  
a story of brothers

## spreadlet

we go then you and I  
when the evening is against us  
follow the sky like an etherized patient  
upon a certain table  
let us go through half deserted-streets  
the muttering retreats of restless nights  
in night-cheap-hotels sawdust  
restaurants with oyster street shells  
that like a tedious insidious argument  
to lead you: overwhelming  
oh do not visit  
ask: what is?  
let us go and make our room come in the women  
Michelangelo: go talk

## Proofs Rock

and: indeed  
do it there / will it turn  
time to say “wonder and do  
how I dare?” his and mine?  
dare and time to tie the necktie back  
descend the hair / the stair / with a bald lie  
is this spot in the middle of my—  
[hair they will be growing modest  
thin  
my morning coat!]  
—collar mounting firmly  
to the chin / my rich butt  
by assertion is a simple pin  
how will I say—  
[but his arms: “legs are thin  
do I dare disturb the universe in a minute  
there are decision times]  
for revisions which minute will a reverse do

I have known them all  
actually already have known them all:—  
voices have afternoons / have known evenings  
mornings I have measured life out by coffee with my spoons  
I know the dying with a dying beneath-fall  
the music from a farther room  
how should I so presume?



## Proof Rocks

and it all would have been: "worth it / after it / after  
 all the cups have marmalade / have thé / have tea / have me"  
 among the sayers / the talkers  
 porcelain is among some of you and would it have...  
 would it have been worth while to have bitten  
 off the matter with a smile  
 to move toward the squeezed / have the  
 universe crimp into an overwhelming ball  
 to roll some question to the skirts...  
 if I am Lazarus come / I've been back from the dead  
 come to tell you all I shall  
 tell all if by one  
 tell you are a settling worth / a by-pillow  
 her head should say: "That is / is not / is that what I meant  
 at all / that is not it"

all that?  
 and would it after a while  
 have been worth dooryards  
 after novels the sunsets are after  
 and the after-sprinkled streets  
 are after the teacups / after the trail floor  
 along the...and this is so?  
 much!

more is impossible to mean / say just what I  
 would as a magic lantern throws the nerves  
 in patterns on a screen while it was worth one "if"  
 settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl  
 and turning toward the window say  
 that: "is it? / not it / all that?  
 that's not what I meant / all that"

## Goth Max

black skirt  
vinyl of course  
natural blinding in the not so low but low  
sun streaming down the former gray street  
fishnets capturing but not trapping  
held by garters  
studs in her mouth / ears / over her eyes  
blue hair enough to shame vegas  
shoes to the stars / height  
tonight her eyes will close  
his shoulder beneath her ear  
as if this poem never happened

## Lobby Spirit in Red and Gold Dress

you never see her  
fully / your mind protects itself  
comprehension blocked out  
by a shutter / lid blinders  
your brain cannot walk  
at the same time  
she walks past  
regardless the distance  
between you  
it is too far a gap

## Replaced Memories

we can suppose it  
replace it  
put an arm around it  
punt it down the narrow short river  
filled to the tops of its banks  
with motes and mosquitoes  
by the fellows residence hall  
she lies prone watching him  
everything we see is a sun blur  
if you can't imagine  
suppose it

## Not In College

hard debate  
hard to seem smart  
finally a good choice at dinner  
followed by spilled wine all around

## Potsdam and Me

does she ever open  
her mouth / not to talk  
not to eat / no not that  
but the other things  
here in the former east  
former stain of soot  
a place where the only  
thing to do was linger  
where the sweet things in life  
were really just soot  
she will never open her mouth  
that way because the lines through town  
never fork

## Magic and Light Holes

here in the dark of a formerly dark land  
the depthroated don't despair though the sights  
are not murky  
not aligned against common will  
tonight the deep fragmented greens of tree leaves  
await the sootless dawn and untimid day  
her smile lurks shadowed under the wan curl of her mouthlips  
only the crook of her brow  
reveals her opening  
just for a second  
between games

## Out

screw it all  
why try more  
when will rest arrive



## Hating

trains every few minutes  
seems like the oppressive regime  
will return any minute  
the roads are unwilling to adapt  
neither am I

## Sleepy In Potsdam

the taxi might not have been the one ordered  
but it did the job for less  
the usually unaccommodating airline  
chipped in a couple of berliners  
the kind Kennedy was thought to be by the openmouthed  
the banks of the lake added to the mustiness  
of Potsdam and the threat of mist in the mornings  
soon enough my mind fogged with feinted sleep  
and I was home and hoping for more

## Dreams and Not

dreaming of the river  
stressed by statement after statement  
the green smell of justcut grass  
later the smell of burning leaves  
just raked from the frontyard to the street  
or burnings from the field across the street  
to create food for the next crop  
burnings of the corn stalks  
what's left of them  
dreaming of these things  
cut and burned into the past  
instead of now-attention

## Admissions

marked and maintained  
roads with important destinations  
along them / what used to be despair  
is now a form of joy spawned by eclectic  
tastes and greed / like the big houses  
on the lakes where once simple pleasures  
(only) romped / imagine lovers blatantly  
loving / now it's the cruises that name  
our desires / pleasures for only a few  
slips of paper money / and a beer when  
it's over / your bottom tingles when the engine stops  
and the interview is over / we'll call  
you sir

## On Street

a bowl of latté  
a not sweet apple pie  
remind me of Potsdam '89  
when the soviets watched us  
disbelieving we would order  
hot chocolate and apple pie  
I think I had a second slice  
from that same pie  
nothing in the streets prepares  
me for the singing / signing / sighing  
the subtle play of cloth on muscle  
mediated by skin  
that organ of protection and pleasure  
the involved hair color mixing with clothes  
an old-fashioned perfection  
maybe coldwar vintage  
an old pie masquerading as new  
humor me

## Fingering Past

unaccustomed to cars  
with their resilient traffic  
lights running over cobbled roads  
the last of the haze and smoke washed  
into the lakes and women plunging  
forward toward  
oncoming dark and lastminute  
rendezvous / was it one or two  
more on the terrace overlooking  
the lake across which  
West Berlin ends not  
that it makes a diff now  
there being no West  
in Berlin anymore / now  
it's West only so none  
but the haze  
the charcoal smoke  
they don't give up  
we need to take them  
house by house

## Illinois 1970s

we moved in  
brick house on a nice lane  
master bedroom locked and offlimits  
industrial fridge  
grand living room  
grand dining room  
our first home  
the things we did there  
she worked  
I studied  
our dog escaped once  
captured within 30 minutes  
next year we took the cottage  
800 sq ft  
but it seemed smaller  
it would fit in the grand living room  
the things we did there  
our bedroom the size of a double bed  
mattress on the floor  
when it rained the bottom of the bed  
got wet / how did we live  
no such thing as a computer at home  
the things that were done  
to us

## Grad

her day  
I suppose  
graduating and all that  
though she still has 5 weeks + 1.2 units to go  
small ceremony  
with all the trimmings  
decorum informal  
sounds too loud  
lighting stark  
tricky  
quiet and awkward



## Clods of Ants

orange death: study better  
taut just misses you  
its cones well defined  
eye of rotation and  
land on someone's uncertainty

no else needs the sky for signs—  
or watch the cows not with  
satellite loops nor with infrared imagery flights

reconnaissance shrinking  
if it makes you steer  
feel ahead and push pins and roots  
through a chart brittle

your wind  
clear square of coordinates  
shear neatly east  
the worst lightning strikes  
and bursts air

all convection from your splattered doorframe  
the Red Cross mobilizes elsewhere  
good takes calm

look at those oak doorsteps and wait  
the sadness is a surge carrying all its

debris back to the flood  
that shoves clods of ants through  
snakes then walls and sits in

your house for days and days this  
is the dirty side of the Would  
storm that Death has blown  
straight through

## Skull Feast

from afar  
there is a road  
with no shoulders  
no place to walk  
motorists aim for you  
lifelike

## Splleing

stuff that doesn't work well  
makes great art  
broken pens  
leaking felttips  
bad splleing  
pomo tells us broken syntax reveals the nonexistent world  
which means revealing means lying  
I suppose  
like under the canopy /trees/  
near sundown when lightbeams are like laserbeams  
or knifeedgestrokes on canvas  
which means means means great art  
has bumped its rump  
all together now

# Tilt

always the tilt  
what does it mean  
think think think  
get it right

## I Wanna Hold Your Hand

waiting for the news  
the ending exciting  
how will the authors  
deterred by fate  
handle the loose ends  
who holds the authors' hands  
scribbling away for weeks  
and who holds the hands  
of the hand holders  
scribbling away for months  
and who holds the hands  
of the hand holders' hand holders  
scribbling away for years  
you know the rest  
it's been written into you  
by authors  
deterred by fate

## All in Photos

dusty earth air  
rising above the horsepulled harrow  
or this  
a scene of my mother through a window  
hauling buckets of apples in a homemade wheelbarrow  
later  
years later  
I found that wheelbarrow in the pear orchard  
broken and rotted  
we sold the farm piecemeal  
but one of the first parts to go  
was the part where her father lay  
for a long time  
beginning to die  
this before the scene  
and my father moved in with his piano  
driving by now  
there is no dusty earth air  
just the rising & blowing off fog of my constructed memories

## To Recall

in the old pictures  
the barn looks old  
the shininess of the neck locks  
made for cows spending winter indoors  
every piece of wood subject to human  
or animal touch worn to a polish  
harnesses in a part we never used  
a sort of wood toilet that merely dropped  
what you dropped into the muck below  
some of it whitewashed inside  
no nails I ever found  
a built-in small coop  
if only I had a picture

## Design

why heroes  
can't figure randomness  
like stories too much  
you and Brooks



## Road Trip Interrupted

grab the highway  
get in it  
step on it  
find the smallest town with a fullsize  
café with a fountain  
serving thick shakes  
with malt and eggs  
find one where waitresses  
wear tight skirts in offwhite  
and face away a lot  
find one with red vinyl stools  
(curb service would be nice)  
with burgers served with mayo  
fries the shape of pigs' tails  
buy a bungalow at the edge of town  
mow the lawn and fix up a hammock  
wait for horse to swarm by  
then bask in sunseting late summer light  
for the rest of your life  
because what else can matter

## Road Killed

more than enough places to park  
on mainstreet in the smallest town  
with a fountain restaurant  
a place not far from grain elevators  
with 50 thousand pound load  
trucks making ditches in the state roads  
but no one's making money  
burger wrappers are free  
beer cans roll under cars  
horses / no where near

## Road Widened Too

streets wide enough  
to turn an 6-ox wagon and team  
around without backing up  
used to be trucks jackbraked through town  
or would were jakebrakes invented  
when the state road moved out of town  
and then the interstate took that away  
taking away got fat  
everything's gone

## Which One

one day one of us will  
add the other to the Laswell page  
and do the whole talk alone  
ending with the picture  
where to go where to go  
from here I  
don't know  
what a day to visit Seattle  
what a day for San Francisco  
what a day to say goodbye

## Paste Itch

copycats and collage makers  
all agree that the other guys  
stuff belongs on the canvas  
paintlike or stuckon  
glued stapled  
here as long as it is  
agree guys

## Yet

Hot Madonna cleavage  
yet super scary arms  
Nice Madonna tits  
yet stringy muscular limbs  
Classic Madonna boobs  
yet petrifying appendages  
what to do

## Reading Advice

never tell the one you admire  
what her eyes do to your ears  
when she puts them on you  
yes read it as funny as you like  
but circle back to the reading  
you know is right  
or the one after that

## tags: words verbal

### soundtrack to my life

when i'm hearing music, and walking around the house...example:

I must arrive to the kitchen before the chorus, or touch the couch before the solo...

3:21pm [Permalink](#) ∞ 1 Comment [Heart this!](#) ×1 [Me too!](#) ×3

tags: sound touching

### floss sniffer

i have the need to smell the dental floss each time i pull it out from between my teeth. sometimes when other people are around, i have to turn my back in case they catch me sniffing the floss, because i can't just floss without sniffing.

3:23pm [Permalink](#) ∞ 0 Comments [Heart this!](#) ×1 [Me too!](#) ×2

tags: hygiene smells

### 747 Boeing

Everyday, at 7:47 am or pm, I always say Boeing, after the Airplane,

and I don't know why. I've gotten into a lot of trouble, and I even say it in my sleep.

3:26pm [Permalink](#) ∞ 2 Comments [Heart this!](#) ×0 [Me too!](#) ×0

tags: words verbal

### poop protocol

I cannot poop if my shirt is all the way on.

I have to put one arm out of my sleeve, and put that side of my shirt on my shoulder.

I also find it hard to poop with my shoes on, and will take them off if I'm at home.

If I'm out and about I will suffer through the shoe thing, but not the shirt.

3:32pm [Permalink](#) ∞ 5 Comments [Heart this!](#) ×0 [Me too!](#) ×2

tags: bathroom

### sorry to make you more neurotic!

My post still isn't up and I've submitted it twice and have been checking...countless times.

I think this site made me develop another neurosis...

3:33pm [Permalink](#) ∞ 0 Comments [Heart this!](#) ×0 [Me too!](#) ×0

tags: words verbal



## And You?

in traffic  
horns as echolocation  
men on scooters  
+ wife + child  
+ infant  
a small fire beside a tree  
in a median strip  
cluttered in rubble  
sidestreets / no / alleys  
filled with severe portions of nothing  
but dogs roaming in search  
of edible garbage  
a man on a motorcycle too fast over a bridge  
doesn't notice the speed bump that sends his bike to the pavement  
and him into the river  
we speed off hoping death isn't back there  
otherwise this city beckons

## After Too Nights

the night made for sleep  
permits the sudden heart reprieve  
from release to store up tension  
her idea is external passion  
and termination  
I spend the night staring  
through my share of wrong turn memories  
tonight upon return I found her  
gone / her gone away note  
I am reminded  
I remind myself  
of the shady nature  
of short links

## Light Lounging After Near Death

not far from the streets  
honked up and weaving  
sweet mango drinks and betel digestifs  
after a meal spiced  
with apologies  
let's recall the aborted caresses  
the sensual womanwoman touching  
in the cafeteria  
the dogs lounge

## Bangalore Dogs

dogs  
skinny ones  
lying in the dirt  
pawing out garbage filled bags  
longeared and mutty  
seems to be only one kind  
some different colors  
outsized ears from starvation  
small for ducking cars  
hard to say who lives more in the ruts

## On Writing Finally

what if the rain won't stop  
the lights turn off  
and maybe on again later but perhaps not  
what if there is no time to write it all down  
no time for memories to be made up  
the way the best rider  
makes up time on the lagging front riders  
what if I can't do it

## Once a Chance

she sat on my bed  
once / a chance  
thing / she wished me to take her  
but / now time is past  
she has run away  
instead of toward

## Interlude

sick  
tired  
thunderstorms all around  
which direction to go  
up and away  
or into bed

## Another Sick Day

sweating with cramps  
tired though having slept for 24 hours  
time should take care of it  
but nothing so far has



## Nearing

not feversih today  
but sore and weak  
points to weakness  
inherent in the system  
in this case  
mine

## Supported Vision

cold light by the Hudson  
exposed under a storm reminded sky and  
with all that and the tankers pushing upriver  
the waterskier going up then down  
the salted river  
a sight near dark

## Fishing Down by the Dead River

no one seemed to understand me  
fog down by the river  
was clear to me but my camera  
never spotted it  
clarity and fog getting it on  
fog reverses clarity  
what should this mean

## A Trip to Skip's

at the drivein  
eating burgers and taking pictures  
the Skip's sign's neon's glare needs  
a longer exposure  
long day driving  
mowing eating burgers  
taking pictures  
tomorrow the same  
for a lingering day  
then home

## Blunt Terms

what I meant to say was  
the idea of foreign love  
is the attraction of finding minimal  
points of contact and determining  
how far they can spread  
over the course of a night

## Passion Invents A Way

certainly the night has a way  
to bring clingers into the fold  
the emanations the little phrasings  
somehow I'll remember your smell  
long into the day / along the nightsheets  
we find edges / hold them on our separate sides  
imagining the tearing  
maybe there is a way to find  
this great divide

## Linger by the Cut

the air is different there  
it feels part of me  
the air is full of mist  
and the smell of cut green  
it's not dust-driven land  
outside in the air it feels like inside  
how much of this is senses  
how much memory

## Unlisted

what list of people informs best  
who can find themselves among the least  
I am facing the possibility  
I actually have no value  
that I am nothing but  
a high quality fake



## Roadless

road is the only thing  
sitting here working  
staring at the screen  
clicking click click  
scrolling and reading fast  
road is the goal  
road is the journey without the thinking part  
let's ride

## Finishing Down

music repeats  
within itself and by mechanism  
like the first of many repeats  
the chorus is oversweet and tenuous  
but then the improvised melody arrives  
makes its way along notes not in scale  
its tremors punctuate its surprise  
then the big chords  
heavy with deepened bottoms  
finally the fadeaway  
the closing leaves  
the road up the hill and down to the river  
this repeats

## After Watching a Sad Tale

below the bridge  
black water cold from snowmelt  
fizzles up to white peaks  
bridgelights made for safety  
highlight the swift current  
the current looking for endings  
concrete banks with green rails  
after saying this I wish  
it were the last thing I needed to say

## Tappan Zee at Dusk

the pictures  
after adjustment  
reflect the evening as more dramatic  
than it really was  
the work on imagining on top  
of the little bits of beauty  
make up a lot of ground  
best part is the big bend at the waist  
of the man on the blanket with his friends  
that make it a painting  
not a picture

## Urge for Later

long ways away  
the end beyond a darkened sky  
rain is pelleted with yellow pollen  
later the roads are black  
the sky tries to be blue  
the grass renews

## Ass Foremost

she walks by  
on the phone  
her ass is her best part  
her hair not far behind  
her ass balances her  
she knows it  
in the restaurant  
at the table  
my girl in front of me  
in front of the window  
I watch her  
walk by and know all her dreams  
are in that ass  
her beauty  
her trap  
her future  
her legacy

## Fear of All

doesn't feel right  
but the alternative is to give up quick  
balanced is the need to survive  
the river waits  
the highlights wait  
how can I seem to be so good at some things  
but fail overall

## Write On

what would it be like  
to simply give up  
cave in  
move on  
become lost until it's not possible to live anymore  
maybe become a leech  
in a welcoming household  
and write myself to death



## Telescoped

fireworks from 5 miles away  
ker-flash!!!

...

ka-boom!

## Wasted

lots of work with poor tools  
the result is a poor work  
tools being tools  
they insist on being in the way  
hey hey hey

## Get Right

how long to get perfection  
perhaps as long as there is  
perhaps a lucky shot knocks it off  
perhaps a right tool drops on it  
perhaps staring for days and weeks  
whatever it takes / you must

## Building

tracks not far away  
once there must have been  
noise and smoke over there  
noise they heard and smoke that bothered them  
though they too burned coal and oil  
winter the smoke would blend  
with other farmers'  
but the sound would travel far  
through leafless woods  
summer the smoke would be smothered  
by the oppressive heat and wet  
the noise captured by trees  
and shushed  
but there it was  
passing many times each day  
signalling great prosperity  
they thought could never fade  
the same way they thought  
a tough life couldn't be brought down  
by a small woman

## Know or Not

is it better to know less than more  
is this the way to greater creativity  
can practice making things up  
work better than taking bits from all over  
and jamming them together  
is it better not to know their stories  
from childhood but be left to find them  
in the cold light of old age  
so they be more true and less a part of me

## Picture of Heaven

steep slopes dusty from high  
altitude sun / long time dry heat  
a road leads up to lift stops  
eventually to the top ridge  
dropping down to the next valley  
a walk up is not a trivial thing  
they say the soul rises at its best  
to the ridge / you think  
to the cool ridge above valley heat  
valley dry / valley dust

## Bob the Poet

he writes long lines  
makes old ladies water up  
young ones too  
he's studied the old ones  
mimics their lines  
modern though  
though not more  
he is pure raw  
seething refinement

## Coincidence at the End of the Day

dusk and after  
sky a porcelain pink  
later but soon a thin lip  
above the serrated horizon  
insects tangle their paths  
fireflies haven't yet synchronized  
one rises and disappears  
in a foreign blue  
then emerges and merges  
with the twinkling reflection  
of an artificial specter  
the satellite launched  
the day I was born



## Replaced Upon Request

she's been replaced  
one day the way she walked in changed  
the way she prepared my breakfast  
of buttery french toast  
while we watched tv in the early summer evenings  
the game shows and then the sitcoms  
I could also catch her looking at me  
instead of the jumping contestants  
winning big money  
studying me to make her simulation all  
the better  
she continued this way  
a strange replacement mother  
until one day she was replaced again  
by thin air

## When Silence Isn't Enough

back porch on the 3 floor tenement  
in the neighborhoods of Boston  
not reserved for the rich  
early spring / not warm  
but the sunset seems warm  
sunset behind the Mystic River Bridge  
we sat there talking about the Sox  
talking about the summer ahead  
the winter behind / the tomatoes we'd plant  
the frappes we'd get up in Concord  
Ipswich clams / lobster rolls  
burgers with mayo and suzie qs  
and after we sat in silence  
I thought of those who are silent  
now in their distance  
I thought what it would take  
to allow them to speak one more time

## Holy Toledo

one day the song will play  
for one of us  
we wrote our presentation together  
to honor the ideas that came before  
and those who thought them up  
we honored those who passed away  
the talk was tag team  
but at this point we stood and watched  
the photos go by with pictures and dates  
one more slide will be needed  
the ideas he had or I did  
and one more picture  
then the one left will give the talk  
both sides of it and will stand or sit  
as the pictures go by  
as the one picture goes by  
that day the song will play  
for the last time

## Universal Suffering

and / and / and  
the missing miss us  
who we sleep with is determined  
one night at a time  
I hate to sleep alone  
but fear the touch of someone new  
but crave to touch anew that one some  
the hungry heart  
disturbs the mind drowsing at sunset  
demands all night of the new  
everyone has one  
but some can forget

## He Passed by Earlier

death just missed her  
she was asked by some being  
to move to a different vehicle  
before entering the salt flats  
she was in the first car to arrive  
at the point of several deaths  
instead of being among those found  
lying about in a white and red scene

## Some High Coos

candle pines  
tall as beauty  
reach so high  
their toes  
barely touch the earth

eraser headed  
pines so tall  
they rub the sky blue

sorry we  
cannot release more  
information at  
this time

I am the first  
robot written hai-  
BOINGGGG

unlike all of the ridiculous  
“make \$1,000 a day” ads  
you see all over the net  
high coo is the real deal

on 3  
plush velvet haik-  
red 69 on blue haik-  
backseat snapcount haik-  
oooooooo

pigeons  
perched high  
coo

honey your  
tongue is it  
tired

## Today is Avoidance Day

read the mascara ads  
maybe she's born with it  
read the rescues  
    washed-out complexion  
    uneven complexion  
    dark under-eye circles  
    blemishes  
    oily skin  
    fine lines and wrinkles  
    redness  
    no time for touch-ups  
    dry lips  
    chapped lips  
    bleeding lipstick  
    uneven lips  
    eyelashes thin, short, too straight?  
    tired eyes  
    red eyes  
    nail biting  
    stained nails  
    old nail polish  
    nail polish wear-off  
    nail polish on cuticles  
when the world intrudes  
lashes to the fore  
oven mitts with kittys  
smell of fresh flowers in the stale living room  
the turn  
maybe it's maybelline

## Deformity

attention / here's to disfigurement  
 |—pay it  
 stare to learn / deformity the relaxation  
 an insubmission to regulation  
 nose bridge spread out beneath the eyes  
 baffling / the eeriness of deformed existence  
 |—to doctors  
 I wonder how the great theoreticians / would approach  
 |—of beauty  
 its dis/covering / breed of invisibility  
 vendible at the tops of trainstation stairs  
 badly healed wounds / sweat over rain drenched shrouds  
 such things can be returned / by the balm of excess  
 |—to flawlessness  
 cash / why we bury the dead  
 but a vendible commodity / disfigurement  
 more entrepreneurial than leprosy  
 think of the last one / you passed by  
 |—cup in her teeth  
 afraid of armlessness / the intimacy  
 of putting your fingertips  
 by her lips at breath turn  
 no less than Adam Smith  
 would declare such / among the rich  
 |—beings / interruptions  
 able to appear in public without shame

the walk was short  
 cool night / narrow  
 streets / in front of a brick home  
 on the stoop right here as we walked by it  
 a woman sat behind her clay face / her everted appearance  
 talking to someone on the other side of the world  
 cup by her side / the smell of urine soaked  
 into cotton

a woman well dressed opens the door  
 her friends over for a chatty interruption  
 she feels proud of her choice  
 to purchase the scented candles that make her home's odor baking apple pies  
 she watched ads and figured  
 this small bit this small touch would enlarge  
 her life and her family's / the smell of apples blushed  
 by cinnamon

### Notation:

Lines like this:

ABC / GHI  
 |—DEF

have the syntactic sense as if written like this:

ABC DEF GHI

but the reader is instructed to imagine an unusual oral presentation, perhaps a second voice speaking DEF at the same time GHI is spoken.



## Pain

*the particular pain poverty affords is named hunger not pain by those who reckon pain as accident*

down sloping sidewalks  
between housecrates two chicken widths apart  
a shack of planks crisscrossed and nailed gaping  
provide their courtesy to mosquitoes and rain  
a vinyl tarp / blue  
harvested from discards where boats unload / for a seat  
this is home to a broken toothed woman  
she recalls men passing through her  
like illnesses leaving pregnancies behind  
she serves tea batched  
from makings never strong never sweet  
from a river fish save her from hunger  
but healing costs excess  
without it her bandaged knees and toes remain flawed  
her crooked hands  
her unearned sexlessness

after tea she sits  
legs folded under / her  
feet pointed out the back  
she searches her unplanned borders  
for a hunger to sell / something exceeding  
mishap / her's is the dirty side of the world  
her role is to live at the wrong end  
of the bell shaped curve  
at the other end the funny men  
take pills for their pain

## Accident Prone

when the rain hits  
the streets become a different sort of black  
an inviting black that welcomes  
rapists and murderers  
along the wall that forms the street  
the blue paint that glows in the streetlight  
becomes part of the yellow world even in the fundamentally blue rain  
fidgeting headlights single out her lips / her green eyes  
lamps through tenement windows shine  
small pockets of safety down the street  
tottering fences / busted bricks / plastic bags / styro boxes with torn-open tabbed slots  
grey night sky over dark roofs bleak as streetlights on a grey puddle  
this is the yellow time  
the prostitute exhaling the breath of poverty  
walks away with the wrong man  
the runaway wrapped in a newspaper  
starts to shiver and never stops  
the sister who bags her day meal in the oily alley  
where garbage is mixed with rubble and sand  
is never identified / never makes it out of the bag  
that keeps the bullets from tumbling away  
if any accident of wealth had intervened  
small bright pools of safety would grow  
risk would pass by / recovery would replace decay

she has read  
when the rain hits  
the streets will become a different sort of black  
an inviting black that welcomes the lovers  
who have just put the first forkfuls of their first meal together  
into their destined to kiss mouths

## Numbness

*drudgery can be improved by diminishing consciousness;  
knowledge is the heaviest stone*

he came up the street  
to the spot where a man was loading  
his brother onto a wagon bound for the ER  
to be patched up

to the west the sun was setting  
after a series of cool breezes  
and purls of gunfire

he needed to earn 20 dollars a day  
to live on the outskirts of wealth  
but earned that only once or twice each month  
he figured one day he'd return  
to his home / his fault  
is no one's fault

mountains to the east faced the possibility  
of echoing stoically and vagrants pushing  
their carts down the wrong street  
could not be blamed for pausing and looking back

he said the night rain froze his coat  
and wind tipped the fire can onto his legs  
was ok

I drove past apartments that night  
one seemed dark when I stopped  
but through a gap in the blinds I saw  
a dim light over a bed  
and a picture of lovers  
the frame corner only perfectly  
visible and sharp

## Estrangement

DONATE HERE  
*help keep me out of your neighborhood*

Mary is kind of a loner

*who knows what your friend's done  
maybe she'll start shooting / maybe she'll draw gunfire  
you never never know*

Mary sleeps two places  
the lapsed church  
where an aleatoric event  
determines who gets a bed  
and in a hole under a graveyard wall  
not near the center of the city

one night returning to her hole she got raped  
there in his stalking ground he (in the usual way)  
grabbed / choked / threatened  
in the end he agreed to protection

Mary's face is toneless / her flesh smells / she has wide brown eyes  
when she fell asleep later / her head in my lap  
I could see lice like lace in her smoky brown hair

she took her raper's dropped cap  
to her social worker who gave it to the police  
(—fingerprints)

I wanted to snap Mary for this poem  
but she feared to let you see her

tonight Mary was playing it safe  
she didn't come downstairs  
because she would lose her won bed  
I talked to her on the house phone  
two grim police came in  
I asked how she would sleep tonight

*I'm thinking of you  
be good*

I wish this were all / I mean isn't it enough? / turn the page  
for the final scene which is about estrangement and war eyes  
set where the overstimulated overeat

walking back to my hotel two streets up from the blueblack river streaked streetlight yellow  
I stopped to stare through the fogged window of a French restaurant (was it attractive? / full? )  
before I could move on a close cropped man (ex-soldier?) looked away  
from the woman with serious eyes across the table from him  
who was about to photograph herself  
and in much less than a second  
studied me / decided I was no threat / turned back to her  
just as her hair fell aside  
revealing her pierced ear / the flash  
explored everyone

## Invisibility

*culture like poems  
shapes by constricting*

by the river a hot drink  
is passed around against the clutching night  
and hampering mist that rises  
up in the rain from the river rushing past  
behind a row of breakwind trees  
one who is poor fellates one who is not

what you and I may take as institutionalized dependence  
another may see as cherishing and respect

suddenly he finishes his meal  
rises from the table  
takes 20 steps and resumes his invisibility  
his blue cap pulled down tight  
over his sweaty black hair  
when I left he was gazing everywhere  
but not at anyone  
with his reddened eyes

he shopped for his wife's underpants menstrual pads and burqas  
how could a woman haggle with a man for such things

where the emblem of beauty is the impossibly slender  
who can't be seen  
the thickwaisted / the sweaty / the drunk  
in short a forgettable thing  
muttering to itself at dusk  
between a paintpeeling cart and the roaring freeway

low tattered tents together in a herd  
dust and smoke rising up into the dusky sky  
a refugee woman speaks from the other side  
of a veil / her lips distorting its hanging otherwise perfect opaqueness  
she says she is not like American girls  
who are used like tissues and thrown away

imagine the humiliation  
of being inexplicably forced  
to serve food to the being  
you have resolutely refused to see

at the club outside town a 400 pound man  
sitting on a chair by the door collects a 25 dollar cover  
inside they're shaved and showing pink

on a subway crowded by strangers  
I moved to sit between two women pretending I wasn't there  
they furled their skirts as I approached and halted their eyes again once I sat down  
they seemed to be asleep but got off when their stop was called  
I can respect shame

the train yard smells of piss and shit so why go there

how can you respect a woman by not seeing her  
the same way you respect her by not seeing her vulva

she seemed unremarkable  
she stood shaking in an icy doorway / nothing in her cup  
she wasn't there was she

## Unwantedness and Dependence

the master foresees / the slave works  
households are formed by men  
using women and slaves

affection may be an advantage  
interdependence with benefits

self-reliance is a luxury

a street vendor told me  
the police took his goods  
left a receipt  
he declined to die  
he put on a good show  
by not falling off yet

Adam Smith said  
*all are often supplied  
and a workman even of the lowest and poorest order  
if he is frugal and industrious  
may enjoy a greater share of the necessities and conveniences of life  
than is possible for any savage  
to acquire*

unless you're used up  
*a carpenter in London  
is not supposed to last in his utmost vigour  
above eight years*

the tightrope wins by default  
in the ninth

my father lived in a community  
that suddenly had no use for him  
he picked apples  
we ate our livestock / sold land

two men cooking  
outside their crates / discussing hope  
*I'm waiting for my death* the old one said  
the young one laughed a brassy laugh  
what if they force you away  
*I'll make another* / pointing to his boxhouse

*unwantedness* may be too much word



## All Closed

when my poem comes up  
comments are hushed  
unenthusiastic / as if it were  
made of black words  
written carefully with a face pen  
but no matter how hard I try  
nothing I write is a face opener  
they sit there all closed

## Whiter Higher Neither Other

I warned her hair about her dreams  
she hung them on the existence tree

## Ian Sez

I'm weighing in tonight at the peddlers' bush  
where the orange stands tall and weeps  
what happens when life meets orange  
when palms meet concrete  
Hades waits by the well for wolves

## Up High

no one tells you how to write better  
only what's wrong with what you wrote  
but looking close but not thinking hard  
you can find things wrong with their stuff too  
a crooked tree about to fall over

## Up Yes Up

the shore doesn't fit  
sitting by it is sitting on shifting sand  
Dean says don't practice  
we know what he practices

## Schnitzelization

Berlin's no stranger to strange  
with more wars lost than won  
(when did they ever win)  
it's full of walls and broken equipment  
but art's won  
maybe it's the pants  
too many pants  
a wall of pants

## Filling Up

you live in a trench  
your ears are onions  
the shape of the town you live in  
is the shape of voluptuousness  
people who believe in words  
don't believe you when you use them  
big rocks by the ocean  
with a history dragging behind them  
fail as metaphors individually and in a group  
with the world filled with beauty  
why not me

## Laughing Purpose

down low I hear low laughing  
in it I discern street purpose  
up in the window she types her blog entry  
never looking down / she never sees what's up  
I marvel at the silliness of people  
who don't write a poem each day



## Squaw Recalls

Blue Ray humped it to the workshop  
well she sauntered in late  
she didn't like a thing  
except what the earnest women wrote  
even still she liked her own work best  
I was surprised when 3 days later  
she remembered my name  
I could tell because she called me by it  
without apparent reminder  
she didn't get to my poem  
but Dean looked at it  
I told on her  
and Bob took care of it

## In The Strong Wind Before It Calms For Evening

over the prairie a strong field wind  
reverses the corn's tilt  
the corn's leave sound like overly dried paper  
with dirt black as the blackest dirt  
everything around here is primal  
nothing sounds like whispering  
or people interested in strange or hidden thoughts  
it sounds like overeager old man hair  
pushing up through hell

## Not So Many Laws

in texas they love death  
by gun by hanging by lethal injection  
nothing stops them  
not even sometimes the courts  
they love the fear  
they love the agony  
they love it  
they love it  
they love it

# I Yi Yi

everyone loses  
(they tell us)  
when the innocent go free

## Two Drifters

many streets lead to the basilica  
centuries were needed to make it  
who could who built it  
it was the work of a mass of god  
some things are not automatic

## Problems Again

always a bug to fix  
a problem unresolved  
and always when I have no time  
to resolve it

## Twirl

beauty of wording  
like slime tiles  
or licorice wrenches  
on a satin decoration  
we harpoon what we like  
resist the rest

## Ugh Bletch

White Plains is so wrong  
10pm Sunday and nothing to eat  
save a greasy diner on Westchester  
yeesh  
next time bring a sandwich or fly somewhere else



## In the Market for Drain Inhibitors

blue uncluttered lovers on their top sofa  
replicate nausea in highpitched tongues  
then retire to water despair  
in sorrow drain inhibitors pack tears  
a spent covered sorrow  
but saxophone objects replicate nausea  
just as effectively as epigrams water away despair  
wastefully I spent my covered sorrow on a nausea mower

## Ian Wilson and Backward Drifting Smog

how poor the poem  
when its line ending  
words read backwards  
aren't interesting  
regardless of skips and an  
undeviating willingness to like  
almost anything say I

## Dithering on Last Position

the tree would like to walk  
it thinks while couples walk  
by or stop to sit under its changeable branches  
it envies you you  
know your movements quick enough  
to seem determined  
but the one you're with doesn't see it  
that way to her the movements  
are random and undirected  
like the breeze that now is hot  
now cool and rain wet  
nearby a white dog believes  
he's about to understand  
something but then he thinks  
it's just a smell or a tick  
and besides now it's time to shit  
the tree will believe one day  
it's about to understand  
but it will be just it's roots  
spreading out beyond the dripline  
anticipating a good year next year  
green with envy as they say

## Bends and Slides

today women occurred to me  
but since all I did was drive  
it must have been the music  
I did see some  
ugly and full of the promise of bad times  
nothing worse the plumber pants  
on a big belly big nose woman

## With a Drip

listen to what the comma says  
its pause deceives  
its information commands existence  
the breeze is starting to blow  
and soon the water will rise  
and the , will be a !

## More on Grandfather

facts learned today  
 grandfather was cantakerous / had a bad temper  
 he pushed Nana before she kicked him  
 it was a marital argument  
 Ann Scherbon learned the story from Nana  
 Nana kicked him from behind but caught him in the plumbing  
 Nana and grandfather did not speak the same language (Ukrainian and Russian I suppose)  
 if grandfather stayed outside all night it was because Nana went to bed angry  
 my mother likely stayed away when the argument started  
 Butch said my mother was friendly  
 all the farmer neighbors in the area hung together because their livelihoods were intertwined  
 Nana had explicit instructions for butchered cows:  
 save all the blood (Butch had to stir it continually so it wouldn't clot)  
 head was "quartered" which included ears one place / snout another  
 intestines but not the paunch (stomach)  
 Nana made hot / spicy sausages  
 she also made cheeses which she stored in a well in the far north field  
 the barn partly burned and was rebuilt but only part of it  
 the raised ground to the south was the main cow part (where they were milked) / no floor there  
 the "creamery" was to the East on the raised part or possibly where the empty cellar was (burned in fire?) / no floor there either  
 they raised and slaughtered 1 pig a year (my mother and father)  
 the well in the field was also called the "creamery"  
 my mother worked 8-5 everyday to pay the taxes / the farm paid the bills  
 she worked the farm mornings and evenings / she did 75% of the work  
 Butch heard the story 17,000 times  
 as you entered the door to the barn on the right was a grain room and maybe a box/cabinet for other foods / to keep the animals away  
 Jimmy was merely deaf / but people learned that when he was 4 so he was simply 4 years behind everyone  
 Butch nearly accidentally killed him when he backed the mower blade up into Jimmy's gut / no injuries  
 had grandfather gone to the doctor immediately he would have lived  
 I visited a chiropractor 1 day a week for a long time (Neil D. Batchelder or Neil D. Butchelder or Neil D. Buchwald) for my eye problem (it's a weak muscle in the back of the head / treat that and the eye will move back into place)  
 Sam broke the "span" on the 1-horse mower (the arm that transferred power from the wheels to the reciprocating blade is how I understood it) / grandfather threatened to sue / Ann Scherbon for \$1.75 in her jar / clothes / purse and that paid for the repairs or the part / Sam returned it & the Hoyts mowed his fields for him and that's how they became fast friends  
 Butch = Charles Hoyt / who remembers me getting shyly on the bus everyday / he remembers me as timid / he would never recognize me he said  
 the first house my father built was maybe an add-on to a 2-room shack  
 my father told Butch that he was building the second house on a site of his choosing and to be nicer since he and my mother wanted another child  
 my father was the first person in the area to use a fake / metal chimney painted and sculpted to look like bricks

the slaughter house was cut off from its foundation so it had no floor / they pulled it to the wide part of the road beyond the Lay sand pit and left it there overnight  
Roy Star was Lithuanian / his wife's name was Edy  
Edy died early  
he lived on his Bell stock as a "gentleman" farmer / he had 2 houses one in town and the farm  
he liked the fruit of the grape  
he was walking to church and had walked into 2 trees and was all bloody when Sam picked him up and took him the rest of the way  
he lived only in his kitchen and the rest of the house was just junk  
he tipped over an electric heater and it started his house on fire and he died right away / he was drunk  
Scotty found the bones the next or a while later and reported them to the police  
used to get 300-400 bales from our property but it dwindled to 200-250  
George Hoyt would frequently deliver grain and other stuff (beet mash???) to my mother  
Butch was surprised I had an uncle  
his memory seemed to bump along so maybe not all this is right  
my mother worked in a shoe factory in Haverhill maybe as a stitcher or she ran a machine  
there were two Wykysac houses and one of them sold the cheese Nana made  
Butch helped fight the Roy Star fire  
Roy Star had a dent in his head where a horse kicked him with his 2 rear hooves after Roy snapped a towell on its rump / he said bone would come out through his skin for years  
he could juggle / he had a trick where you put your hands between your legs and Roy would grab them from behind and pull / flipping you over and you'd land on your feet  
Roy had a glove with sandpaper attached and would sit cleaning eggs and would talk nonstop  
he knew John Carver was a realtor  
Priscilla Carver went up to the Bath Maine summer camp and starved herself thin

## Day of Drink

day of anger heat drink  
a day drunk with wet  
they fought / their daughter drove off  
she kicked him from behind  
but landed her foot in front  
refusing treatment / laying drunk  
he died / all the women cried  
for 20 years they cried  
nothing was fixed



## Judge Reluctance

should he graduate  
seems yes but the case is not easy for me  
the explanations not so thorough  
he seems evasive but not from fear or lack of knowledge  
I tell them all I'm disappointed but satisfied  
he passes easily  
we are all happy and drink together that evening  
with his family who all love each other  
and me for passing him  
he will not embarrass

## Airport Rest

with hours to kill  
it's a meal of Montréal smoked meat  
aka pastrami of a sort  
dijon mustard on light rye  
made famous by  
an enterprise  
that makes things famous

## Attacks

the wind nearly blew me over  
the wind by the river  
the sky was purple with distress  
cloud bits broke off and swirled to oblivion  
when I couldn't stand anymore  
I got in the car and tried to sleep  
when the trees seemed like they'd fall over  
I moved the car  
later I drove to where the weather was bad

## Flecked Door

funny little thoughts  
scribbled like backwards rainfall  
on a brokenglassed door  
my hand's on the handle  
not the knob  
behind the door lies a secret so final  
that even learning it doesn't  
make any difference

## Go

in the next room  
my computer works hard on a problem  
optimization of workshop schedules  
for a poetry conference  
work with all leaders in the first 5 days  
work with 2 repeated but not same leaders the last 2 days  
work with as many other participants as possible  
no 2 people with the same schedule  
no workshop days 1–6 with more than 13 participants  
last day no workshop with more than 15  
go

## Night Break

behind them the lights are reflected as frizzle  
reproductions beading up in the drops on the window  
they've abandoned their blankets and if it were light  
you might see mist rising from them  
soon they'll be done and first one then the other will cover up  
behind them the lights keep on

## Today in Spam

Very,  
Incapable  
Anyone  
Gravity  
Replied;  
Anyone  
<<http://www.ltodnenm.cn/>>  
very,  
suffering,  
<<http://www.ltodnenm.cn/>>  
Crossly  
Incapable  
Anyone  
Learning,  
Incapable  
Suffering

## Simple but for Technology

ICs in the the D/A burn and think  
tubes glow  
music appears  
through the air



## Foo on Sun

how can installing emacs  
be so hard on a machine  
that claims to be for hackers

## Overnight Revelation

the building  
cut off at the foundation  
because it needed next  
a dirt floor  
was placed on a sledge  
to be dragged by a made-up tractor  
well they couldn't make it the whole  
way that day  
so they parked down by Lay's sandpit  
the one guy who saw it that night  
always asked Hoyt who lived in the house  
down by Lay's pit

## Green Pathways

hail shredded leaves  
green coat on the small roads  
layers of half/inch hail in the gullies  
mist roiling up from the leaf bed under the pines  
and from the road curving up the hill  
following this path I found another witness  
whose views contradicted everything

## Black Watching

dead crow labeled  
do not touch  
every dead crow has the danger of west Nile  
animal control will pick it up and test  
do not touch  
days pass  
the crow remains  
remains composed  
its black eye eyeing me  
eying its note  
and it after all

## Planning Style

in Denmark  
cold air will push away the leaves  
the oddly tasty hot dogs will be served from carts by the train station  
it's only 10 minutes to the grocery for juice  
and 20 to the preserved town  
canals / water scenes  
down past the church  
there's the old cemetery  
spread out large not far  
from the center of town  
many are respected here

## Now or Soon

watching the storm show its black face  
above the brick faces  
of old buildings  
people turn away

in the streets lights like headlights and neon lights  
smudge the streets orange and white and purple and green

the storm is everywhere  
that is near here

a black storm warns  
a green one threatens

to some a storm is a danger  
to others a story

men with yellow eyes  
and hungering mouths  
drive to the edges of swamps  
beyond the rim of the city's fragile order

someone far away awaits  
coronation / near  
someone awaits death

fingertips hover near  
key caps

which way is stage left

did I mention  
the streets have already  
been wettened

## Two-Horse Hay Mower Story

to cut his field  
Sam borrowed Powell's mower  
about a 6' blade on a horse-drawn rig  
metal wheels with teeth to dig in to transfer  
forward motion to a back and forth of the blade  
it needed a tractor or two horses  
Sam broke the drive shaft  
Powell threatened to sue  
but Sam's wife Anne found  
\$1.65 in her pin jar and Sam  
bought a new shaft and replaced it  
Butch Hoyt said they never spoke again

## My Stories

the way words fall  
into place or off the page  
makes the hair stand up  
and sing / nothing navigates  
through the mind  
like a mindless  
story playing out  
with half-random words belittling  
the halfwit author  
but through it a thread of indecency  
plows up the subtext  
of plainwrapped characters  
fixated on a tour of the bar  
that first served  
undrinkable martinis



## What a Waste

not a line of poetry  
in the first 54 lines  
what was TS thinking  
I guess he wrote them in April  
the cruellest month

## Books Wait

not far from the paths  
I cross though habit  
every year  
lies a person who might  
have been important  
who might have known  
things I want to know  
but it's so tiring to think of it  
when there's more reading left

## That Season of 60 More Days

ditch the bridge  
keep the cash  
this is what I saw  
as the most important  
news of the day

## Waiting More

one day a woman  
will bend down to kiss me one  
last time  
one day soon

## Politics Today

when we can't count on the elites  
all that's left are the mediocres

## Short Pic

windmill in the red dust  
of late afternoon  
being blown in circles while  
cars drive by  
everything you can see  
is relentless  
this time of day is cruel  
this time of month passes quickly  
like the wind passing over the blades  
making spinning

## Confessions

like living  
in the past  
like believing  
in the past  
like losing  
like the past

## Hoboing Down

when the shouting is over  
the hoboes move out of  
the back of the graveyard  
and into the railyard  
to fire up their barrels  
and cookfires  
the evening clams down  
spark add to the constellations  
smoke smell invigorates the cooled air  
and even throwaways smell good cooked  
behind a row of headstones  
a teenage couple settles down  
the paths of choice fan out



## River Dreaming

if Florence means anything at all  
it means look here at what men can do  
(yes sexist but that's the truth of the renaissance)  
now it's the old buildings and cathedrals  
and the leather markets  
the repeated stalls and muted bargaining  
and the funny old cuisine not like Italian  
at all  
no not at all

## Quiet Street without Streetlamps

lost in thought  
in the city  
in foreign chaos  
who we meet is just hot noise  
who I am is a leaking balloon  
living I adjust  
otherwise I'm like rock

## Spurious Trip

the drive up through the north woods  
alone / the drive through cold north air  
I'm listening to songs repeating  
and the same song played many ways  
to learn of its integrity and what makes it it  
the city I'm driving too is not inviting  
it's know for its cold dark wet nights  
for snow and unfamous meetings after the cafés close  
what would it mean to meet then there  
after the cafés close / after the long drive

## DFW Up Up and Away

never sure  
but always writing  
fragmenting reality  
finding fragments of literal truth  
among the potted absurdities  
always about the self  
foot and end notes  
interruptions of continuous literalness  
where the interruptions are themselves  
continuous or serenely attached to one another  
fragmented reality  
writing / sure  
never / sure

## Why Go

why chicken out  
put the weeds between you and the country road  
why bail  
sneak beneath the bridge where the sound  
of the water passing the pier and rocks  
sounds like silk on silk  
why end  
the pulses and throbs in your head  
that makes the world and everything in it  
a colorful bright red

## Dream Weaver

too much to do  
time dropping into the bottom bowl  
makes me want to sleep

## Joint

one day the drive-in will close  
and though I never found it til I was 40  
that will the day my connection to the past  
is gone / the mayo-y burgers  
the suzie Qs / the picnic tables  
where the west sky is purely visible  
no one will ever know what about it  
was the best / maybe the stolen frostie sign

## Ars Star Trek

a poem of sewing  
threading a needle through the squint  
of eye (of person) and eye (of needle)  
this is why poets are forced  
to scrub warp plasma conduits



## Nature of Order

wholeness / life / personal  
egoless / subdued brilliance  
gift for God / unity  
structure / the architect  
says it all / yes says  
it  
all

## Listening

years of fiddling  
and I found the album  
listening  
Michael Tschudin  
the Hammond B-2  
Leslie 147  
finally on its way

## Endings

summer about to quit  
quitting / such a lovely idea  
to just stop to relax  
to permit life and the world in  
summer has the luxury of simply stopping

## Wasps Under the Pillows

because the night comes up earlier  
because what poses as work grows darker  
at the same rate and in the same place  
we celebrate the increasing pauses  
and flowers sent increasingly by accident  
pile up in the trash pile out back just inside  
the ring of woods and swamp  
still I recall the warm room cooling  
as night was pulled in by the fan  
the cricket sounds / the frogs  
my dreams of accomplishment  
more / different / less  
more confused  
less defined  
less valuable  
less like those nights

## Why Here?

clouds and light rain  
mixed with heavy and heavy winds  
hot / typhoon blown into HK  
flights delayed / ferries on hold  
maybe to be shut in with someone  
to look out over the bay  
the shitcrazy buildings  
instead it's here with the cool air  
from the screen door up to my knees  
just writing as if I were able to do it  
worth anyone reading

## Bits Broken

what else can go wrong  
everything she said

## Ill Wonder

the song is heavy on the wavering  
deep piped organ that can and does  
well upward to a silver shimmer like high thin  
clouds underlit by the set sun  
but even with this image in my mind  
the song tells me it's about a rainy  
early winter evening in a bright northern city  
surround by ocean water  
and I am at the curtained window  
watching a girl who once loved me  
walk with her collar up  
and her hair kerchiefed

## Live on the Street

on that street  
puddles are whipped  
into reluctance  
into streams into the gutter  
her kerchief wags on the down  
of her back / maybe  
she is reciting to herself  
one of the poems I wrote  
for her / for her  
I live here



## To Me

the sulphur lights across the harbor  
contribute squiggles to everything  
that points to me  
at least the pathfinders can't straight arrow  
themselves through my eyes and into  
the night that has my back  
better to lean on forearms on the rail  
pretend the tears are for the girl  
who just hours ago unsheathed her hair  
after the sharp glacier wind  
rushed her back  
but it's the cold wind  
off the water  
off the far glacier  
off the world

## Aubade to Who?

(she eating a cucumber)  
the train like a bullet  
6' into a pond  
(she with sculpted and shaped lips)  
the cobblestones like a former street  
down to the river a former septic drain  
(she walking her bike with a man / a future lover)  
the romanesque church  
closed on Sundays  
(she walking away)  
(down the cobblestone street)  
(toward the romanesque church)  
(me never a lover / not past / not future / not)  
but dawn just waking  
the clouds not folding

## Out of Sight

river uncovered  
now plain in the sight  
of the low sun all day  
short days  
but still all day  
all those days  
seems the victims are lined up on the banks  
waiting their turns  
for the lowering sun  
to wink them out of light

## Among Fields

she told me  
she would take me to her  
for the rest of the days I have  
knowing my days were few  
hers many  
she would follow me  
as far as I could go  
then make me comfortable  
wherever that might be  
however many those days could be  
would be enough she said  
her eyes / her cheeks / the pillow wet  
the train then took her  
around the bend  
out of the city  
back to her north  
her warmth now hours later  
is just the shape of her blanket  
her pillow / her not here

## The Four Questions

what gift  
which woman  
why her toothy smile  
how much will it cost

## Why Who Would

why would anyone care  
why would they find their way  
to my side / the small player  
the one not expected to arrive  
let alone thrive  
why someone would love to be near  
why the dark would be a treasure chest  
and the promises / fields that find themselves  
flooded and uncasual

## Facility of Love

nowhere familiar and certainly sounding  
flabbergasted by the dark sun behind grayed clouds  
we walked down to the formerly covered river  
in search of artmaking gear and a new view of the oldfashioned  
in her skirt she made herself into an innocent  
we worked hard on the art / felt safe from artifice  
later she talked of the days still left and her plan  
to ease my head down softly when the time came  
when she was ready to make her contribution

## Price Sensitive

among the hats  
hat pins dress sharp  
skirts hang to cover  
no one wanders more  
than the fleeting stare  
nothing more fun than typing  
a row of 0s like this  
000000000000000000000000  
even of them  
it adds up  
doesn't it?



## Recollection and the End of Love

does remembering the nights  
mean the nights were about love  
does remembering the walks  
mean the walks went somewhere  
her skirt (not pretty) made her walking young  
what happens when it rains on her street  
here it means I'll walk

## Me

on her street footfalls  
have pumiced dailydirt  
into a fine black dust  
but the snow will grab  
and rain it away  
near her street  
trains probably turn snow to steam  
with the force of heavy attractions  
she of course has made a place for me  
has shaded the window and streaked it  
in dust and caking to make my disappearance  
whole and sparkling  
she has planned meals  
and sleeping arrangements  
and a story for every ear attached  
to a doubting mind  
all that's needed now  
is the one thing too hard to deliver

## Electronic Pan Pipes

does the heavy breathing  
coincidental with your name appearing  
on the presentation slide represent  
a coincidence or a desire  
now think about the snow falling  
from gray/black clouds on a day  
the sun never rises and the importance  
of warmth through the night  
rises to the level of desperation  
she of course has it planned out  
the down above and below  
the little caresses  
something like a fire but buried  
and its smouldering like hot asphalt  
under a desert sun  
she welcomes the snow and commands it to pile  
so there is nothing but the bed for it  
now the slide  
hunh hunh hunh hunnh

# Mortal

when life was young  
death could only wink

## Localities

and the rain that fell last night  
persisted to become the strength  
in a unfurling fern

## Along a Worn Out Street

cracked glass  
still waterproof  
might hold under a load of snow  
could use some ice this winter  
be careful when you rest beneath it  
so rare to find a glass roof

## Temples Out Here

she doesn't know about the roadside crosses  
the plastic flowers the desert turns white  
broken red lights and cracked mirrors  
from the car that kills  
day after day the cars go by  
no one admires the carefully made but makeshift  
arrangements by the unofficially saddened

## Reality Really

lens flare made her miss  
the best photo of the most fleeting thing  
that has ever happened  
so fleeting she didn't even see it  
her only hope was the camera  
and its fast shutter and quick lens  
its very receptive sensor (film for you old guys)  
she knew it was there  
she almost saw it  
sensed it sort of  
like an orgasm pulling up like the Rambler in second gear  
but never quite getting there  
(it felt good though honey)  
but the sun flared  
the lens flared  
such a beautiful geometric pattern  
like in all the best magazines  
but not that most fleeting thing  
like a pinprick of perfection



## One Fine Day

how many will come visit  
what'll happen if they meet  
which of them will own me  
what if it's raining and the only  
place is under the copper beech  
what if one of them points and says  
I designed that  
what if it's not raining  
and they spread out nude trying to guess  
which spot I'm in  
only one will know  
which one

## Fashion Train

everyone around me is dying  
they are doing it younger each year  
some say I'll grow frail  
I believe they are wrong  
I like to follow the crowd

## Creepiness

the deep dark and the red face  
within it / he holds a small silver  
camera and frames his shot  
as if overseeing a tremendous  
evil being committed on the floor  
in the dark / he holds a small gift  
for you / one you don't want

## Story Lights

certainly the illumination  
the eyes that watch  
the clipped memory machines  
that capture it / frame it / make  
it a story or worse  
in words of one punch each  
but if not the illumination  
another story about what we saw  
and with each retelling  
the story clears

## Twang Kong

Nashville noise from the bars  
a staggering drunk punched from bar to bar  
by fatty bouncers  
some play as if it mattered  
but it's just a strip  
just a place to walk / be seen on a Friday night  
no one can face the truth that even  
yes even the talented suck

## Near Musicians

nothing  
dinner / no comment  
music and a float  
nothing

## Also Too

and where are they  
where do they sit  
when the world needs to dance  
who is able to refrain  
from singing the refrain  
when everyone else has forgotten  
my life is the drain  
everyone else's pours through  
but like thin water or thinner  
where are they  
the voices quiet  
the wind too

## True Truth

her hand small and  
still dimpled with young fat  
rests in the cracked palm  
of a man none would mistake  
for someone related to her  
by love alone



## Qualifications

the beauty of the night  
is the blueness of light on the rivers  
the yellowness of light on the streets  
meet in the middle

## Do Good

she speaks an Irish slag  
and drinks men under tables  
this man / this table  
he is hunchshouldered  
and done drinking  
for good

## Certain Chunking

hair parts  
the upper class  
into withs and withnots  
I assume the mantle  
I assume is false

## Parthenon

the fake greek statues  
the absurd costumes  
the hard to obtain difficult food  
nothing to drink without drink tix  
and drink tix as hard to find as lasting love  
even though with the target in site  
the grassy slope though  
is lit well

## Up North

what if what  
we are is nowhere noted  
and little appreciated  
simply put  
what if the constant sunset  
is all there is  
if the black dark clouds hovering  
above but not near the horizon  
are the peak of clarity  
what if a bit of freshly fallen snow  
is all that could remain

## Books

books piled around the recliner  
lamp bookshelves a nice stereo  
(to use the old terminology)  
too much to read  
and I'm not inclined  
to start something that cannot be finished  
so the task accumulates  
piles pile up

## Birthdays Are Happy

the past is stamped  
by a darkness and a wetness  
for example  
to imagine a girl's birth 92 years ago  
requires picturing a cloudy day  
a birth at night  
a raining day or a drizzling day  
a cold day  
the mother  
of course  
deeply involved  
and the father pacing outside  
under an elm or more likely an oak  
if the mother is 17 as some records indicate  
she wishes she were and he is  
drinking from a widemouthed jar  
stern family is just outside the door  
to the birth room  
soon everyone  
even the youngest  
is crying  
is screaming

## Across the Waters

her promise is to walk me to the end  
to take care of it all until there is no more  
she knows it's not a long journey  
and when it ends she will not be well  
she's already made the place for me  
she will not scream there



## One Discussion Too Many

too curious  
about her she  
becomes furious  
with me  
unlike with Blessing  
I've lucked into this blessing

## Because Work

she began her work  
a day early  
a while back  
a long while  
we await  
the gone time

## Open Close

the day was like this  
cold and drizzling  
clouds and some fog  
dark hung around all day  
before midnight it was over  
one bracket in place  
the other under construction

## Requiem for Methuselah

she is likely not sleeping well  
pissed / I hope so  
the better to forget with  
remember Kirk and Spock  
and Rayna with Flint as once immortal  
make her forget

## On Our Way Home

many trips / much talk  
no one really there  
the future is fear  
always running away  
time is no friend  
I say to time  
“hold it right there”  
time moving  
fast laughs

## Greatest Good

of the places cars park  
nothing is more special than  
next to the water  
river / ocean / lake / tank  
it spells romance of the most  
intimate sort as orchestrated  
by men with fumbling hands  
and smelly intentions  
life is so strange  
it had to have evolved  
no?

## Question for You

picture a place by a river  
picture the water flowing  
from maybe a far off mountain range  
into maybe a nearby ocean  
picture a bridge  
make it a peculiar green  
make it a swing bridge  
operated still  
by hand  
picture sitting by the river  
and you feel it's time to move on  
not time to leave  
time to move on  
what does the river do?

## Voids and Nulls

suddenly emptiness  
fills the back room  
insulated from the world  
by walls of thick books  
all I have is 1 plain window  
looking out on an abandoned lot  
broken bricks / wire in concrete  
plastic bags & ampersands  
it's what I watch as I type  
the repeating stories  
the stabs at making love  
with imagined lives  
like someone I once  
walked strange streets with  
with her missing too  
the emptiness needs  
another room



## For the Fourth Time

the expanse  
the cut corn  
the sheared wheat  
the light fails early  
and under a smudged sky  
facing an indefinite west  
covered by smothering level smooth bank of clouds  
all these things irrelevant compared  
to who's missing  
who's passed on  
passed away  
the sentiment of untested writing

## Looking

once we looked for words  
we looked in alleys  
on main street  
down the largest boulevards  
we looked in busted houses  
in warehouses  
in cardboard tents by the tracks outside town  
we searched the woods  
the fields  
the oceans  
mountains seemed promising  
highways / back roads  
we went fishing  
and hunting  
we made love a couple of times  
but it wasn't memorable  
we didn't speak  
and it was weeks before I realized  
it was because we couldn't  
because we had no words

## Song of the Ancients

many days the ancients cried out  
filling themselves with great self  
they tried learning to sing  
but the concept of melody  
wouldn't play in their heads  
after hearing this  
I moved to a flat by the tracks  
in a country that neither would be  
expected nor un  
in a room on the second floor  
I'd sit each day writing  
watching the trains go by  
the heads sometimes looking up at my window  
people would pass on the street below  
and look up  
but because the place is neither likely nor not  
I'd be who I wanted to be  
ancient / no one

## Against the Top

the dream of moving  
into the past is a symptom of depression  
/ over failure or fear of more  
of it / anticipates a remainder  
of life dedicated to uncelebrated  
effort / unlike days before  
where performance sat atop the goals  
the depression of  
leave me alone  
has the effect of isolation  
and sleepiness

## Oh?

she pushed her stroller into me  
at the corner called  
the Bermuda Triangle  
in Manhattan  
flustered she didn't  
but I did  
apologize to her  
I said  
I'm sorry for pushing my stroller into you  
I didn't see you  
down the street in a small park  
with benches enough for old men  
to sit and remember young men  
a yellowed maple leaf  
just missed an ant  
after detaching  
she said  
I'll think about it

## Stride Right

who doesn't love chaos  
and the unexpected lives  
that go with it  
who needs a foreseen life  
flying over me in a pan-Atlantic pattern  
overhead fields size rooms  
for computer counters  
passing breathings  
are alone in their thick skins

## Airplane Health

above the city fading away  
my plane banking showing the city's  
raked streets in lights like thick  
pinpricks is just aiming to get away  
and me with it / not every headlight  
and backyard light is foreign  
underneath / perhaps some are recalling  
something we said together  
ahead a another city is lighting up  
its tonight heaving into view  
someone who might one day wish  
to say something with me  
is watching something like  
a computer turn on his backporchlight  
and I suspect that light will be the first light  
I see when I decide to arrive

## Once Upon Her Bed

foreign  
she is strange  
her preferences depend  
on pasts and presence  
in the night  
after the great darkness began  
I watched her  
I was half/asleep  
my memory of it weakens every night  
she eventually cried out in the quiet  
in her version of the night  
I did what I could  
for the rest of the night



## Hard to Sleep Sometimes

if only  
time would  
make room  
if only  
the far places lasted longer  
if only  
I could make  
myself over  
the past will catch you too

## Bookfall

books responded  
to those who walked past  
by falling to the floor  
the store clerks took turns  
rushing in good-natured horror  
to piles of books in splits  
and getting them back in their ranks  
all they wanted was for their  
words to be licked off their opened hearts

## Shot

all that's wrong  
is summed up by  
an out of focus  
snap

## Duty Avoided

someone's life was at risk  
I was in a position to judge  
but a vacation intervened  
my hardship was granted  
but was that all

## Friends of the Night City

we love the shots  
of cities from above  
colors are blue and exaggerated  
steam rises from manhole covers  
headlights bite through streets  
what must the lovers be doing  
as the helicopters chop

## Re Alignment

of course we can discuss  
this all later / when we meet  
but for now just assume  
you're wrong  
the woman will welcome you  
cry while forgetting me

## The Club

she likes what she  
has / her  
music declaims it  
we like what she  
has / our  
eyes are on her swelling  
parts but she believes  
herself worth too much  
and asks it  
we look  
don't pay  
walk out and back down  
the concrete canyon

## Alley 1

the crazed night  
the stared-at streetlight  
the steam waist high  
the man beneath an old comforter  
uncomfortable by the backdoor  
of a reliable restaurant



## November 22

day of important deaths  
one for everyone  
the other for just one  
or the handful who have chosen  
to stand by the one

## Traipsing

dogs enjoy  
flight of birds entertain  
they all act  
on the basis of silliness  
the true purpose  
of the order behind  
our worlds

## Our Depression

wouldn't it be funny  
if the fear of the worst  
my mother taught me  
because of her childhood brush with the collapse  
were to come to pass and it was I  
who experienced it at the worst  
possible moment  
and not her

## Future Looking

looking back down the street  
curving down away and out of sight  
I see the green light taking on a variety of shades  
of green in the titanically polished  
finishes of the newer cars parked  
along the outside of the curve  
soon the light will turn red

## Falling Through

on the bridge  
one of the times when everything  
it seems stops  
the sound I heard was the water wiping  
past the piers not even a wind  
or a far-off bird / no bugs no flies no breathing

then off somewhere  
up stream I suppose  
in a house lit by one flickering light  
I heard the guitar strummed  
making a sad set of chords

I pulled her bobby pin from my pocket  
placed it above my lip and under  
my nose / it still had some of her  
on it / then the guitar stopped  
a bird sang of its night ahead  
a car seized the road with its hot tires  
the bobby pin slipped off my fingertips  
and bounced into a drain hole  
down into the streaming river flow

a weeping came from the house  
I listened

## Thanksgiving

were it then  
we would have walked  
the fort and watched  
American Press  
head out to sea  
as it happened  
I cried

## Blam-o

I dreamt I kissed her  
chastely in her bad hour  
but on the lips because  
that's all I know  
when I did her mouth  
turned into a muzzle  
and her tongue into a thin tongue like a rat's tail  
she pushed her serpent's tongue into my mouth  
but cute  
very cute  
she stays on the list  
of people I could love

## Live a Lie

if you had any doubt  
the alleys will pave the way  
to a vein of daylight losing  
understanding as we dip  
our way to philosophical twilight  
this all in a town  
once inhabited by those  
with more ways to lie  
than a henhouse of chickens



## Mistake Now Failure

the only house I have left  
of my tiny past  
is a place beginning to leak  
(both ways I suppose)  
a place I cannot walk into alone  
every year I went to turn on the water  
the pipes under the sink would burst  
years after the last time  
after it was no longer required  
I realized it was because  
I opened the valve as fast as I could  
I did that for years  
my friend who could plumb would come with me  
in anticipation of the failure  
why was it only just now  
I figured out my mistake  
when the house is ready to seriously  
start falling apart  
like says Zachary Schomburg  
I should choose no scary

## **Bills See**

planning a future  
that keeps me well  
but nourishes me  
not at all

## Yes Yet

from a cornfield  
in a heavy rain  
don't ask  
I watched them run  
from the porch to the car  
switching sides so she  
could drive  
and laughing  
they will be in lover  
one day but  
they can't know it  
yet

## Purpose of Correlation

americans grew fat  
at the same time and rate  
that widescreen tvs became popular  
and were set by default to stretch wide

those lovely female stars  
with their wide midlastcentury  
hips and asses

## Behind It Today

when the thoughts get happy  
the discouragement and mistakes  
pile up again  
think and pay attention  
don't blow out the sky  
get more depth of field  
when you're not sure of the focus

## Crab Spider Approaching Dusk

the light that lights  
the dark parts of the jungle  
is strained of every color  
but green and an earthly orange  
this casts a pale view toward horror  
on the humble spider merely  
repairing its web

## Nobody But

nēnē nē nē nē nē nēnēnēnē  
nē nē nē nē nē nēnē nēnē nē  
nē nēnē nē nē nēnē nē  
nēnē nē

nobody can do the  
*shing-a-ling*  
like a goose

nobody can do the  
*skate*  
like a goose

nobody can do  
*boogaloo*  
like a goose

nobody can do  
*filly*  
like a goose

well let me tell you nobody  
nobody nobody nobody  
nobody nobody nobody  
nobody nobody nobody  
nobody nobody nobody  
nobody

## Several Outbursts

outside the restaurant  
where the older elfin woman  
eats her fettuccine with her  
twotablesfull of friends  
the motorcycles designed  
to pretend they went mufflerless  
banged their pistons to applaud  
her wrinkled though girlish laugh



## History Marks This Spot

today I asked  
third one  
third time  
she agreed  
no one else will follow her  
Kilauea lighthouse  
overlooking the island at the end of the hook  
2pm today

## Honolulu Airport

where the warm wet air  
carried by the trades  
from the far south seas  
and the fertile lava islands  
found out there masquerades  
as it blows over my back  
while I write these words  
as a cool breeze

## Her Day

in a bar  
on the ground floor  
of a pale pink building  
with bright yellow awnings  
on each small window  
a woman with dark  
very dark hair  
sips a blue drink  
while wishing her husband  
whoever he may turn out to be  
walks up to her

## The Science of Not Much

when all the years  
are piled like a careful  
pyramid and archeologist  
type people stare at it  
and stare some more  
the question I would want to ask  
is one that the pile can answer  
but the science in their heads  
is not ready for  
the pile is starting  
to top off

## Where No One Goes

so many roads  
some are selected  
for the curves they make  
through forests  
or the lines they cut  
vertical and horizontal  
through deserts  
the ones I select  
are selected  
for the way they've  
broken apart  
become unpassable

## The Lost Lovers

*after Bolaño*

I dreamt of her lovers  
standing behind the mercado  
staring at their hands  
the wounds puffing up  
the tiny unbeloved  
spatters of blood  
beginning to cook on the hot asphalt  
just beyond the edge of the ragged  
mid-afternoon shadow  
I dreamt of her  
lying back on her bed of pillows  
reading soft poems  
written by her hard lovers  
all the contrasts hidden  
in the dark inner circles  
in the middles of her eyes

## Im Possi Ble

I speak to those whose ears  
desire human sound  
I play my guitar for those whose hips  
and feet desire movement  
both languid and ulcerated  
I write for those who wish  
they were better / wish  
they could do the to-them impossible  
I try to tell them that it's the same  
for all of us but to them  
that's impossible

## Prophecies

clouds eat away at the sky barrier  
allegiance falters eat bite  
inside the ward his eyes  
are covered by bandages over bandages  
because of this he is unable to eat  
and therefore to shit  
how long has he been here  
the other children are shouting  
snow / snow / it's snowing  
this means months  
out the back door of this place  
is a cemetery  
and years after he gets out his mother  
will buy a plot not 100 yards from his bed  
decades after that he'll bury her there  
from the ridge that leads up the hill he can't see  
I'll watch every one of these shows  
wonder what's next  
maybe you



## The More We Know

the madness of where  
we must be  
just think  
the dreams stuff  
is made of

## Don't Ever Call Me Sweetchromodynamics

the light tires  
but never slows  
though we've believed it for years  
and never understood anything about it  
 $e=mc^2$  has just been proven  
protons and neutrons comprise quarks  
bound by gluons  
the mass of gluons is zero  
(that's what makes them stick)  
& the mass of quarks is only 5%  
where therefore  
is the 95%  
quarks and gluons screwing around  
for those keen to know more  
the computations involve  
"envisioning space and time  
as part of a four-dimensional crystal lattice  
with discrete points spaced  
along columns and rows"

## Who Makes It Out?

what makes her tick  
only in a place across water  
who will buy it  
that her tricks aren't tricks  
her love a forgotten token  
on her dresser next to  
invisible lipstick

## Bad Gig

too far off the road  
through a deep field  
into the woods  
down a woodland road  
to the stonewall  
that's where it's buried  
what a dope

## Look Look Here

as she approaches  
I watch her eyes and her hair  
as she passes I glance down  
and back  
sometimes after she has passed  
I need to stop  
and get my bearings

## Rant O Rama

naturally the edge of discussion is slender  
the wide flat mallet of declaratives encroaches  
only a few atoms thick the cut part of the argument  
can be seen / perhaps just from one angle / in its splendor  
meanwhile I dream up explanations  
for how your scope can be thus limited  
and every dread flat and unflattering

## Why Big Boats Sink and Logs Don't

no one doubts nor borrows the future  
the ship that famously sank  
carried even the haughty to the depths  
the most trustworthy things  
are the most lowtech

## What Was Learned

35 years ago I married for the first time  
looking at the young today to compare  
I was nothing but stupid  
though it was love  
I'm sure of it  
she is probably  
crying tonight  
we lasted only 7 years  
perhaps it's better to forget  
yes learn to forget



## Coldity

perhaps tonight she  
lies in her bed weeping  
her children wondering  
how someone so remote  
and so remote  
could cause their great sturdy  
mother to spend all day alone  
in her bed

## In the Strange Dark

nowhere is it like here  
the voice she wants to use  
can't pronounce all the sounds  
in our shared language  
in the night I hear her  
practicing I see the outline  
of her body balanced and tense  
later her sheet rises  
pauses and falls and she  
makes little sounds  
in the morning she prepares  
a song for me

## Linger Just a Little

just beyond the last road  
a long oily beach reaches  
out to the receding oceanline  
and though it looks dirty and abused  
it has looked like this  
for thousands of years  
above the beach a whitehot sun  
behind wet white clouds  
is just a blowout above the scene  
of reminiscent love and something  
tried just once

## Escaping is Always the Last Part of the Game

when no one else would  
she believed she could  
and the end of it came  
after the train pulled out  
after the waving goodbye  
after the curve where the station  
track aimed its way  
to the other end the line

## Hard Search

so hard to parse the records  
and check the memory  
to guess who's who  
and who I might be

## I5

speeding 75 past  
an orchard  
of thin small young fresh trees  
in early Winter  
I'm trying to count the ways  
I can look down open lanes  
at angles related to the 2-d symmetries  
of the planting plan  
 $22.5^\circ / 45^\circ / 67.5^\circ / 90^\circ$   
maybe more  
some showing deeper lanes than others  
at their ends gray mist  
then we're past and it's rusted  
farm equipment  
the beauty of such work

## Tortures

no one fights like the fighters  
the purpose of cleaning is response  
we never take what is our own  
the sleep you sleep is never regained

## Hiding a Year

written the wrong year  
this is a comment on endings  
a cardinal on a snowy branch  
liking the seasons in the wrong order  
a year to forget bad nighttimes  
strange beds / strange people  
too many performances  
time to retire or at least return  
to the way of hiding



# Lies and Their Falsehoods

*A Collection of Poems from 2009*

Richard P. Gabriel

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## Family Stories At Last I Hope

naturally this will be the year  
to begin the deep stories of me  
my parents / my grandparents in a way  
it won't be possible to write without a fiction  
lies as some might call it  
but if there are no falsehoods  
or nothing seeming so  
what are lies but fine style  
and useful glue

## Very

I can feel her wondering  
why answers aren't there  
she is cold I suppose  
maybe some tears  
but her view on the world  
wiggles too much  
she is I suppose  
sweet

## Imagining Is as Good as Witnessing

someone will find me  
maybe she will  
if she does she'll say something  
like I love you so very very much  
she'll call someone to move me  
she'll put down sheets so their shoes  
won't dirty the floors  
she'll vacuum after  
she'll put all my things into the trash  
after I've been made into ash  
she'll try to fulfil my requests  
but I know she'll put me next to my parents  
and visit only once a year

## **Hard Work**

somehow I need to convince  
them that I have some value  
hard to do when you don't  
really believe it yourself

## All Not

simply put the way  
to salvage a long haul  
is to follow it with a short one  
when we find the precise way  
to frame it / to put in in simple  
words we find nothing but old wreckage  
like a ship that went down at sea  
after a sappy romance and a mistake  
how to put it / we are lost in our bets  
that have grown so large  
that all in is not much in

## Flat Story

the little story has been sitting  
on the mantle for 35 years  
at times its edges curling and singeing  
while it hung over the fires below  
that occasionally opened up  
I've been thinking of reading it  
sitting on the couch  
lying back really  
on the couch thinking  
I should read that story  
every time it's maybe next time  
I pictured it getting better  
deepening by age and distillation  
now it's time  
for the story to go away

## The Last Word on Poetry

how is the poem understood  
reading?  
never reading / no one who reads  
a poem can ever understand it  
no matter how many times it's  
read / the only way  
writing it / whenever  
you find a poem write it



## Among Travelers

before the sun rises  
snow showers  
really frozen drizzle turned white  
slant across the still empty parking lot  
the cold is deepening  
one car joins the scene  
seen from above in my hotel room  
last night reluctantly I turned up the heat  
the welcome sunrise is an hour away  
the cardoor slams I think  
and hot breath smudges the tack sharp  
edges around the driver's head  
two people / one day

## Someday a Hand Will Write

I wanted to write  
I really did  
and I knew the effect I wanted  
what I wanted you to believe after reading my letter  
but though I thought  
for hours / really for months  
I couldn't think even  
of the first two words  
instead the perfect thing to say  
only is the silence of a white  
page on my desk

## Inspiration

she is nearby  
she saw the sun set  
tonight just as I did  
she perhaps is standing on a hill  
perhaps under a tree  
she is now what  
a man might wish for  
if only they would meet  
I am merely a shepherd  
in the scheme of things  
sunrises and sunsets count the same  
if she be nearby  
our breaths have crossed  
at least this  
but not more

## Trip End

dismounted and resting  
I'm not sure I can make it back  
half the trip long past  
only a bit left  
but too tired  
too far

## Waiting

the package on the front stoop  
perhaps a book perhaps equipment  
hope and expectation  
a story or a thing  
of course to find out  
requires a knife  
a slice or cut  
maybe tomorrow

## Undertaken

I can French girl  
I can Italian girl  
I can Brazilian girl  
I can if necessary chubby girl  
I can my new shoe line  
I can not like my parents  
I can eve...

## Screenish

the characters spend their days  
on the beach and their nights  
in the back reaches of a shallow cave  
the ocean never cedes to silence  
their conversations seem scripted  
by writers living in LA  
well everything's hot both places  
in the end it's real  
it's real fiction

## The Bug With You

the camera won't focus on you  
leaves and trees are fine  
buildings are fine  
on you is the problem  
too soft maybe  
the computer needs the hard edges  
something to hold attention  
my memory of it is fine



## On The Walls

mirrors when perfect  
are perfect liars  
telling you what you  
know is false  
someday though  
it'll spill all

## Webcams

how they do it  
we watch and it's one way  
alone another  
perhaps or it doesn't matter  
perplexed by the privacy of it  
we need to sit and watch  
later everyone holds back  
their tears

## Yes They Are Different

we have places here  
as poor as there  
what is common there  
can be found here  
what's hard to find here  
requires no expertise there  
I am certain those with power  
would not mind a little of here on top  
sprinkled on a lot of there here

## End of W

tonight is the last night  
of a bad era  
the worst president of my lifetime  
so far is about to pass into the past  
he has brought us to great disgrace  
and has ruined many lives  
he has sneered at what made our country great  
I wish I could pity him  
but it wasn't an accident he did those things  
he was raised to not understand difficulties  
and what calms him makes him stupid  
tomorrow will be a good day

## Dedication of a Gift Outright

on the knee of a ridge  
a new flagpole  
brushed and bright in its backlight  
replaced the old one  
wood and white  
which had gathered dark streaks  
and peels  
the flag too was new and its thick  
weave let the light  
through and made the dark blue  
light / and upright  
for years the flag hung blue field  
down / and tattered  
at its flapping end from storms  
of many kinds  
everything replaced in naïve renewal  
and that's why I paused and stared  
until the tear storm passed  
and my eyes could only  
look up

## If I Can

if I could I would ruin them  
those who put profit over lives  
they think they are saving themselves  
but they are strangling themselves  
and I will help them do it

## A Little Bit of Tonight

sharp cadence makes  
a good dance song  
some misguided rhymes  
a lengthy melody  
a decent dance song  
suitable to celebrate  
everyone who's gone

## Figure It Out

the lesson of mistakes  
is to make them into art  
simple errors / grand performances  
repeat the gestures that broke everything  
when you do it wrong do that verything  
once more / and if you like rhymes try this  
there once was a house painted orange  
whose shutters were tinted in silver



## In Santa Cruz

on the street  
where else  
she passed by so quick  
I cannot now  
describe her because her form  
filed into my memory too fast  
for words to stick to it

## Remembering Rivers

the river is certainly  
inky black tonight  
as it draws down the mountains and hills  
foolishly someone's built a bridge  
thinking the crosswise traffic  
would last / instead  
the river's curling surface  
knows who the joke's on

## A Letter Not Written

when you listen to reports  
of what questions I asked  
and the answers given keep  
recall that even if all the information  
exchanged is what was reported  
who said which parts  
which were questions  
can never be clear

## Quick Thoughts on It

if only what I said  
to you could be heard and what  
you said were not fiction  
filled then maybe a way of speaking  
could be figured

## Story Starts

figure the strange  
foster slabs of tubes  
don't fear cycling through time  
telling stories that recycle  
make up what has more wings  
than legs / shred your suspended  
longing and high order lower torsos  
dying and being transformed and disappeared

## What is the Truth

writer gone away  
the words he wanted to put in order  
left behind still in their little dictionaries  
the paper waiting for ink  
catching fire in a black wood stove  
enclosed in a stone fireplace  
the ink in the last pen starting to freeze  
after a 3-day-long winter storm of snow and ice  
now clear and utterly blue  
his greatest tool the eraser  
that would put behind them  
his mistakes of choice  
his wrong imaginations  
the truth

## Meet Back Here

surrounded by pictures  
this place is the heart of present  
in the bounded past  
no one wants to depart  
but departure is all there is  
I suppose the beauty under glass  
has a message / reflects on the skeptical  
places more value on unearned value  
on the wall in front of me  
a picture the same color as the wall  
a chinese painting with all the detail on the right  
in a gradient piled to the right  
and the top of a mountain as if above a cloud  
all else the void / a great null  
like a comfortable couch  
a comfortable place to sit  
only and alone

## Single Ambition

her cart needed to be repacked  
her bags piled on the table  
3 women 2 a mother-daughter pair from Japan  
watch and later question her  
before she eats she prays  
she prays for 5 solid  
minutes before her first spoonful  
she stands and bends to answer  
their questions later / after I've gone  
and can't know anything about her  
she repacks her cart  
walks to the small redwood park  
by the transamerica bldg and curls  
up for the cold night



## The Cormac McCarthy

sitting 2 doors down  
from Cormac McCarthy  
you're bound to lose  
a comma here and there  
but when it comes to quantum  
the Bell inequality makes as much  
sense as Cormac's reticence to speak  
of writing

## On Google Earth Today

the place is cut up  
the woods have been flattened  
houses built already falling down  
like a memory I wish it were still mine  
who checks with the next guy  
needs at the other side of the world  
are needs no one needs

## Pop Art

art makes the filling  
the crust is your doubts  
when a question is asked  
it's time for the sound track  
to swell / meanwhile all  
the while you talk someone  
behind you keeps typing  
you wonder  
where will that transcript  
pop up

## Desire I

she's not in the mood  
her back is to herself  
among her pursethings are my teeth  
she's spent half the night brushing  
her hair is too bright even  
for the reading light's light  
she might turn over in the night  
I'll remain behind her in her  
dreams she's holding the man of her dreams  
her hand is behind her  
she is holding him erect  
what she has  
in mind hasn't entered her mind  
all thoughts reflect away  
the mirrors all chuckle

## Burdened

the days of no pay dragged on  
but the days were filled with persistent work  
the fields waited in the wet mornings for the plow  
for the scythe the rake and wagon  
the cows waited in the cool dewed mornings for the milking  
for the feed the opened door and grazing grass  
the chickens waited in the self-warmed coops for the hands under the hens  
for the feed the unlocked passages to the yard and the sunwarmed bugs  
my mother waited in her lumped moist bed for the presunrise wakening sounds  
for the farmy breakfast the invitation to work and the rest of the day  
splayed like a hog butchered to its back waiting  
the final cuts and icing down  
passing time by radio only and borrowed books  
cooking on the coal range and the smell of it against scythed hay  
she remembered these days the night of the storm  
whose end marked passings

## Old Tapes

Rachel Fury can she sing  
or are her dark looks all there is  
how she moved next to Floyd  
I still watch and wish I could more

## Photography 101

so how do they make them  
the photos so strange  
extrareal hyperreal  
what I don't have is  
the answer to the question  
what don't you have

## On The Attack On Duncan

when the truly famous come around  
you forget they are ordinary  
but filled with power  
that rage toward them seems to you  
now  
as rage toward the ordinary  
which is what the truly famous harbor  
you forget the rage they receive  
is deserved / O deserved as anything can be



## LOL

they wondered how much music  
were in the lies  
or maybe the exaggerations  
they asked questions that made little sense  
but I was tired and not eager to spend  
effort understanding  
they were like flies around good laying zones  
the fact it might icestorm made no difference  
that someone very smart might attend  
only made me more nervous  
they thought I would welcome it

## Funereal Sounds

the guitars and amps are set  
to make the strings sound pure  
and undistorted / the sort of sound  
one expects the lightened bluegreen tops of waves  
to sound like when they are just about to break  
the only people who can play them set this way  
have glass fingers and opaque hearts

## Consolation Number One

the colors don't speak for anyone  
the colors are not true  
to themselves let alone the lights on them  
by dimming the thinning  
but adding density and substance  
I capture them / I mutilate them  
the colors can't fight back  
they fight through

## Upon a Time

wasn't the day afloat when you found it  
was it upstream or down from you  
how many breaths did it take  
to get to it from shore  
I saw a boat earlier  
was it that day  
some logs appeared to be floating nearby  
do things consort with time  
I remember she loved a particular song  
that played several times  
that day

## Still On

the song goes on  
we drive the road that rocks  
the car like a gentle long wave  
ahead the sun blares  
ahead the sheer cliffs are but a guess  
we've made meanwhile the song  
goes on though nothing else does  
besides the magpie on the line

## Plan For Now

survive innovation  
and post it on the paste post  
this week we will invent  
the new art form which will differ  
from earlier art forms  
by being like their differences  
to do this we will first need to identify  
subproblems and in this case  
the first thing to invent a form humor  
not based on funny

## One Fine Day

the field / cold / late november  
the hay / long not harvested / has frozen  
brittle yellow / frosted in white / in clear  
refracting ice / I am by the hummock / a rock  
and small bush / here it seems warm / blue sky  
the sun high / some hay thawed / it feels  
like yesterday / it feels cold / it feels warm

## Able to Lament

just think  
she would grow up  
and I would grow old  
in the same hell made by  
the provocateurs of greed



## After Watching

some fantasies  
cannot be revived  
others simply watched  
others evaporate

## Camming

the camera mounted somewhere  
viewing a road lined with snowbanks  
middle of the night and one streetlight camera right  
after watching 20 minutes  
a car slips by taking 5 seconds and 4 frames  
some light on its roof like revelation  
of place over time

## One Time Once More

one time when I was lost  
I drove across a familiar bridge  
odd shade of green and a turntable  
to open a passage to tall boats  
instead of being a fact maybe  
this was a story I didn't know  
I had started / to write like this  
requires a car / a bridge  
and lost

## Fleece City

steep hill even in a low gear  
the legs find it hard  
the bad body doesn't help  
I've learned that only  
constant work keeps it working  
so much of my mind is hidden  
why wonder why I can't know it

## Westerns and Modern Music

on a western street near big mountains  
the mix of rainwater horseshit and blood  
is just a bit more foul than the flux  
of music making in the saloons in there they  
do not create anything  
all they do is manipulate sound  
most of it sounds  
like a bad night in hell

## O Memory

waking I cycle through  
each bedroom this could be  
before settling on the north  
in Europe / the light from a colder  
blue east than usual tells me this is right  
the breathing though and the blonde hair  
over sleeping eyes / her not watching eyes  
the warmth under the feather throw  
her deep breathing she  
falling asleep I've begun to think  
what will waking be

## No One Here But Us Bovinians

what is there to give  
the woman who wishes me to explain  
who should win the prize  
for doing what I do  
in the place where I live  
and my name never comes up

## News You Can Use

the colors that make no sense  
cover a brush made from a wrong dream  
together they paint an inflexible bird  
on a supple canvas of gorgeous skin  
he deadpanned never taking his eyes  
from his work as he brushed bright  
orange paint on the stomach of a model  
in his glass-enclosed studio under the grandstands  
at the Sambadrome where Rio's Carnival parades  
ended Tuesday at dawn



## Why the Old

a room fills with music  
sit still and imagine  
see whether you can hear  
the sounds of the music  
I'm describing a room filled with music  
that has started as a small breath  
behind a small chair  
each step it takes the music unfolds  
a small sheaf as if of twigs  
that with a careful unpacking  
turns into the web of a complex living tree  
whose leaves block the light from windows  
whose growing branches no longer twigs  
block the door soon the room has no room  
for anything but this music  
is it Mahler is this Shakespeare

## First Base

what of the beauty of old movies  
the projector light flickering  
the screen receptive and reluctant  
the actors forgetting who to be  
shattering mirrors for sake of an art  
that can last only a century  
in the pursuit of art  
the one who wins the most  
is the one with most flickers  
the most stumbles

## Last Supper

it's night  
my camera will tell me later  
that the sky is a death blue  
the motel is faux adobe  
the ocean makes a sound effect  
like the sound of tire rubber  
fast on hot asphalt  
beneath the palms  
orange walls  
this looks to me  
like a good resting place  
good enough to be a final one  
if it comes to that  
but for now steak

## Women Came and Went

behind the screen where I'm typing this  
the coarse video of a bouncy song  
is playing / one blocky pixel column alone  
visible and what's moving there is in sync  
with the music made from bits and hot wires  
if only these words wound around elegance  
the way the guitarist's fingers do the strings

## More Than 3

one day David Foster Wallace  
wrote just one sentence  
for us that would be a bad day  
with 93 footnotes  
320 endnotes more punctuation  
than in all Dostoevsky combined  
and the first 719 digits of  $\pi$   
in correct order as parts of clauses  
footnotes and endnotes when read  
in proper order he wrote more  
than everyone reading this poem  
ever could in all our lifetimes times  $\pi$

## What It Is You Straight

nonlinear  
the jump cut  
episodic in randomized jumbles  
the best way to fill in detail  
without the boredom of straight lines  
and the waste of time to make them straight

## Tourniquet

dates are just numbers  
we can subtract them  
add them sometimes  
underneath their representation  
lie the memories and thoughts  
of people who some of them  
wish not hope not project not  
I am among the fleshly ones  
and rampant

## Experts Testify

they said

innovation needs the government to increase funding

innovation needs companies to invest that money in the future

innovation needs the nonprofits to act wisely

but people need nothing / people are not part

of the innovation equation



## Not For Me

my father never grew old  
in the poetic manner  
he didn't wander off the path  
home through the woods  
lured by an off key bird  
then a ruby rock / a barking wolf  
no brambles and briars to catch  
on his sweater / no darkness coming  
on / his eyes across mine at the dinner  
table showing lost / no  
he simply dropped to his knees  
one night and called out to me  
like a coyote under a window  
in the night

## The Middles

two crows  
rain  
three crows  
a blessing  
four crows  
heaped up  
to tell God  
in the garden—  
petals like  
a thousand crows

## A Simple Place to Sit

the water that forms the river  
that rushes past on the quick  
carries in suspension the land  
my parents walked on all through their lives  
I can mark their births and deaths  
I can scan from one end of them to the other  
a thing impossible for them / sitting here  
I can compute their value  
few cried when I told them  
there were not many to tell  
the water that forms the river  
has been this way many times before  
has carried the soil before  
one day none will be left  
soil like the departed  
the stairs I climbed  
the barn I hid in  
the fields I ran across  
the woods I pushed through  
even some of the trees I climbed  
I can imagine they did too  
it's lonely without them  
only I am left to make up who they were  
and tell everyone so that one day  
perhaps when my soil's all washed away  
down to the deep oceans  
people will cry and wish they had not left  
so silently / in the dark / when the water was in full flow

## Reluctance

the days the important things happened  
the sense of loss hung low then blew downriver  
today the clues make no sense  
they are in fact invisible nearly  
my reckoning will be near the truth  
by definition as they say  
but this weighs so heavy  
I cannot write it  
cannot write the truth I must make

## Coal or Wood?

the clock hands moved ahead  
the harsh look of time on speedup  
a coal fire in the oven baking rough bread  
the woman later to be known  
as my mother wheels the wheelbarrow  
from the woodpile to the backdoor  
for warmth tonight she has chosen  
the woodfire

## You Will Walk in the Footsteps of Death

just an animal  
a reptile even  
but with personality  
she never liked me  
and when we moved here  
she began to fear me  
we moved right when my father died  
I went back home and we were moved  
when I got back / did I take on  
the aura of death

## Deep Emotion for a Low Animal

just an animal  
reptile even  
but today when she lay dead  
eyes open  
her color still green but graying slowly very slowly  
she like people I've known who died  
was not there  
there was a she inside  
and that she was gone  
Jo had come down and told me  
I think she's gone  
just a reptile  
whom I've known for 18 years  
she was gone

## Really Relieved

thank goodness  
Dick and I are depressed though  
Cid passed away early wednesday  
morning / she was definitely  
slowing down but really faded fast  
monday/tuesday / I didn't think her  
chances of making it  
through the night were very good  
when I put her to bed  
tuesday night / when I  
went to get her wednesday  
morning / she was gone  
she's at the dr's office now  
Dr. Voss will let us know if it was old  
age and simply her time or  
if she was ill / neither of us thought  
she would go before Lu  
really miss her



## Gone

the phrases are so easy to say  
the meaning is hidden in several metaphors  
what made a thing the thing it was  
has disappeared / science says  
there is not much to it  
everything else says there is

## Harsh Lighting

things left behind  
forget you as fast  
as you forget them

## Greg Laing

though he loved living there each winter  
he did not want the surgeons to treat his leg  
when it exploded from a tumor while he sat  
on a balcony overlooking the ocean  
a task he took on every winter  
instead they flew him to Boston  
where they amputated and later he died  
taking all the historical knowledge  
only in his head with him  
all that work in the special collections room  
left undone / ah but the warm sun in winter  
on a balcony in Goa

## Chores

and when I get home tonight  
don't forget the door  
let's me in too

## Horizon Looking

we notice he scans the landscape  
as he accompanies the body  
to its home / at the end  
he salutes the coffin  
then searches the horizon  
driving to the small town  
he would study each ridge and stream  
the story told of all this  
and the movie that showed it to those who won't read  
tell of these things / but never with explanation  
this is what makes it a story

## Don't You Know

desire paints with sleek thighs  
(as paintbrush)  
the direction of falling  
required by the hungry protagonist  
known as undefined direction

## Clemson

cloud broken pink sky up to zenith  
temp dropping into the 60s  
in a scrapyard of skeletal trees  
perched near the top  
here in the South  
the long tailed and boyant mockingbird  
mocks the songs of all the stilled birds  
and dried up novels and stories  
as I said  
here in the South

## Tired Song

the lake's sunk by drought  
it's an old army corps trick  
a river turned into a lake  
but because laziness is the easy answer  
the lower the lake the more like a river it is  
and now the old bridges show  
bridges across the river  
ready to swallow the fat and eager  
water skiers who don't know they're  
skiing up the lazy river



## Yes I Believe I'll

easy for us to say  
something like that  
I don't think they're big  
on chihuahuas down there  
she did something to it  
tent city in Sacramento  
tent city in Brooklyn  
time to bag it

## Advice from a F/C Writer to a Deperate Writer

not the end yet  
let's stay with it

## Debate Without Question

so tired I can hardly  
see this / the day's poem  
is the no poem / the day's debate  
just a show

## On Hearing My Name

she said  
who  
he said my name  
she rang out oh my god  
she held her face in her hands  
like something would fall off

# Newspaper Review of 'The Life of a Poet Not Yet Deceased Nor Threatening to Be'

I cried till  
I passed out

## Tongue Tied

red dress  
black blue black hair pulled back  
made up well  
thoroughly smiling  
flared skirt of the dress  
black heels  
the radiance of her future  
versus the rest of it

## Once and Lonesome

branches down from ice  
trees too / lawns burned white  
from the extremes of cold and wet  
the town is battlegroundish and hightailing it for Spring  
when we pass through / on our way  
I suppose  
to the fork in the river  
each passing to its own sea

(North City)(Dead of Winter)(Warm Scene)

imagine this  
two in their cold north city past midnight  
low clouds facing snow forming above  
below the city lights fadedly suffuse  
the satin bottom of those clouds  
an almost imaginary yellow  
the two walk / their gloved hands curled  
around each other's  
there is nothing to say  
they've decided long ago  
not from dislike or despair  
but from everything to be said  
having already been emptied  
into each other / after this walk  
as after every other walk for decades  
they will like their gloved hands already are  
curl around each other resuming  
their knot of entanglement  
nothing sexual about it  
for now the questions in their minds  
each with their own questions  
but always the same ones  
are whether the particolored dog in the blue-like-velvet  
house ahead will bark tonight waking its masters  
to window-light-emitting rage or curiosity  
and whether once they reach the bridge  
serving the sides of the river flowing  
its surface to a black satin shine as every night it does  
the snow will break through and their  
velvety coats will slowly whiten  
and what that will mean  
for the curling in cold that will become the warmth of their comfort  
that's always predictably  
(and something else)  
inevitable



## Elisa's Speech

and she said  
this is what she wrote  
"this life is so still  
sometimes  
forgetting even happens  
when the moment  
is just  
the same"  
and her simple speaking  
becomes the stillness  
no one forgets

## They Cross a Bridge

they paused over the river  
the night around them / the black river moving below  
you'd think streetlights would scribble themselves on the water  
but the snow was too heavy  
the wind too festive  
their thick gloves wouldn't permit their fingers to mesh  
so instead they curved their hands around each other's  
with the snow so heavy  
they wouldn't have been able to find their way home  
unless each step counted itself off  
like a line of soldiers counting off  
getting ready to march to war

## Ms Unmentioned

how to answer  
the snippy message  
worded as a passive missive  
yes I meant the sleazy echoes  
because that's how the message seemed to me  
I composed a poem in my brilliant and fertile  
mind but filed it instead somewhere in here  
where I toss them in as if into an old open cellar  
filled with trash other homes / other lives

# Too Tired

with uncertain discussions  
confidence is at a low

## Fog Toward Home

the fog was too thick  
for driving so my clever device  
showed the way  
her gentle voice like an unreal lover  
or an imaginary mother  
told me which way the road bent  
and her detailed display  
was like a compass on a map  
and the fog though enough  
to slow us down never impeded  
our progress toward redemption

## Clemency

certainly everyone knows the words  
to the song forgotten yearly  
in an effort to keep the dogs  
from digging up the old facts  
naturally ghosts are involved  
they says dogs sniff the ground  
no longer walked on  
this is the scent of diminishment  
that drips away only on the hottest days  
when it's the worst year  
wake me up

## Again Once Again

in Amboy they filmed  
scenes today for a horrific movie  
in which the towed SUV was perfectly lit  
but the wind and cigarette didn't get along  
and so they needed to do it again  
with the focus repulled and the driver  
freshly pee-ed and the well-done-up young  
actress in a dull suit though Amboy  
was bright and coming alive again after  
its demise like this movie which must be a remake  
of The Hitcher

## I Imagine

she sits by her window  
probably / regretting her choices  
while the cold air outside tries to grab  
the wet in the wind and festival it  
into crazed confusion  
and (no one works tomorrow)  
her confession of lying down  
wrongly rightly motivates her contribution  
to the cold air's project via the dulled  
transmission through the glass  
did I mention this all takes place in a northern city  
in the tail end of a typically dark-dayed winter  
and that had the choice of a try out followed  
by possibly a do-over been one physics in its godorific glory and power  
permitted perhaps / that is had the haps had it so /  
I would be in the room which behind her glassward gaze  
is sweltering hot and not on the street below  
framed by the lights of two opposing streetlights  
and thus in the cold dark and obscure like a Caillebotte  
black lump in a cognitive corner and bless me  
the choice is not clear / the night is dark  
you see



## Single Fringed

one day the walls became  
thicker / I mean the walls  
held back more conversations  
no one wanted to hear and I have  
to admit the heat held in by those walls  
would make a winter night lumped in  
I would imagine the small scale of the effects  
walls make and who would benefit  
but while I sit here typing two women are wondering  
about in their minds and mine  
and hungering for the falling shields of love-lost walls

## Meaning is in the Guitar Tonight

the café was in the basement  
of a curvilinear mall and being empty  
the hallways and curved stairways  
swirled the music into peaks and troughs  
and soon I saw the lighthaired woman  
sitting up front and off to the side but  
she alone listened except one other  
he and his computer played well  
he sang with authority and a small dose of tears  
but she smiled and her mouth moved to the words  
with no one else to look at (save the other)  
the song loops onward with repetition without  
variance / what the other sees is what  
he cannot again have / those who labor  
on as others know what he means

## Green Line / One of Many

and but so the day will come  
when the bouncing line  
will settle down  
and lie flat once and for all  
once more

## Deathlike Fatigue

the fatigue I feel  
can never go away  
never be relieved by sleep  
no amount of rest is available  
why do I persist?

## Important Religious Ideas

the men and old women  
carve dolls up on the mesa  
tell stories to tourists  
behind the shabby homes  
stray dogs gather and plot  
their escape in the cars about to depart  
dolls wrapped in paper  
stuff into pepsi cartons

## Flagstaff Views

after a week of warmth  
the snow shocked with its color  
the color of everything  
but cold / I find the furlike white  
coverings on every top a distraction  
to the production of art

## Summary Love

in the end  
the machine was programmed  
to make him love her  
so when he returned to the future  
he would love the woman she was modeled on

## Love Bed

she finds the carelessness liberating  
the odor of leaving precedes the endings  
she is polishing the bottoms of tables / of chairs  
her bed is singing itself to sleep  
the mattress is slightly yellowed  
is faintly smelling of urine  
twice she failed to find me  
agreements are cold fillings / hinderances  
the fur blanket at first for show  
became our revolving interest  
night after night and sometimes day  
we meet at the door sometimes / our keys clinking  
like wine glasses over a candle flame  
one day she ordered a stool  
and never told me why  
the surprise she said was surprisingly surprising  
I took it as her language challenge  
one day we stopped and it feels like yesterday



## Differences Are Not Minuses

yesterday is like today  
the only difference is  
it's possible to remember yesterday  
possible only to imagine today

## What History Will Look Like

a man has put a pier in a bay  
the wood posts are treated for decay  
and constant wet  
he has sunk them deep / down to stone  
there is no moment when the water  
is not rubbing up and down each post  
green life and barnacles have grabbed onto the posts  
and they hold onto their coherence  
if the man doesn't persist  
or if men don't come after to persist  
these posts will dissolve away  
though we know it  
we cannot imagine it from moment to moment  
only the befores and afters  
and some glimpses in between

## Like Her

she like others like her  
is unusual in her affect on me  
unknown and changed accent  
she is foreign except for her shape  
trees beg to throw shadows  
after she passes

## Vision Flash 48

The following report introduces the reader to a category of visual descriptions that, by virtue of their simplicity and elegance, may represent a major step in vision research. First attempts at descriptive formalisms almost unerringly produce systems that bog down in their own generality and apparent power; restrictions to classes of objects are viewed as a compromise of reality in its evasive detail. Unfortunately this leads to the eventual mapping out of important structural information from the aspiring formalism and, hence, a need for other powerful procedures for recovering this loss.

## Defined the Same Way

Suppose we have a husband coming home after his wife has retired for the night. He is interested in knowing whether she is indeed in bed, but fearing to turn on the light, he looks at the white pillow and sees a dark, undefined profile. Since this is where his wife usually is, and since he saw what he expected to see, he concludes that he has “seen that his wife is in bed.” Although there are imaginatively many possible things that could have caused him to be deceived in this judgement, he stands firm in his conviction.

## Movie Thinking

why does she cry seeing any child  
why does she crave the sight of them  
their touch / was she once a mother  
if so how could she be once  
a mother and not now

## Reading for Fun and Profit

she prefers words first  
then the sharp embrace  
she is willing to pay for each page  
but she wants the pages first  
when the books end she heads for the trains  
years later he is unwilling to stop  
paying so he delivers the words / the pages  
when it's time to pay  
he pays the one closest by

## Art Artist

great thinker  
maybe  
but where's your *magnum opus*  
now I need to deal  
with what has come along



## Schmaltz

the song playing now  
reminds me of the place  
I heard it first after many years  
walking through the mall  
that ends at the train station  
in greater Hong Kong  
the people there  
so little / so many  
moving in every direction  
the song part of a video  
playing from flatscreens  
all over suspended from the ceiling  
they are there now I know  
because in Hong Kong  
they always are always there

## Never-Stops Wind

when the wheatfields bow  
away from the wind  
and the tumbleweeds run down  
the lane we sit closer  
and the deeper the wind  
the more raucous the brush blowing  
past out windows the closer yet  
until there is just one of us  
and then later with even more  
until there is no one

## Borax

searching for the old  
commercials / unprofessional  
songs not making any sense  
but a memory not letting go  
when all you needed  
was the straight scoop

## Constant Comparative Analysis

Relating data to ideas, then ideas to other ideas.

Substantive codes summarize empirical substance.

Have grab, relevance, and fit.

Sensitizing concepts: Are “accessible” through imagery, humor, irony.

In vivo concepts: concepts inherent to action scene (e.g. milkman’s “coffee stop”).

Coding for anything and everything.

The analyst asks general questions of the data:

“What is this data a study of?” Leads to discovery of the “core variable.” The core variable becomes the focus of the research and theory. The core variable is the variable which accounts for the most variation (e.g. Milkman’s “cultivating relationships”)

## Sharpied Out

responding to swine  
including 8 in New York City  
other travelers called  
the hurricane "panic"  
the speed and scope of free money  
stopped looking at the tip of the iceberg  
another hypothesis is an unwittingly  
dangerous proof

## Foggy Insights

we wonder  
we sing when there is no tune  
the terminology we used is baked like cupcakes  
our ears are partitioned into true and other  
when the snow falling hits the ground snow  
there is a sound and whether you can hear it  
tells you how many days are left  
fewer ahead than behind  
time to write

## Pulverizing

everything about you  
perpetuates my fear of speaking  
you can be the center of an evening  
I am sure you wish for a return  
the Winter certainly provided  
all the darkness in the world  
we live once / why should others  
mess that up?

## Abstractioning

imagining is wrong  
when something real is available  
this lesson so easy in life  
is impossible for those  
addicted to computers



## Walking Away

destiny is not what inevitably awaits  
but the attraction that cannot be turned  
away from / the obsession that focuses  
all attention / something like  
the perfect skirt

## Timelessing

famous when young  
looked up  
to / today they cannot  
be recognized and they scrape  
to eat / to live

## For a Ride

once or twice a story  
opens up that promises  
a performance for a lifetime  
but when the second string character  
get it into her  
head something she suspects  
she send a tight message  
aimed at my head  
the result is a story  
that ends in email  
and a throbbing silence

## Night Mornings On

*wrong embeddings from Anne Michaels*

pull water  
unhook its seam  
we are black smudges  
on the frozen river  
one night we drove to the lakeshore  
past the powerful debris in the harbor  
the small ship of his bones  
sinks in the earth  
on the dock at midnight  
anchored by winter clothes  
we lean back to read the sky  
you turned 22 in the rain  
we walked in rubber boots  
I loved you all day  
each year the forest  
presses our dialogue  
into another ring  
I say nothing  
when people talk of gatherings and plans  
I turn from them  
think what you will  
far away in a boat  
someone wears a red shirt  
a tiny stab in the pale sky  
time presses down and we panic  
become inventive  
dead / he was movement  
shrieking through water  
suddenly out of the element  
that kept him alive  
rain makes its own night  
long mornings  
with the lamps left on

## Some Hopeless Where

dreaming about it  
the dry night air in air  
conditioned hotel rooms  
in what will soon be Winter  
far away and up high  
in the end we  
were both lost  
both losers

## Interminglings Like Before

three weeks longing  
water burning stone  
under the big top  
of stars cows drift  
all day the day  
whispered into  
the sea and sails  
your mouth a hand  
against my mouth  
like stones from stone  
like the sea from a sea

## As Usual

another long day of travel  
sore from sitting too close  
no much sleep the night before  
tired tired tired tired

## Saturation in Models

the story sits there  
and each word along with it  
a crowd of confused inattention  
the story maybe is like a vibrating  
disk at some high but resonant pitch  
and the words white  
specks of sand held in place by attraction  
but the specks are specks  
and the story is just sounds in the wind  
you know what has to cling



## In Florida Humid

if only the copper  
would wait to turn green  
the turquoise would suffer  
less for beauty stress

## Some of Them Know About You

do you think this  
is some sort of sick prank  
like a deer head in the bungalow  
I got him locked up at the station  
I can see the chair where he sat  
it's been hard on both of us  
all the same  
I want to thank you for getting married here  
it just takes time  
my bed under the picture special to you  
the quilt just as I felt it when I left  
my mother looking just like me  
I have a lot of bad memories

## Did You Know About This

stay here  
are you ok  
the stairs into the attic  
the light on a string that still works  
pictures not for anyone to see  
when Dad arrives I've come down  
I need to get going  
he says he's sorry  
for / you fill it in /  
he seemed all sweet  
you should see what he has in the attic

## To Find To Write

sitting in near dark  
keyboard under worn finger pads  
the next word is impossible

## She Is Here More

the color of the sea  
like emeralds in tar  
like feathers on snow  
like ashes on granite  
standing by the shore  
with a storm halfway  
to Nova Scotia  
these thoughts and thoughts  
of never breathing again  
fill me / fill my mind  
fill my lungs / my heart  
is open to overflowing  
her hand by her thighs  
my eyes open to all this  
courage breaking on shore  
up north in Nova Scotia

## Shadow of the Statue

the mysteries of stories  
tempt the mind into figuring  
instead of disappearing  
the mind disappearing  
these are figures we must  
understand in order to live

## Past is Past

the night air being sucked into my bedroom  
by house air being pushed out my mother's  
sometimes the peepers / the night sounds  
from woods not far behind my window  
recently I've thought of time being more flexible  
and the possibility of me going back  
if I could all I would do is watch more carefully  
write things down and ask questions  
why do you think of it only now

## Longing for One More Shot

everything through a pinhole  
the edges a light blue  
in the center a delicate trunk  
still / no person in the shot  
everywhere is too many wheres



## Another Night Stop

lingering on the street  
that leads from the quay  
to the stairs and then your door  
and beyond it to a bed soft and warm  
enough to masquerade as an invitation  
on a night like this / a night with  
night air choking between drizzle and frozen fog  
right now it's past midnight  
very past midnight  
but no thought thought tonight  
will survive till sunrise  
as usual a dim light above the street  
on the second floor invites me to stop  
and watch / watch for the woman  
walking between her stove  
and nightstand hot tea in one hand  
and a sheaf of poems in the other  
lingering / waiting / watching  
for the clue that tells me they're my poems  
that keep her up / because if they're not mine  
nothing in that bed will keep me  
beyond the first rim of dawn

## Heat of Night

the heat puts its hand on my head  
nearby something rotting is covered with flies  
like those days I wrote of so much  
there is a fan blowing in the bedroom  
finally cool air is being pulled in  
the day was spent in languor  
these are the days unlike those past  
when I feel like I've done enough  
to be able to rest and days like today's]  
of laziness feel like they are my due  
what more do you want

May 18, 2009

*web site entry*

**Richard P Gabriel**

to write...

## Secrets But Really One

the steps to a great picture  
are what they always have been  
watch with penetration  
until you can predict what the subject will be like  
then take as many stabs at it as you can  
finally work the chemicals or bits and tricks  
trying one after another on top of even others  
until the story you see is the one  
you wish had happened

## Sounds Wrong

perhaps we live in a time  
when good decisions cannot  
be made / or if it isn't  
possible to listen to the sound  
coming out of a singer's mouth  
maybe it's the church  
at it again

## American Dreamboy

This is the America of road songs:  
asphalt, macadam, concrete, oiled roads,  
dirt roads, gravel roads, roads with high middles  
growing timothy and bermuda grass.  
And lines alongside: telephone, electric, lines  
that hum from calls home or away from home.

This is the America of wandering, of fast  
driving down from passes, along rivers,  
across plains, by surf, through sequoias,  
into towns made light jewels in the dead  
of night, through cities lit sodium orange  
or blue where lights for cleaning crews  
stay up all night, up into mountains, past farms  
as old as angels, to the graveyards of old frontiers.

The song of roads is the song of lines,  
quick verses blank of understanding  
and sympathy, too young to abstract. Let  
me try to find nourishment in these lines,  
along these roads and on these plains; let me  
sit beside these weed-lined avenues of someone else's memories  
where creosote-soaked poles rise up like stylites,  
like crucifixes half-made, like rods grounding hope, like  
monuments no one remembers.

Let me have these roads, then,  
if I can't have you.

## Footnote Haze

a busy girl displays thigh ingenuity  
her hair makes the same statement but  
there are too many footnotes  
the gulls fly by in the LA haze  
buildings behind them and an expert at capturing them  
betrayed she figured out her slightly used skills  
were back in style and she started to sing backwards  
the beach scene didn't work because the muscle men  
were still muscle bound with pounds to go before they lift  
the great hall smoked in the prose version  
but in this one she fought off his rags  
heretical / yes / but she urged us to emulate  
tv went offline / off air / the second story dropped its lines  
at least her highly unusual appetites  
along with our thoughtful sitting vases

## American Dreamboy

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sit beside these weed-lined avenues of someone else's memories  
where creosote-soaked poles rise up  
like crucifixes half-made, like rods grounding hope, like  
monuments to surprise.

Let me have these roads,  
let me have the wind whispering soft in the wind-bent wheat  
let me have nothing but these then,  
if I can't have you.



## Cameras Need Mirrors

I've built a machine  
that displays in real time  
the prevalent metaphor  
in any stream of spoken speech  
I held it up to Lost and it displayed lostness  
I held it up to American Idol and it flickered  
between money and young girls  
I held it up to me reading this poem  
and before the very last word  
it flashed boredom  
and then it said  
surprise!!!

## Boring

it takes a lot of effort  
to get ready for a long trip  
I have started getting ready  
for a 10-day trip that includes my wedding  
and have been working to get ready  
for 3 days already with 2 to go  
things take a long time

## Part of a Larger Canvas

a big sculpture of Christ  
after a critical flop  
facing a boy with a pitcher  
it's the perfect symbol  
of Esther fainting before a bag and garlic  
what I mean is  
our universal spirit  
is a critical flop

## Quux Doubts American Dreamboy

now I know that the words  
aren't plain and there is a question  
of what the poem means  
and I need to think  
though I believe I've expressed it all

## American Dreamboy

This is the America of road songs:  
asphalt, macadam, concrete, oiled roads,  
dirt roads, gravel roads, roads with high middles  
growing timothy and bermuda grass.  
And lines alongside: telephone, electric, lines  
that hum from calls home or away from home.

This is the America of wandering, of fast  
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stay up all night, up into mountains, past farms  
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along these roads and on these plains; let me  
sit beside these weed-lined avenues of someone else's memories  
where creosote-soaked poles rise up  
like crucifixes half-made, like rods grounding hope, like  
monuments to yesterday's surprises.

Let me have these roads,  
let me have the wind whispering soft in the wind-bent wheat  
let me have nothing but these then,  
if I can't have you.

## In Tamworth

many things regret changes  
complaints are typical  
here in the north  
a slight fog rises from the river  
minutes after sunset  
clouds catch hold of peaks  
especially bare ones  
places she ate  
burned to the bottoms of their basements  
places she shopped for groceries  
turned to knick-knack stores  
the roads that should be filled to capacity  
on days like this at times like this  
are empty / the signs that say  
Brake for Moose  
might as well say  
Accelerate for Pandas  
it's a bit lonely up here

## Staining Days

staining the south face  
of the Tamworth house  
so it might last a bit longer  
reminds me of the many stainings  
from the past / from former days  
of staining houses and more  
I remember photos I can't find  
but sometimes I find other copies  
funny the vanilla fudge of history

## City Strangers

outside the hotel  
the cold morning sun  
is fixing to rise  
someone is sleeping in my bed  
facing away from the window  
which also faces away from the sun  
out this way windows and building fronts  
grow pink as night and all it held  
weakens and departs  
later when we are both awake  
we'll walk to the center of town  
and buy something special to her  
so she can make something special to me



## **What An Idiot**

my fear of making a decision  
has ruined my mother's house in NH  
I am too depressed to write tonight

## Still An Idiot

some find it easy  
to slough off huge  
errors / not me  
you would think I'd be happy  
tonight but the memory of  
how I failed my mother  
cannot easily be shaken  
maybe tomorrow

## Marriage Tomorrow

the light falls funny  
on the white steeple  
not too long before sunset  
maybe 3 hours off  
the paint is gloss  
and undelineated highlights  
are all there are  
tomorrow I become different  
legally but not otherwise  
nothing will change but finances  
and the existential nature  
of the promise

## After a Long Wait

by the river  
not many insects  
the grass nicely mowed  
and the sky just a little  
clouded over but  
not thickly  
in a simple ceremony we wed  
nothing spectacular in the words  
but simple ones without controversial meanings  
it was short and our promises did linger over details  
but big strokes that can mean only much  
welcome to our family

## Wrong Statically

finding the man  
though he be merely a remnant  
unanimated and retiring  
proved the adage about looking  
on the wrong side of the river  
and that the market is not efficient

## Wishes

will you fly with me  
will you help me withstand  
the mistakes as time floods  
past me / will you remain  
as I remember you from the first day

## Accident

the bible makes us lust for superiority  
that we among few know the secret  
we move to spread this secret far & farther  
but it's cocooned in words and thoughts that keep its spread narrow  
those who don't believe are spit upon  
or worse / such as bullets to the heart  
once I found a road with a natural cross  
at its side and stopped to find  
the blood of Christ  
instead a twisted fender and hubcap  
along with a cross covered with tinsel flowers told me  
here was yet another fatal one

## Unassumed

who among is able to find truth  
beyond words  
no matter the stories  
the conclusions based on intemperance persist  
the path to faith is like a Tarantino  
flick



## Fried Proverbs

explosion at meat plant  
broils hundreds of steaks  
and turns pigs into pickled pigs' feet  
train wreck by Water Street  
turns hoboes into job seekers  
price of gas forces fat fathers  
to buy more beans  
my stove with 40,000 btus  
has no match

## Blanketed In Thought

the nights lasted longer  
we spent all day in bed too  
the shades pulled to remind us of lust  
outside all I knew was that it was not home  
nothing familiar in theory  
all territory was there for discovery  
pulling back the blinds midday  
enough to see the clouds milking  
red from bricks I felt about  
to really fall asleep just  
as I deserved to

## Tomorrow

jerk  
I'm awake  
probably from a noise I made  
only the slimmest slice of light  
comes through the pulled curtains  
I am not home  
my memory struggles to name the city  
then  
the breathing next to me  
I sit up and turn toward it  
the hair is unfamiliar  
wrong color / too light  
the curves too deep  
who is she  
her arm moves toward me  
her hand pulls me back to sleep

## View (in sound) From a Room

a shallow grade  
my transition from sleep to awake  
I heard water  
indistinct as if mixed with wind  
where was I  
just as little light came in from the window  
I was in a hotel  
in a foreign city  
in the north  
north in Europe / it was autumn  
then a gust and sharp tapping  
rain in a heavy wind beating  
at the window  
the light like a lantern behind gauze  
then my sense of sound direction  
switch on / the shower was running  
I saw I was on the side of the bed near the window  
the side was still warm  
and a little damp  
a book in another language  
on the bedside table  
clothes I didn't know hanging on a chair  
I remembered a rounded warmth in the night  
those times I woke  
times the sky was still filled with stars  
last night something happened  
or something changed

## All This Knowing

it's possible to know everything  
but for now / in these lives we spend  
only the tips of everything show  
we know only one way to paint in the gaps  
it's not through poems really  
but something like them  
only longer  
and maybe different

## In a Jealous Sky

some songs  
some parts of them  
are written to remind us  
that there are loves we cannot  
return / that unlike the upbeat  
songs that accompany bright new weddings  
these songs beat melancholically with downward moving chords  
these songs are what you hear when a woman  
whose heart once beat like those perky songs  
is walking instead away from a once hopeful meeting  
into the disappearing mist and fog of a bit warm but biting snowfall  
down a street much improved by the offwhite unfrenetic storm

## Appendage

she browsed through the brushes  
then selected an ink  
paper was tough in this crafts shop  
we would be able to try only a few dozen strokes  
she tried 40 and I did 2  
we chose then she hopped the train for home

## They Said It Couldn't Be Done

they say the Irish girls  
won't strip and in my estimation  
tis true / they leave that task  
to their slutty sisters in England  
never expect them to strip off  
in mixed company or even just  
the girls / no one  
not even Mother Teresa  
was more covered



## Ire For A Reason

too friendly  
too rude  
but the pattern soon clears  
tell what's important for tourism  
object to everything else  
makes for a prickly pickle  
of daunting stew

## Winding Stair

fragile flighty toothy  
pale red dainty laughy  
spastic hairpinned  
blueeyed bugeyed  
she blanched when her date  
offered Quux his cell to surf on

## Aftermath

when a great friendship ends  
the sparks always dim quickly  
even with winds funneled into short  
offshot streets / I am reminded of the passage  
of women and temporaries through a scared life  
tonight instead of hope I hold a profound fatigue

## My Father Could

tie knots  
sing and drum at the same time  
solder copper pipe  
look at me and not laugh  
said he could run between raindrops and not get wet  
catch / purge / kill / clean / cook / eat a possum  
with sweet potatoes  
jury rig anything  
dig tunnels hundreds of feet underground  
in confined conditions  
the kind of hard labor my generation  
didn't have to do

## And I Can't

## Short Words

no one worries  
the struggle is always alone  
sleep teaches us the final rest is serene  
don't worry about the religion of it  
just work aka struggle

## Rare Pops

my thought processes never reach  
a valid conclusion / my thinking is too  
shallow and what I understood has been long  
forgotten / I am increasing the pile  
that no one can be proud of  
line by line you can see  
the e's piling up because  
nothing rare pops out of  
this mind

## Bad Stuff

I need to do something again  
by body has exploded  
I cannot look at myself  
I cannot think I am worth anything

## Note From My Mother

near misses don't make quiet afternoons  
there is a certain hush to the evenings  
I can almost hear the cows in the barn  
wish the card game would start  
the moonshine would be dug up and poured



## Like Now

what do you do when all you have is  
when they rebuilt the house  
it was not the way it was before  
which we loved but something different  
something ugly that we hated  
you find a photo taken by a neighbor the year  
before the first house burned down  
and photoshop that corner enough  
so you can see what that old place could have looked like  
almost as if the information waves  
(or are they particles)  
still splash against some edge and can bound  
back to you  
at times

## To The Barn / From the Barn

out the door  
across the yard and road  
over the stonewall and along it to the old apple tree  
around it on the stonewall  
along the dungish stream  
a jump over it  
through the hayed over stretch  
and up to the old foundation filled with debris  
from a generation of life  
past the big lilac a poet must have found musty in fragrance  
down to the driveway and to the barn door  
slide it open and then a climb up into the hayloft  
where hay dust fills the nose and the eyes  
shafted by light pouring through the gaps in the walls  
50 years ago and now all I have is this small plot  
across the world away and the words that attract  
strangers to me like that barn

## Poets Be Gone

out of here you  
overbleached poets  
enough of your  
sparrows and finches things  
and the damned ancient lilac  
poetry is better than this  
better than you

## Fathers Ago

he works the fields  
behind him the trees have never been  
more fluffy with green  
I believe I'd fear him  
my mission is to remake his story  
into one for me

## Sci Fi Bodice Ripper

a milled hand approaches the nape  
of a milk white neck in the diminished  
light twilight brings to the nearly fogged in cottage  
at the shore of a romantic encounter  
is it possible this hand might dissolve  
into a nervous sense of reluctant touch  
as befits the brush of metal on skin

## Souled Out

why should the skies clear  
the fog burn off and the coffee brew  
as if the hot water meant something to it  
and to the water / speaking of water  
what makes it special in all three forms  
when none of the rest of us really  
reach special in any of our phases  
these are things that matter to writers  
small of mind and timid of soul

## Gold Fields

in the night  
her mouth softens  
as she stops readying for speech  
there is little light  
there are not many lights  
there is only one light  
outside and belonging to someone else  
someone nearby  
she watches me  
as I stop my readiness  
this is the moment  
everything is made of

## Vaudeville of Pretending

they all see it  
as a towering strength  
no one realizes  
that it's just a show  
that's all there is



## Wings Remade

trying to figure it out  
the next great idea  
waiting so far out into the wings  
that it's in someone else's wings  
naturally I too dislike the ideas  
that ooze out of this head  
I dreamt for instance  
of the house unmade and remade  
filling my dreams like Lab-enhanced photos

## Synecdoche

as I write this  
I write this  
I wonder why  
as I wonder why  
this sentence no verb

## Like Gabriel

I bring you a light  
it says illumination  
it says what is lit is possible  
I bring you the light  
only the light

## Where It First Happened

when you see the land like this  
when it's a place you could wander  
for hours when there's nothing else to do  
when the different seasons play against it  
in the way a lead guitarist will play against  
the melody when the singer sings  
when there are hardwoods pines leafy paths  
needled beds mighty rocks strewn about  
buildings older than you can imagine  
until research dozens of years later reveals  
them as potentially precious  
when there are ponds that can freeze over  
large enough for a plausible hockey game  
a stream that in spring can make a fine small torrent  
when there are apples pears grapes blueberries enough  
to survive on / then you're talking a real piece of land  
something worth spending some time to remember

## Sanctuary

the road skirts a pond  
one side with a large mown field  
is filled with geese  
across the road and a little higher up  
there's a swamp

down the road the road  
passes by the birthplace  
of a minor poet from 200 years  
past who moved not very far  
taught near my farm  
and is buried across the street  
from where my grandfather died

this road once had a trolley  
to my small town from the larger  
one to the west  
every now and then the frost  
shows its rails to us

## After a Day

sitting down  
producing  
talking to no good purpose  
a day of rest  
a day of work  
the music doesn't stop

## Northern Exposure

sleepiness still in my eyes  
cold air in the late afternoon  
autumn in the north of Europe  
I walk with her down streets  
darkened by clouds and a sun  
about to go missing  
she let's her skirt hit her boots  
from behind it's a series of little kicks  
this is when the parallel universe  
is supposed to kick in and let me play  
this one out to the end  
instead the expensive little café  
the only one open for us late Sunday

## Why Always the Last Minute

not much time left  
to tweak the schedules  
hack hack hack  
but it's the complexity



## Short and Strong

Nugent called in to the show  
from his home in Michigan  
and told Palin that he was firing  
up the grill to cook up  
Alaskan black bear backstrap  
in her honor / the governor said  
that was "awesome" / Nugent encouraged Palin  
to stay strong and fight the forces against her

Palin announced Friday she is resigning

## In Pain Language

between the house and garage  
he lay curled over  
stabbing pain in his gut and groin  
through the night he feels the need to piss  
but nothing happens  
he can hardly stand  
the dew rises to a low fog  
behind the house and down the long hill  
the pond gives up its bullfrog bellows  
crickets well up and sometimes die out  
near the ground the air's cool but just above  
it's still warm and cloying  
his cows chew and moo in the dark  
chicken in their coops cluck restlessly with every  
nearby sound / no one comes out to him  
car horns blurt soft in the distance  
the train comes then later leaves  
this will kill him / one of these things will  
still he can't move / do they think it pretending  
he lays his head to the grass / its smell of finality  
he cries / cries out / his groin cries from the pain  
he cannot piss / his thoughts flee from one language  
to another and then into the language of no language

## Someone's Version

someone took him to the hospital  
the doctors looked inside  
the infection was too much  
though made of nothing but the littlest things  
alive they were out to kill  
how could this be

I heard a story about his speech  
to my mother  
how she was too good  
too trusting  
that people would take advantage

the heat didn't let go  
only fans did their work in the small room  
in the small hospital  
in the town where he perhaps  
worked next to the town  
where he worked the farm

people have told me  
his temper was sharp  
his wife's was too  
my mother's too

he died of the fever  
in chaos  
his mind not by his side  
my mother  
just 21  
stood there  
later she stood by his coffin in the living room  
stood by the grave  
watched them lower him in  
drove to the farm  
drove home

## Jazz of Random Information Spotting

in the old picture  
if you look at the right spot  
in the background  
you can see the style  
of house that burned down  
twostory but with a peaked roof  
cedar shakes on the sides  
though in b&w it's clearly redbrown  
all I needed to know  
was that it was different  
from what replaced it  
and just enough to make up  
a description that would take up  
4 or 5 pages in a book on people  
I hardly knew

## Physics Doesn't Play

why does the hardware  
always fail  
some would say the software  
does or should first  
but hardware likes to tease  
physics / physics always  
bites back / never plays

## Near Wichita, But Only as a Place

wind whips papers and bags  
a can rolls then topples down the street  
coming to rest in the crook of the curb  
in the past the bags and cans  
would be paper / steel  
now they are plastic / aluminum  
so thin the crow eyeing it could crush  
it were it to step onto its sleek side  
the wind through the overhead  
wires makes a crying sound  
or a sound like soft singing  
anyone standing here watching  
it would be sweating from the forehead  
because it's the interplay of heat wet and thought  
that makes this scene exhausting

## Anti Ars

no great bucket of diction  
or contrived phrasings  
neither an interest in greek themes  
or mythologies / at least not  
those same old ones /instead  
perhaps the strangely large words  
Hopi use where two of them  
make up a poem

## Liffey

when I was about to get there  
she was leaning on the railing  
above the river that runs  
through the middle of the city  
her hair in this light was just  
this much red / in the breeze  
it seemed to melt into a mist  
when a burp from physics' gut  
erupted and the air shifted  
I had hoped anticipation  
would enliven her face as funny stories  
in the pub always did but in her face  
she was straight as stone and eyes  
on the slow sludgy water below  
she didn't see me coming  
I think though the bridge I crossed  
was just downstream but the traffic  
and concrete railing surely interposed  
or she did and that was why

I crossed myself  
crossed the street  
and scooted down an alley  
away from the river  
and what gripped her  
back to the books  
where sadness is a turn of phrase



## 1/125 @ f11

the labeled swan  
ingeniously sat motionless  
while his harem schwaremed  
behind him / behind me  
someone thanked him and he  
moved his bill from statue forward  
to staring at me / nothing else  
moved but the fish which apparently  
leapt a little to snag a bag  
jesus christing across the pond  
still except for all its life

## Cold Hard Steal

the surgeon selects the right one  
begins silently slice  
on one side your exposed abdomen  
on the other your cash  
and later your tears of joy  
and even later your tears

## Science

the hills are alive  
with the sound of music  
sitting in a circle  
what would be suspect  
could make this true

## How Like Us

an army of angels  
propel themselves  
through the mechanism  
of indecision  
considered through the lens of reason  
they are as if programmed  
with loose details and intentional fudge  
you thought they could see all  
instead they see a lot  
and do it quickly  
but they are ruled by time like us

## Technology Can't Help No How

many parts of a life  
are just a litter  
pile up on the side  
if we looked at one  
through the lens of a digital photography editing package  
we'd be tempted to amp up the colors  
and oversharpen the details  
but the dodge and burn tools  
the erasers and cloners and maskers  
would be greyed out

## Like Many Days Except

where my school sits  
a factory once sat  
and for recess we'd race through  
the raised gaps between its foundations  
we'd wonder what it had been  
the concrete now chunking off  
with wood bits rotting away  
the town once all factories  
now torn down and homes  
line the streets / the rail line  
gone / the meaning of the town  
long past like the streams that urge  
their view of the past on the fishing boys  
worn out from biking over to one side  
of town from the other on this hot day

## How O How?

no matter how I picture him  
in a field / shaping metal  
his departure escapes my imagination  
yet what makes up me  
made him up in part  
money for a train  
an unwalkable walk  
boat maybe  
money enough for a berth on a ship  
through the Baltic to England  
was it a business deal / too much work for escape  
bravery cannot be part of it  
hard work is the only thing that could have happened  
or did he meet her there  
and her money got them here

## Rule-Breaking Contrast / Unprintable Colors

fallow fields are filled with poets who would paint  
 with words this valley in the expensive colors  
 of a gallery painter's palette  
 such noticing should go un-...  
 I tried the smells and used them  
 like razors to cut away the stillness  
 suture up for you only the lean  
 memories / the ones packed away quick  
 in unfinished boxes / like this...  
*tarweed smells / like souls bound*  
*for heaven on the train that stops*  
*where the mournful gather / gum trees*  
*drop their lozenges as if an extra*  
*(my God an extra / just one extra)*  
*breath could be taken*  
*but the portion is determined*  
 ...this way is nothing but deletions  
 I heard a woman tell me once  
 all smells blow down this valley  
 here in St Helena the light is too much light  
 the contrast that makes us see is the harsh cut  
 from one unrememberable color to its opposite  
 what some see as delightful small bites  
 on the way to a bounding evening  
 is what we say to fall asleep  
 what matters is out of gamut  
 after all this the small yelps erupt  
 telling more than what they interrupt  
 the poem I want to say starts like this  
 the story that's hidden by walnuts and figures

suddenly awake / nothing but dark / silence  
 cries from the room where women wait  
 crying / *wake up wake up*  
 I am suddenly awake / *it's not fair*  
*wake up <pause> <I hear something> <and pause some more> just one more time*  
 he matters to them / they matter to me  
 but his half stare widened  
 breathing damped  
 only one breath was left  
 then that one was gone

things like this / in rooms made but not finished by us  
 happen at night in valleys that are but never seem to be  
 too bright



## Chime with Brash Urgency

The Geyser is a loading tube  
 for the now famous Coke geyser  
 powered by MENTOS®, and if you've ever tried  
 doing the experiment, you know how difficult  
 it is in structural engineering to resist lateral loads  
 so a building is designed to act like a tube,  
 hence the name *tubing*—for the conveyance of fluids—implies  
 tight engineering requirements while a tube is a device  
 used to amplify, switch, modify, or create  
 an electrical signal by controlling the movement of electrons  
 in a low-pressure space as distinct from the hard vacuum type  
 which has internal gas pressure reduced  
 outside the U.S. where Go-Gurt is sold  
 as Yoplait Tubes and Frubes as opposed to Fizzix,  
 a carbonated yogurt snack, a “sparkling yogurt”  
 developed by Lynn Ogden of Utah,  
 to resemble a cylinder, one of the most basic curvilinear shapes,  
 its surface formed by points at a fixed distance  
 from a given straight line, the axis that started  
 as a collection of high school friends named  
 Fee Waybill, “Sputnik” Spooner, Prairie Prince, and Re Styles,  
 with Waybill assuming the persona of “Quay Lewd”  
 decked out with flashing glasses and impossibly  
 beautiful looking and beautiful sounding 5Y3G tubes  
 with the “ST” or “Coke Bottle” shape, so difficult to find  
 if you've never tubed before, so head for the Town Tinker  
 Tube headquarters on Bridge St.,  
 where expertly trained staff will rent you the tubes  
 and give you instructions for transporting objects  
 using the basic principles of pneumatics  
 as stated by the Greek Hero of Alexandria  
 so you can enjoy all the ammonia aromas  
 of fecal decomposition for the rest of the climb with your Poop Tube  
 in your haul bag or clipped with a ‘biner  
 to the view from the meadow where  
 the face seems a pure place and pristine but actually  
 it compares in aroma  
 with the New York City subway.

Tubes sweet as the oranges that once grew  
 in the pre-mall Southern California sun.  
 So hurry!

## On The Plus Side

*From an Unprotected Fairy Tale Blog*

...thanks for posting this / can you imagine the ultrasound...

...makes me wonder what those trolls packed (toothbrush deodorant calf's head . . . )...

...±M ÿì €£ °Ê "£ "]" ©w ©ñ 'Ú;Chttp://post-post.org/national ...

...was she truly ugly or just not as beautiful as her sister...

...I like she ate them both...

...maybe the shock from the goat and the spoon just threw everyone off...

...simply fools your brain into believing...

...thing I love #3: talking baby...

...every man should know this at all costjss...

...anyone who knows fairy tales can hear the alarm bell  
don't disobey the wise woman!  
thing is: the queen's right...

...option of making your own electricity...

...Tatterhood kicks troll-butt  
losing one's head isn't fatal  
and she tells off the grown-ups...

...she will call you a maniac...

...thing I love #8: "Not unless my sister marries too"...

...Jasper Cavanaugh (lovelyladiesss) is now following you on Twitter...

...on the plus side / at least she does the magical transformation herself..

...was the goat even consulted?  
I think not...

## Sonnet 1110100

To the marriage of genuine brains I will not permit  
the approval of obstacles. Where removal medicine roils,  
love removes change, bends with the ferryman  
to extract the unnecessary. Uh, uh: love is the rainstorm's  
fixed signal, the one in no agitated circumstance;  
it is the star with the barking voice, the rind  
that roams approximately about actual worth,  
love is not an idiot but a sickle that folds its mordant edge  
to the limits of cheeks and lips rose-colored inside;  
love is not a summary of one dumb week,  
but supports the one at the edge of destination.  
If this be mistake and on me be proved,  
I'll not love with judicial action  
nor will any person initiate authorization.

## The Saddle of the Day

in the days of no pay and 10¢ gas  
 the fields waited in the dew-wet mornings for the plow  
 for the scythe the rake and wagon  
 the cows waited in the cool dewed mornings for the milking  
 for the feed the opened door and grazing grass  
 the chickens waited in the self-warmed coops for the hands underneath  
 for the feed the unshut passages and sunwarmed bugs  
 the girl my mother waited in her lumped moist bed for the presunrise sounds  
 for the farmy breakfast the invitation to work and the saddle of the day  
 splayed like a hog butchered to its back awaiting final cuts and icing down  
 waiting with spite and remorse watching through weather stained windows the farm turn on turn out  
 the stations of the farm devotions the stall the slop and coop  
 the sacrificial trees and bush of apples pears and berries  
 the vines the hills and stake-tied plants of grape and squash and peas  
 pumping water from hand-dug wells filling tubs and buckets  
 for horses hogs and chickens geese and cows and ducks  
 water cooled in soil and sand in underlakes to burst in ponds and basements  
 logging trees for repairs and heat packing coal in bins  
 sending logs to sawyers and mills for planks and boards for braces and dowels  
 the loaders the side-deliveries the hay-rakes the mowers the pitchforks  
 the crow bars the wheelbarrows the wagons the hitches the harnesses the feedbins the haybarn  
 the smoothed neck posts the milkcans the creamcans the pickling jars the mason jars  
 the spades and shovels the barbed wire the electric fences to teach the cows  
 cooking on the coal range and the smell of it against scythed hay  
 picking fruit picking tomatoes picking corn picking peas picking squash picking cucumbers  
 digging potatoes digging carrots digging onions digging garlic  
 shucking peeling slicing butchering mixing frying broiling boiling baking steaming  
 washing rinsing whitewashing painting scrubbing scouring swabbing sweeping folding making  
 working the plow spreading the manure harrowing it in planting mowing drying baling stacking  
 feeding cows feeding pigs feeding chicken geese and all that all that  
 passing time by radio and borrowed books  
 passing time by trips to the bridge its river and shaded lanes  
 passing time in old-country language the stories of travel and hints of love's messages  
 no time for dating and courting kissing and holding walking down dustpacked roads and phonecalls at night  
 no time for friends and girlfriends and townfriends no restaurants no snack bars no icecream stands  
 she remembered those days the night of the storm  
 remembered her mother too fat to help remembered her father killed by that mother  
 farmers and neighbors in on the secret  
 police chief drinking down his payoff cache  
 remembered all this just this on that night that night of the storm

## The Girl My Mother

hauling woven baskets filled with pears filled with apples bringing grapes  
from the storebin to the coops to the chickens to the geese to the hogs  
in an unshaped dress over pants gloves flannel coat  
too poor for glasses too hungry to daydream too tired to wonder  
cows call low but never stop always eat never wander too far  
she opens the door removes her boots and scarf her gloves and hat  
sits to a green plate of fried kielbasa rough bread and boiled cabbage  
coal fumes spice her meal the great chef of the Ukraine has made it  
for her daughter's strength to keep them alive and drink  
is all that's left what's left of it and later the neighbors will provide  
but for now it's the girl my mother

## Dating Advice for Certain People

whenever you date for the first time  
choose a beautiful locale for the first touch  
get her to look at the scene and pretend  
if you need to  
to be overwhelmed by the scene  
tell her it reminds you of a sad thing  
you can't talk about  
yet around sunset is a good time  
then touch her  
pretend you are not aware of the move  
that observation deck up on Victoria Peak in Hong Kong is a god spot  
take her there then implement the plan I've just described  
it should work especially if you don't live in Asia

## Abracadabra

tonight in Santa Fe  
after the 3 minutes of light so magical anything can happen  
is over then is when you can see the young women bouncing  
down the streets but only the small ones  
small streets I mean just tonight one woman  
looked like she had feathered legs and bounced down the street  
her blond hair was everywhere and it turned out  
when she got under a streetlight that her legs were bare  
this is that happens here  
after that 3 minutes

## Carry Me Slowly Carry Me Gently

he cradled me  
as a child would be  
or an infant  
so my transition from the table to the floor might be eased  
one arm under my neck  
one under my knees  
he rotated me up from flat to vertical  
I had expected it to happen once more  
to be lifted this way after I was a child  
this wasn't the occasion I expected



## Crossed Mine

on a firepit near the oversized oak  
coals smoulder and low slung chairs  
bear up well / sitting beside each other  
the two watch the coals express their final emanations  
the night is not too old but the question  
could arise where will they sleep tonight  
does this question cross either of their minds  
it crossed mine but I have something at stake  
smoke if you can call it that entangles us three  
and I wonder sometimes what oaks like this one  
would think if there were a set of dimensions  
of the physical world where poetic ideas operated  
and whether specifically there would be a place  
for me in a two

## Listen Up Quick

I'm the prophet of the future of institutionalized love  
the caretaker of the monetization of incremental favoritism  
I've reckoned the depth of illegal manifestations of despair  
hear my words as I speak them quickly with only 5 steps  
to go to the top of the gallows

## Geometry and Reason

from her hips down  
movements are elliptical  
even her skirt rings like a hula  
I suppose viewed differently  
or in different clothing  
this stopping would not be sensible  
but hearts were never taught what if

## Over Again

sun's made up it's mind today  
to rise as if as usual  
tonight though it will dip away  
to think it over again

## Sunport

in the airport lounge the gorgeous family  
with a beautiful mother and 3 beautiful girls  
and an ok father tried to board the wrong  
plane though the gate was clear  
and the man whose name was called 8 times  
never heard them even though he was just over there  
well actually in the bar over there  
the sky became beautiful and I didn't hear  
anyone call my name  
probably because no one did

## Sanuk For You

for once the sun set he found the pain  
undiminished and his optimism  
built after his walk out of Russia to the Black Sea  
and then a ship ride to the States and a successful farm  
with a formerly rich wife failing  
along with the light and warmth  
he couldn't stand / more than that was wrong  
he would have wondered why / was wondering why  
his way but instead it was the animals he worried about  
the key to survival though in this case so silly  
his wife was still screaming at him from the kitchen  
mixed with the sounds of vomit and running water  
he heard singing too / his mother her low voice  
from the barn stalls home in the old country  
he had come so far to end so low

## Sanuk Knowledge

sun about to rise but he could not  
he lay where he was put down  
the heat was coming up again  
the cows made their complaints  
why didn't Helen answer them / him  
was she even home / he couldn't remember  
his head hurt from the aftermath of the blow and drink  
his wife snored heavily her snores just offset  
from their echoes between the house and garage  
the fancy car / he couldn't drive it now / maybe  
never again / he knew how this would end  
the pain was a ragged shard / the kind that killed  
the pain of walking would never overtake him again  
nothing would / he knew when the animal  
would never rise again

## Sanuk Early Day

the sun went up about halfway to the top  
the heat came back and bugs from the ground  
walked into his clothes and mosquitoes from his wet  
farm hovered over him landing when his attention dropped  
the cows were out in the fields and woods  
was Helen home / did Alexandra let them out  
Billy came and stared saying Pawli will you ever stand again  
Sam called to him come home / Ann called for lunch  
flies liked his smell and his head hurt  
he still couldn't pee / pain was all about  
pain was always what it was about



## Sanuk Trip

she put her arms under his and lifted  
Sam helped too / they got him into his convertible  
she drove him to Amesbury / a little closer than Haverhill  
he kept his eyes closed the whole trip  
the bouncing kicking him again and again  
down Hadley to Highland to Main to the Highland in Amesbury  
and the 2-story hospital / the heat was relieved only by a fan  
and they planned a surgery to look for what was wrong  
the story being of a horse accident and the tongue  
of a wagon / when they heard this and saw the man  
even then they wondered at the story

## Sanuk Operation

when they were inside  
they knew they hadn't the tools to fix him  
and with ether as the only tool of making it painfree  
he knew everything they knew  
because he heard them talking  
coming all this way  
and then she did this  
the little pipsqueak  
but he didn't have that word / instead a Russian one  
and she wasn't little outweighing him by  
oh how much a lot  
he was about to sleep and he sensed it  
time to cry later

## Sanuk Early Morning

he looked out the window  
it was open and the screen was a dark shade over the bright sun  
riding on the waving leaves of the oak outside  
the smell of the heat that blew in had a hard core  
in the center of a burst of just-cut hay  
the river was not far he knew  
and though he was patched up the end was a day or two away  
the bright sun was just an early morning sun  
and in a few hours she would come  
the girl my mother to hear the sentence  
from the man who did the cutting and examining  
were the cows taken care of the pigs the chickens the horses  
even the one he knew they blamed / it was the story  
she told him on the drive / the two drives into the gut and groin  
a week apart to account for the damage  
what good would come of his wife in jail  
when the animals and fields needed their tending to

## Sanuk Telling

later she came the girl my mother  
and after he sat there for 30 minutes  
with her just looking out the window  
and feeling the cool wind turn warm  
he began the story as the doctors told him  
but he needed not bother / the 30 minutes  
told all / a bit back she had sat down  
in the hard chair and now she moved  
to the corner of the bed where the light and shadow  
divided his face / soon she knew and would never tell

## Sanuk Rules

that done he sat silent once more  
and she could see his thoughts transforming  
from Russian to English / birds of course  
chimed in and a nurse looked in asking  
about water but he knew that would not work  
and after a bit after about 30 more minutes he spoke  
told her everything she would need to know  
for the rest of her life / he thought it was small advice  
but she embraced it fully and it informed her every  
day until the night she died during the big storm  
even still it didn't start to inform until he was gone

## Sanuk Gone

next morning she returned and learned  
hospitals preferred face to face not the phone  
when she turned into the door and saw  
his clothes in a pile on the chair and no  
one in the bed / perhaps the doctor came in and told her  
but all she remembers is her hands the soft  
way a woman will / folding his clothes  
smoothing them out / placing them  
slowly into the cardboard suitcase  
that sat on the floor all the last few days  
walking down the hall down the stairs  
out the door to the convertible  
thinking about not what happened  
but what would happen when it's two women  
who hate each other / a 100-acre farm  
and 60 hours of factory work a week  
then there were no thoughts  
and they didn't return for years

## Sanuk Visiting Hours

at the house some or many came  
to visit one last time / the food was cooked  
oldcountrystyle / by relatives some friends  
even still the animals needed what they needed  
and did not wait to see what followed on  
the heat never rose / her mother was able  
not to drink the night before / they had not much  
good to think of her / the girl my mother though  
they knew what she would need to do  
the man in the plain box could not help her more  
outside there were noises / simple ones  
for her soon the only ones

## Sanuk Burying

a hearse pulled up and his oldcountry friends  
lifted him from the parlor down the stairs  
into its bed / in the barn the girl my mother  
was finishing feeding early / she  
followed in the convertible taking the shortcut  
through Newton over to Winnekenni then past  
Lake Saltonstall and into Linwood / to the new part  
just half filled with low stones many from oldcountries  
out in the sun / a priest spoke in Russian  
the chanter echoed and swung the incense  
a dozen men and 8 women stood for an hour  
his wife cried (I think) / the girl my mother  
looked up at a hill behind them in the cemetery  
with only a few bigger stones and thought there  
when it was over they all left but her  
she watched the 2-man crew lower him  
lower the lid fill in the hole / she walked up the hill  
where a small beech was just starting to rise  
she sat nearby and watched down the hill the work finish  
then much later the sun set / the river smell came up  
cars made rude noises / here she thought  
one day here



## Sanuk Left Behind

the drive home was in twilight  
she drove slow past the new grave  
the headstone would come later  
when there was some money  
maybe from insurance or the workers'  
group he belonged to from the oldcountry  
where they knew what exploitation was  
the air was cooling as it always would summers  
throughout her life / dreams now would be  
only through the night / but she stopped  
at the icecream stand and got a large maple walnut  
sat on a rough bench watched autoists drive past  
some coming from the beach others toward it  
everything felt back and forth to her  
her bed in the room waited for her to come sleep soon  
when she would sleep next would a long time  
away but she knew where / it would be where  
she could see  
him

## Sanuk Story

the story's too good to ignore  
but I know no details  
I need to imagine them  
and to imagine I need to write them  
and to write them is to make something  
real only in the most fictive sense  
this is the single path to a conclusion

## A Night Too Far

too many nights end like this  
the sad song playing in the dark  
the tubes glowing pushing the music  
into the speaker cones  
the words to match spuming onto the page  
later sleep will powder it over  
no one will be better off

## First Cause

according to decency  
several people would be willing  
to forsake their wills  
and walk like never before  
to the gates of bad neighborhoods  
where they will as one  
turn their backs on the rich

## In a Country You Can't Guess

in the extreme old place  
now modern layered upon it  
my flat is above the old street  
I am in a modern layer  
below it's extreme old  
it's not near where I've lived or grew up  
it's planned to be an escape  
a place where no one can impose  
if you saw a picture of it you would never  
guess even what hemisphere it was in  
even what hemisphere I am in

## Not My Thing

my level of gap is asymmetric  
for example a manuscript plan  
or business or development leaders  
decomposition is people people formally  
identified as gaps / a manifestation  
might manifest itself as a subset  
of felt effects / affectations  
this reminds me of eyelashes and buttered hair

## Day O Day

day of speeches  
the light on the Bay though blue  
reflects green and gray  
the effects are like cold unwelcome  
no one was prepared for my outburst  
of key bluster / I was hoping it'd  
go better

## Other Half

in the palm of a mind  
the tethered thoughts wrap  
around the figurative trunk  
like a metaphor's real half



## Business As It Is

spelling the habits are obsessions  
doing the job so well  
the habits are riffed  
join the dole line  
pass joints on corners  
leer at pretty practices  
the obsessions file bankruptcy  
and every floated boat sinks

## Pick a Winner

could you be a hoarder  
hiding like the things in your clutches  
things hang from hooks on your walls  
your ceilings are invisible behind what lingers there  
your head touches the drippings above  
because the floor is nowhere seeable  
one day soon the door won't open  
which side will you be on

## Over the River

the river's foam forms strange attractor  
shapes in the backflow from the sidestream  
of a speedy downstream current  
from the footbridge built by entrepreneurs  
decades ago when the town was neatly industrialized  
to render trees into wealth and toxins  
that beauty forms from leeching  
such from the normal shows in the tanned  
tinge in the river / I wish to depart

## Long Ku

across the pond  
on a flat rock sticking  
up out of it  
the loon preens  
the sun behind him  
he has fished all afternoon  
and is full of fish  
his feathers shine bright  
above the water

## Alongside a Railway

near us the grass just mowed  
made the air smell of home  
to me / and above that is the salt  
of flats at low tide  
there might be a way to photograph this  
but I can't figure the stops  
I am fiddling  
the scene fidgets

## Unknown Flying Humanoids

the balloon sequences are persuasive  
unknown creatures and living beings  
would find this an ideal location to survive  
no DNA was found  
it appears to be a work of art  
and no something once alive  
the artist?

## Giving Up

tired of things not working  
just plain tired

## The Same

everything was the same  
as the last day I was in the house  
aside from the deterioration  
from total neglect  
same carpet same wallpaper  
same linoleum same tiles  
black mold everywhere  
rot and water damage  
insect damage  
overgrown grounds  
but everything else the same  
exactly the same  
after 40 years



## Another Morning

the sounds of confusion  
reign / loud phone rings  
talking/shouting loud music  
things knocking around too loud  
to figure how to describe  
another morning at the house  
food being prepared nonstop  
papers shuffling doors slamming  
the walls coming down  
another morning

## Snow Walk Across the Carpathians

he was on a horse back  
it was snowing  
and he was go ahead slow  
and we was walking behind  
well we walked maybe  
mile that way  
then he said  
now he said  
walk this way  
and  
and he was disappear  
and we walk and it was snow  
and snow was stop afterwards  
and we holler for him  
and so forth and so on  
no and we walk night and we saw the light  
until we walk on that light  
and then he come in and say  
you did pretty good  
because he did not want to get caught  
see  
he did not want go with us  
so he was way way out from us  
like he was watch  
was watching us  
and so we come in there

## A Curve Fit

sometimes  
even a powerful tool  
equipped with too few  
smoothes the roughest of gestures

## As Liked

did Shakespeare  
have surrealism  
if he saw his plays mangled  
by anacronistic absurdity  
it would be surrealism  
to him / would he recognize  
it as a form of art  
when I make curtsy  
bid me farewell

## Replacing Fence Posts

replacing fence posts  
think out  
close that which  
in this world are quite  
good fences make go  
neighbor is more  
because the old ones  
the earth feels more  
alternating veins  
beyond the instinctive  
darkness lays a return  
under vertigo and I am  
ether or not I should  
beg four-by-fours  
know that story  
recovering something  
wear a buried silly  
padlock or a toy  
folded patiently and  
him playing

## Fear

the many worries  
culminate tomorrow  
when it could  
I can't write it  
suddenly I can't face it

## Passing Alive

today a dark figure  
cared not to stop  
or even slow  
though he glanced my way  
and moved his mouth  
not to a smile  
but just a smirk  
or maybe (think about it)  
a wink

## Change as Dust

she paused to kiss me  
opened her mouth  
I not knowing what to do  
did the minimum  
which was mimic  
later under blankets and cheap sleeping bags  
unfolded into comforters  
we held on and now  
it's all molding away  
falling all around  
and back where home was then  
the same phone is there  
to call on



## On Women

these nudes perplex  
their skin so smooth  
no woman I've shot  
looks like them  
maybe I need some new filters

## I Am So Highj

nothing like the feel of things  
just going wrong going  
wrong going wrong going  
wrong going wrong going wrong  
going wrong going wrong going wrong  
going wrong going wrong  
which is what happens when the world  
is or is  
treated like a feedbackless machine

## Dodging

who is sleek  
who is tanned and trimmed  
who knows how to show it off  
when enticed by the cameraman  
find me someone like that  
and watch me become  
an artist

## Riverside

somewhere the flags have been taken down  
the dogs have been fed walked and bedded down  
the tall grass has stopped waving and the sun  
has agreed with all this and has told the ground  
it is ok to sleep / where I sit on the bank  
of a river eager to run to sea the only sound  
is the shushing whisper of water by the shore  
and the small splashes of fish jumping  
out where only the sodium lights reflections  
light the swirling current / I am alone  
but you should have known that by now

## Fervor

a wrapper blowing down the road  
a can barreling along a curb  
and then into the gutter  
a dog looking back and slouching  
around the corner  
all on a cold wind  
a day of indeterminate cloudiness

## Regrettance

poetic justice I suppose  
the old ready to be  
discarded man standing  
in the living  
room of his boyhood home  
ready to fall down around him  
whole sections off limits  
for safety black mold throughout  
water stains on the ceilings  
every appointment exactly  
as he left it decades earlier  
slow growing trees out front  
50' tall where he sat by the windows  
on the hearth and watched the sun  
drop to here and pray to be there  
now too molded over to even  
stand near where his mother watched  
her mother die fading all color to the gray  
he was himself covered with  
only the dead were safe

## Believably

the cellar after some fire  
had crashed the house above into it  
became a dump or perhaps the house  
was a barn because of the passage into the cellar  
but next to its corner near the road  
and near the orchard a lilac grew  
tall and fragrantly purple  
and had I thought then to photograph it  
what things I would know today  
what stories I could make up  
more believably

## Death Chamber

go ahead?  
nothing I can say can change the past  
I done lost my voice  
I would like to say goodbye  
my heart goes is going ba bump ba bump ba bump  
is the mic on?  
I don't have anything to say  
I am nervous and it is hard to put my thoughts together sometimes you don't know what to say  
man there is a lot of people there



## A Man's Duty

by the horse barn the fawn  
lies hit by a car in the night  
the smell of the horse waste  
covers that of the fallen fawn  
air-filled blood spilled from her nose  
passing by previous days I had seen her  
grazing with her mother the sturdy doe  
in the meadow above the barn  
today as I climbed up past the meadow  
the doe lifted her head spread her ears  
wide to fathom my approach and  
watched me pass by carrying her sadness  
for her

## Corridors

in a window overlooking  
the wet sidewalk a woman  
watches the rain and slight wind  
release the condensed oils and heat  
from a long summer without rain  
the first rain is like this  
she is too

## Thinking in a Box

when the actress takes it all off  
with the cameras running  
and the dialog is about  
not showing her bush  
that's when you know  
you life was not lived

## Doing His Work

the devil walks down main street  
looking for all the businesses  
doing his work but that's a waste  
of words because he's really just  
looking for all the businesses

## Hollow Sounds

I was caught up in her shoes  
her heels stepping across a sidewalk  
heat pressure the clicking  
the blue of them  
the faded color of gum on the sidewalk  
nearby a pair of rails not yet  
tired from bearing steel weight  
I followed while I failed  
and the light  
the faltering lesson

## Tonight Another

the funny little things  
that happen when the bugs  
enter your wirings

## Realistically

the filament is waving in the breeze  
that makes the evenings filter in the cool ocean  
the snapshot that's now holds all the people  
I can love even though possibilities seem to expand  
like an inbreath before the out  
even now fading is the evening  
light and fabric that could be mine

## My Old Bud

sitting on a bench  
at the end of a shady street  
on a bench out there in the hot  
sun the one I've ran across many times  
my old friend failure



## Procedamus in Pace

once / actually a year ago  
it grew cool one evening  
late sunlight followed the trend  
the room cooled  
there were ways to warm up  
ways even for some people  
to grow happy  
a turning point might have happened  
had the train carried one extra passenger  
and mystery were permitted  
to unfold if the breath were to be unheld  
it could have been cold for many nights

## Out of Mouths

also like  
male vervets  
and Campbell's monkeys  
male Dianas  
have a scrotum  
that's a tasteful  
shade of blue

## Uses of Disorder

what is it when you can observe  
the envelope of your life  
see the time that has taken you  
watch what you watched be built  
fall down / fall down / fall down

## Progression

if I could get it all back  
I would  
if I could build it back the way it was  
I would  
it once was a world that I commanded  
it was a chunk that was mine  
walking on it was walking on my home  
I miss it like a friend gone for good  
would I  
I would

## Middle

about as often as dry lightning  
where the prairie drops to a ravine  
holding a meandering near dried out riverlet  
stories are written about such places  
cottonwoods have gathered around the bed  
making a deceptive cool oasis (like)  
but the prairie holds things flat  
no distinctions / no story  
I'm interested

## Hemlock It Is

tonight it's the big wind  
outside raking across the windows  
and roof rattling the water down in the pond  
the animals have huddled as they have been genetically  
taught to do / the details in the song playing  
don't match up / as if ever other word were shifted  
left in meaning and the others up and to the right  
the when you put the wind on top of the song  
you get a trip 40 years back when the house  
that's decided to fall over was new enough  
you could smell the wood drying

## Go Back to the Beginning

imagine your own orchard  
a pear orchard with one large  
mcintosh tree at one corner  
and a little barb wire fence around it  
now picture it's mid-fall and the pears  
have fallen and the apples have too  
the grass has dried out to translucent  
tubes around the trees  
the pear trees were stubbed and old when I knew them  
imagine another orchard not far  
a cherry orchard with just a few trees  
maybe 4 or 6 and their fringy bark  
imagine having these and apple trees spread around too  
and grapes in trees enough grapes to make a year of juice and jelly  
blueberries in low bushes so fat that I can plunge  
my hands into the buckets we pick them in  
eat my fill and no one notices  
then imagine it's all gone now  
gone to me because such abundance  
calls to the one who loved it most

## The Trees Comment

the darkness isn't sinister  
it's part of the lovely scenery  
it's the curve in branches and trunks  
it's the bark seeming to curl off the trees  
the occasional low clouds that drift off drizzle  
now the only outside (the road) is my inside  
I stand on it / stand on its edge  
I look out which once was looking in  
this time of day / when the evening rises  
remember / the darkness isn't sinister



## Too

she can't be real  
not her face  
her name  
what she can do  
I'll call it talent  
she is too

## Visitation

the blacktop road  
was made from oil and sand  
as the sand was pulverized by cars and trucks  
the oilfilled sand formed sidewalks  
along the road a yellowed sand  
you don't see much anymore  
near the cities / but where they are  
that's where home is

## Final Fling

no one positions  
the leg braces like a journeywoman  
who has traveled here with her sisters  
two abreast and not only that  
knows deep shit about braces

## Smitten

I am waiting for the caper  
to begin / the lesson of deliverance  
nothing but mighty / I am fatigued  
at the thought of deliverance  
the deliverer is driving away  
his tailpipe spewing  
his car disappearing into smoke

## Of Sorts

in a way the lights on the bridge  
have been on forever  
the bridge's yellow has always been there  
the water has flowed and has stopped  
the water has been low and the river dried up  
the water has risen above the bridge and everyone on it  
the lights are blue and the bridge yellow  
in the middle they meet up to make a pleasant white

## Can't Stop

everywhere tonight the lights have dimmed  
candles were lit and the women have all drawn  
their baths stepped out of their gowns and attire  
our attention has been drawn to their calves  
as they step in one by one and the bubbles froth up  
their eyes close as one and outside the city  
fills with blue rain and yellow lights  
do I see your tears

## Under Achieve

when your cover's blown  
the streets swiped clean by typhoon wind  
the streets washed clean by typhoon rain  
you find yourself on an island  
tall buildings ready to fall you think  
but you are the one to fall  
your cover's blown

## Cellar Flowers

lingering like lilacs  
on the purple of the morning  
slewing scent and skipping breakfast  
looking down at the sandy driveway  
from a small rise by the lilac  
someone's important bush once  
now along by the hole in the ground  
that once was a cellar



## In A Long Ago House

they are poorly made  
the daughters for some reason  
one cramped upstairs  
one in a home  
the one talking to me  
speaks simply and shows off childish  
things / she smiles into the deep past

## Memphis

her voice comes in two  
pieces / one edged with small serrations  
she uses it to start her cut  
the other like the surface of small pond  
on a windless day / she uses  
it to float you into her dream

**By**

in the room above heart-  
break street near the hotel  
of lonely hearts the poet of id-  
ioms waits for inspiration  
to pass

## Aphoristic Brevity

the meal is basic and rough  
the company is aleatoric  
at best / we talk but I'm unable  
to focus well and important stories  
are for me unavailable  
the meat though is the star  
and we share it as if close  
but we are as different  
as different is from same

## Fragile Undercurrent of Hope for a Quick Trip

the beauty of the snow  
beating down hard in high elevations  
with all the silence of the ocean's  
hard press on the face of the earth  
it's on

## Extinguished

the world waits  
for what follows on  
there's no time to underscore  
the important points  
forgiveness's equation  
is all imaginary coefficients  
and unforeseen variables

## Kind of Empty

the moon triply large  
enough for an evening  
of open mouths and expectations  
like luck forbearance takes a back  
seat in high speed chases  
I wish the year would slow down

## Hate Apple

why does this crappy shit  
always happen just when I'm  
about to leave



## Under the Sky Tonight

tropical clouds firm up  
up high and with sun behind near dusk  
they urge a hint of languorous lust  
and a pair of mojitos but  
the sun's downer pre-sages cool  
rain and tropical wind  
aimed into the heart from the west  
the west as known in myth and romance  
a longer ride / a ride into the west  
would swap topics for desert  
wet for dry / my car's primed  
for it / for the ride and the result  
mojitos then tequilas this and the eyes  
downturned and animalistic  
no lust but all lust let's have it  
all tonight

## Your Destination

play the drama  
don't explain but narrate  
tell it / weep it / wail and wait  
but it will come to you  
release

## Over You

I'm interested in your line of sight  
the lines I see you in  
the angle of the highlights  
the lighting of the days  
with you / the ways I make my way  
past the night that unfolds  
beneath you

## Everything Wrong

oh zzzzz  
the night away  
ye of little sleep

## I Miss Her

what year  
what time of day  
the envelope please  
the story's end and beginning

## Alignment

she is not the light  
gorgeous I remember her  
to be and I  
wish to depart

## Fear of It

the love of it  
I sit with the beauties  
in 2 days a day will come  
to witness my demise  
undone

## Special But Unnoticed Goodbye

when she stepped up  
the bus steps / humid enough  
for everyone to sweat  
I hoped she'd turn for one  
last look and when she didn't  
I turned away toward my room  
and remaining life / but when I  
turned back to watch her step  
finally into the aisle and away  
I caught her turning away  
from me again / these glances  
pose the problem of relation  
a dizzying problem



## You

they say it rained  
misted all day and cold  
as they drove to the hospital  
and parked under an oak  
bringing me forth broke  
some things and I turn  
now to decrepit old age  
no one left to love  
me

# Traditional



# Salvation

Richard P. Gabriel

March 5, 2021

3605

## After A Lot of Prose

the long form  
makes more sense for speculation  
and hoping  
and even the small swings at poetry  
fit in the cracks like old mortar  
that will certainly dry out  
and fall out  
leaving the bricks to tumble  
when the critics quake

## Cantankerous Woodchucks

she's only in here  
her pants are famous  
of the 4 stories you might know  
which do you guess  
she bounds in  
winks laughs  
bounds out  
extra if you guess the bridge  
but you know her  
she knows everything  
your job is guess

## Ploughman Take My Earth

possibly a good day  
a story worth hearing  
under the frost the grass remains green  
lilacs stolen while women worked  
in the fields / heavy work and even more sweat  
though Spring is nearly everywhere  
it's not here / not here nearly  
but near

## A Hundred Miles

when I'm alone  
I dream that I'm dreaming  
the car moves forward  
I make it go as it might  
the roads repeat  
songs repeat  
stories repeat  
if they knew what I make of their stories  
they would say  
forget them  
forget us  
be someone else

## Just What You'd Expect

never fails  
always fails

## **Past the Truth**

maybe you wonder what it means  
who is the storyteller and who listens  
where the facts get factored out  
and previous truth is shoved aside  
the past I talk about is 100 years ago  
and it's a b&w photo turning brown



## Thoroughly Gone

you know you look  
at a woman who face is blank  
from the realization of love  
and you think how human  
how alive how miraculous  
and then you remember  
she's gone / I mean  
she's dead / long dead  
and there is nothing like that  
for her anymore  
O it makes you cry  
doesn't it

## Missing Sound

without reverb  
the guitar is a metallic plink  
the music waits back behind a curtain  
I'm certain song is pretty  
but it's just an itch  
just a scratch on a metal wire  
sing to me  
sing me to sleep  
drive away when I'm gone  
drive away without one sound  
let your departure be the reverb  
in our song

## Undoing

behind the walls  
under the beds  
what we wish for falls away  
the woman who makes it possible  
drives away and takes with her  
a glimmering laugh

## A Visit

when she drives under the gate  
a woodchuck scrambles up a small hill  
and then under a granite step into his nest  
likewise squirrels bound away because  
her car's not silent / and why should it be  
it's 1940 and it's a warm spring day  
stones strangely thin and tall stand up  
over the hills in the fields she drives through  
three turns later she stops the car pulling over  
onto the grass steps out / walks into the field  
past a stone / turns / looks back / it's where  
she's intending / she remarks a funny remark  
places a lilac on it / laughs / drives on  
to a bridge / over it / she honks the horn  
at a couple below kissing on the ground  
all the wildlife scrambles away / birds fly up  
and away / wind swirls in her wake

## Future Proof

why it all breaks  
submerged and dejected  
words are all we can have  
the words you use  
tell me your job  
what you deserve  
much is made of the creatures  
descended from heaven

## **Ship Born**

the simple romance  
was left behind  
on a ship that tossed for days  
alone with a scarred woman  
in her bed all through the storm  
making life life

## On & On

even though he made the journey  
from cold & wooded farmland  
to a colder samelike place  
other journey's could have been and have been  
he heard the radio and from the distance  
the air popped the electricity making the sounds  
proving the equation primitive=lone  
I walked the same fields as he did  
I walked others and farther  
I am carrying him on

## Wrong Day to Bloom

the bloom came  
and all the inside parts designed  
to attract the bees and flies  
and spread the pollen and make more  
but no flies would fly by nor bee buzz  
its way in because the bloom was at the start  
or winter and all those helpers were tucked  
away till spring / you might wonder  
what was that iris thinking?



## Color of Truthlessness

her gaze is like a lie  
she's reclined like the queen  
her eyes are pale green  
she is her heart's spy

## Sanuk Haying

longing for her he went about his haying  
every time the horses stopped his heart  
did / the grasshoppers continued to jump  
he remembered her just shaking in the morning  
under the blankets / she was doing things  
he could sense it / in the barn smells  
weren't hers / in the house smells of cooking  
his wife cooking for his last load  
later that week she would kill him

## Which Game

on the other side of a deep mist  
near waves that barely splash  
many of the cheerleaders are wondering  
how many children they'll have  
which home they will buy  
which cars / which boats  
on this side the quarterback  
takes his 7 step drop

## Expectedness

the birds scrapping through leaves  
looking for grubs and worms  
for seeds and the dander of life  
they're brown like the leaves  
brown and darker  
the leaves are brown and darker  
light is fading in the almost winter afternoon  
sky's lightly clouded but it feels like rain  
in the future / I walk past and the birds  
hope away

## Justice, O Justice

oh what fun to josh the dopes  
they are what our democracy  
counts as the of the people  
we base our justice on their ideas

## Furious Ending

under sheltering pines  
snow piles slowly  
above snow falls like late age  
clouds coming apart fast  
it's cold enough that you think  
it happens slowly but it's  
happening as fast as it  
can and those pines won't last  
much longer

## Fleeing

there was no door  
and I turned back  
and there was no door  
just a man / just a bottle  
only the jasmine desire  
broken apart when the lovers parted  
when the doors disappeared

## Near Night in Boston

the porcelain sky near twilight  
dusting the blue that guided us all day  
we are invited to kiss  
and were it summer there would be the smells  
of flowers rising up around us and grass just cut  
this afternoon around us and we would kiss  
ignoring each other's shining scars  
but this is a winter sky and clear  
we are wrapped in warm coats  
and our skin is cold yet we kiss  
anyhow because the river before us seems still  
and something in the sky has called to us  
its nighttime invitation



## Wedding Day

once I knelt in a chapel  
once I said some words  
once we exchanged rings  
my father played the organ poorly  
a young man read a poem badly  
we ate in an Irish house  
we spent the snowing night  
in an old inn in a historic town  
she spread herself out  
and the next day we toured the village  
people cried then  
they still cry

## Kalyna Truss Almost Visits

driving up 1 she entered Newburyport  
then turned west toward Merrimac  
the roads weren't yet paved I hear  
so she must have bumped up rutted hills  
and down rocky hills and the trees  
alongside were brown from the dust of it all  
she passed fields where farmers were still ploughing  
and though she never looked hard at them she knew  
they sweated and would be ashamed of their shirts  
were she to stop and see them / she would have been  
their dreams from that moment on scar and all  
in Merrimac she turned northwest and then up a hill  
then south to the farm where she stopped  
he was in the field / ploughing behind the horses  
she never stepped out of the car top down  
she watched his hard back working  
his arms pumping the horses through their reins  
she saw near the barn a woman hanging laundry  
she thought this is the one he settled for  
she drove back the way she came  
but she vowed to remember the lilac bush  
but the clothesline and how it must smell  
in the mornings

## All These

the bridge fleeing one side for the other  
the water reflecting another blue  
the road whipping under wheels  
the trees bleeding leaves to the ground  
the silent stealing of a sprig of lilacs  
the gates opening into the spill of endings  
the groundhogs and squirrels returning to chaos after a calm  
the auto stopping two wheels in grass and two in dirt  
the dress dripping with femininity and the black veil pulled down  
the gloved hand dropping the lilac like a forgotten moment  
the stone receiving the lilac like a forgotten moment  
the soul believing she owes this one thing to the underground man  
the universe retreating behind this moment

## Tiptoeing

when two possibilities conflict  
the foreign sky intervenes  
the cold turning autumn to winter intercedes  
the one based on courage turns and walks off

## Not Clear

oh it turns out my nose is stuffed  
and up the street lanterns are covered  
over by the mist or fog and near the ocean  
a wind from off the water blows salt spray  
over the road and onto the windows of a lucky man's house  
luck / not so lucky / stuffed up / mist and fog and spray  
all the ingredients that makes the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
something to worry about

## Snowy Day and a Train

she heard the train whistle  
she thought  
she woke up believing the whistle woke her  
but the air in her room was cold  
she was under blankets and goosedown and warm  
she was warm but it seemed like she should get up  
but she couldn't remember why  
she turned over and fell back asleep

## Sleepy Time Time

trips are unsettled  
we are unfinished until the last moment  
sometimes the urge to sleep is itself a blanket on the soul  
my feet feel cold and finding a way to loosen my back  
takes half the night / yet sleep is like a rainfall  
with sudden gusts of stillness the secret  
to a good soaking

## **Her Scar**

her scar under her hair  
her eyes scanning the room  
over her head the ceiling is patterned  
this is where I gaze  
her breathing is slowing



## Lost and Forgotten but Quick

when she's been gone for years  
all's left are what impressionists would see  
reflected light / memory with but one bit  
of information / the part of him that simulates her  
struggles to add back information / emotions  
but the channels are clogged / it's as if no  
one has any free hands any more

# Everything I Mean Everything

*A Collection of Poems from 2010*

Richard P. Gabriel

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## I Could Not Clap

this year more of the past will make it onto the page  
I'll explore the long form and see what Lux meant  
when he said "you write a fine prose sentence"  
it's time to start winding it down  
I never meant to make it this far  
any time will be when I go away

## In The Hut Leaving the Ukraine in 1910

behind the hut under a rough wood roof  
he found a stack of split and dried firewood  
behind the stove in a can  
some wood matches  
by the stacked wood he found a small hatchet  
he used it to chop small bits of kindling  
and before it became too dull  
he used the hatchet like a knife  
to peel off some small curls of wood shavings  
he carefully built a small teepee  
from a couple of the matches  
placed the curled shavings on top of that  
then built a larger teepee of the kindling over that  
in the iron stove  
a couple of the matches were long enough  
to reach the flame into the structure  
with luck  
the favor of God  
some well-timed breaths and the dampers set right  
he had soon enough a good fire going  
after he had warmed up he started to unroll his bundle  
and the wrapped sandwiches fell out  
the food and fire settled him  
he was tired  
but even still he couldn't sleep well  
it was a long cold night

## Walk Across Country

in the darkness the country looked the same everywhere  
certainly there were different fields around them  
stands of woods and windbreaks  
and probably farms and houses off toward the horizon  
but they could see only the ruts, the road, and the snow  
banked up beside it / sometimes they would see trees  
like skeletons off to the side  
or bushes hanging onto just a few leaves  
and though he was certain the land was flat  
it felt and looked like they were climbing a long low hill  
falling snow made the night seem hushed  
after another hour they saw a light up ahead

## Heartless

making the long journey  
is nothing more than the steps in front of you  
for a while

even the sick man can cross the earth  
if he can step  
then step

sitting here her journey seems short  
years of heavy heavy work  
wasted years

wherever you are  
the reward can't seem the equal  
to the pain

## Near a Green Bridge

surfacing the fish force  
their mouths into the air  
hoping for food not death

the river you'd think  
would supply its own rippling surface  
but it's depending on the fish

today a storm will drop by  
cause the biggest disturbance  
in summers' history

but right now the fish  
are at the surface hugging it kissing it  
later they will dive beneath the rocks of the river's bottom

## Pit Incredible

the river's murky  
north Germany in the crux of Winter  
the river's a port  
and soon people eager or anxious will sail away  
to a rest cure for desperation  
not realizing the nature of the fire



## Smile and Laugh

one day you must get off the road  
admit everything you've tried has been a failure  
you cannot provide value to anyone  
all you are is big entertainment

## Two Lemmas

noticing is gaining more attention  
hiding is taking a back seat  
loving is getting a cold shoulder  
looking is behind the curtain now  
fun is crestfallen

## Going Pray

I stepped up the stairs  
of the white church branding the scarred  
cornfields near sunset and the sky  
half filled with high light clouds  
froze white blue a cold blue and  
it seemed so very high up so  
far away and I was glad for my coat  
my hat my gloves the heavy boots  
because it was a cold winter late afternoon  
and not many of them are left for me

## Self Unstable

she got up and walked around the bed  
in her panties and all that then pointed  
at me and said liar then grabbed her dress  
and split the room and I heard the door slam  
and then another outside a car door and after  
my shower and a hard drink in a small glass  
I stepped outside into the cold winter air  
and forget everything

## Bitty Ditty

something of value  
in my hands tonight  
one bit of luck  
in an otherwise black night

## When Will It End?

what do we expect  
when wrongs become rights  
when air and water interchange  
so much work to do and for so little credit

## On The Road

Human's do not need to be driving cars.  
When humans are removed from behind the wheel  
only then will we be much safer.  
Automakers are working on the systems to make  
this happen.

I've passed my test not long ago  
been driving for the past Month,  
I can tell there is ignorant driver's out there,  
whom they think they are good Drivers which they are not,  
they should take their test again,  
i don't think they will pass their test, DSA Well Done,  
I was taught to be defensive whilst driving,  
and give way,  
these days Give Way ON THE ROAD  
( Non Existence ) Every One Seems to be in a Hurry,  
The Other day i was giving way to an bus,  
There was this Nutter Horning me behind me,  
i let him past let him go kill him self ...  
Its an War out their on the roads

What the \*\*\*\* are you talking about???  
That doesn't even make sense.

I think the most drivers due to experience they might cause accidents  
hence they assume to know each and everything without care for instance  
driving without driving belt.

## Stuff Sucks

as we move the technology  
trays along the slide bars toward the cashier  
it's clear the meal is wilting  
and soon will be inedible



## The Conference

cool and edgy  
don't lose any money  
don't make them print things out too soon  
make it interesting  
provide cool people to hang with  
provide something to learn  
new  
edgy  
all that

## Real Email I Got August 21, 1995

Last fall I moved to Seattle and have been working on a new business here with a few other folks.

As of July, this business is on the air so I just thought I'd mention it here since I haven't done so yet.

The business is called Amazon.com Books, and it is a bookseller that takes orders entirely on the net, in fact entirely on the world wide web, and also ships worldwide.

I just mention it here in case you want to have a look.

The URL is <http://www.amazon.com>.

## A Visibility

in this light  
on her cheek a tear track  
about to dry up  
visible like a snail's shining  
on the sidewalk just past dawn  
tells the tale  
perfectly  
not too much  
more than too little

## Deleted

she is what she is  
and the factors of her desires  
fall out into 7 separate buckets  
which ar

## Uncivilization

cruel deceitful  
liars racists bigots  
closed minded  
hateful what  
do they deserve  
do you think

## When Losers Win

we go back to rule  
by though desiring cruelty  
who determine deserve  
by money / I await their  
downfall

## The Sadness of the Continual Cycle of Birth then Death

after the road is behind me  
after the sun has past its hottest height  
when all there is to look forward to is all  
that has long past  
then the gait slows / the shoes begin to fall apart  
the trees make a cooler shade  
one that swallows what sits within it  
my feet hurt / my back hurts  
I feel hot / that cool shade  
that welcoming backrest of a fine old oak  
I need them now and forever

## Meadows and Such

small pasture  
what was here before  
a small cabin  
an old dump nearby  
wandering  
just looking and pretending  
the old road from pasture to another  
the old trees now down and gone



## Last Rides

I remember driving into the sun  
heading west out of Bakersfield  
driving straight through from Carefree to Redwood  
the sun just above mountains to the west  
flashing through a rising fog and dust from the fields  
being worked by tractors and workers  
the view crisscrossed by wires and lines  
and passenger jets jetting between SJ and LA  
I remember being tired / getting hungry  
I remember the passage of time  
how I wondered what the hell people do here  
on this road on the flat earth  
with wires and poles directing me toward the light  
go to the light / they all say

## Progress

do you remember the apple tree  
in the corner of the big field  
and behind it the elms and maples  
covered in grape vines  
concord grapes / we'd pick to make juice from  
apples from the apple tree  
pear trees in the orchard  
cherry trees near the coops  
all these supplies and all of it coming  
to an end for no reason but progress  
now I sit here typing  
that's all that's left

## Cafeteria Sock Hop

in the corner of the cafeteria  
as the band from Haverhill plays  
their Fender guitars and Fender Rhodes piano  
through their Fender amps and the drummer  
plays his Ludwig drums / at the door at the corner  
some have gathered and at erratic times  
one at a time they start to leave  
long time between at first  
then more often / the band plays  
their twanging songs and they sing  
tentatively and you think that as the night  
wears on they will smooth out  
but only this: their voices get deeper  
and the songs grow more melancholy  
and those who leave  
not matter when they leave  
never come back

## Falling Outside

in one corner of the cafeteria  
as the band from Haverhill plays  
Fender guitars and Fender Rhodes piano  
Fender amps and Ludwig drums  
at the door in another corner  
some have gathered unexpectedly

at erratic times one leaves // long time between

at first then more often / the band plays  
their twanging songs and they sing  
tentatively / rasping / you think as the night  
wears out they will smooth out  
but only this

their voices fall deeper  
the songs grow more  
melancholy and those who leave  
no matter when they leave  
never come back

## On Passing Thoughts Back and Forth

why gloat at the idea  
you might not fall  
as soon as someone else  
why not sit quietly and recall the life  
sit quietly and listen to the stories  
quietly listen  
tell stories quietly  
to yourself  
never use the shift key  
again never again

## Way Road

if only the touches  
made it under the blankets  
not just out of cold air  
on the bench on  
the out of way road  
to the swampy park

## What Happened

I saw him lying on the bed  
his head at an odd angle  
then his brother in law  
shouted for him to spit it out  
while he inserted the vacuum syringe  
dying and doctor  
while wife and sister sat on the foot of the bed  
knitting his final cap  
to keep from thinking  
what's happening

## In Cramped Room

in the other room he is sipping  
from the stilling stream  
he is slipping into the calmest  
breeze / the last to leave are his quips  
as if we were the ones wanting  
comfort and we the ones about  
to depart



## England / Night / Rain / Clapton

the house is solid stone  
under the light rain  
that will hamper their ride  
to dinner / inside the woman  
brushes her hair / stems the tide  
of age with applications and brush strokes  
the lights flicker and their filaments  
add to the age of the countryside  
and the history that pushes against  
future moves / somewhere  
from another house the light  
touches of electric guitar riffs  
mark us in the presence  
of the history of music

## Away In A Car Away

heavy breathing  
quick but shallow  
his head tipped one way  
for days / then the stops  
the breathing stops  
like line breaks making meaning  
clutter into itself  
shallower / softer  
the breaks longer

he was the gentle  
man / I not

the break now  
goes on / the shallow  
cannot grow

## Absolute

overthrow despite their size =

46911118740600197471125938193942854308578999720621435843478595110140830271526

stewardship is known as

a steep edge on one

line station letters used are as follows

weather was an ocean swell

becomes the salinity levels

shows multipolarization modes and follows

thunder. or becoming driven

a large piece of freshwater

tolerates trapped iceberg pop

friends below (used by

him/her) are derived from the remote sensors

characterisations shows no system in place before

they called reflections to track

## Upon A Leaving Time

well there he goes  
she said as the suv carrying  
his body away drove up the driveway  
my daughter looked at her  
these were her first tears at death  
and the words she heard  
chilled her / but many  
things are funny  
life for example

## Acquainted

rain / funny sounds from the car  
in a b&b on the coast  
and trying to calm the trip  
think of what to write  
the manure spreader beckons

## What?

the weird sound  
like chirping  
from my car driving to Pt Reyes  
was frogs  
in February

## I Walked Slowly

a row of ravens  
on power lines  
mile after mile  
above the bay  
vultures drying out  
their wings  
ducks in long rows  
above the oyster beds  
I couldn't think of good things to say  
but I remembered to talk fast

## Alone in the Rain

the upswept trees  
where offshore wind  
pushes them inland  
the downpour just sounded  
a pathetic refrain on the roof  
as I slept I thought  
in the morning  
nothing was solid



## Among the Chosen

in the jury assembly room  
people no one would wish  
judge them sit and wait  
subdued by boredom  
and not a little anger

## First Answer

in the cold night  
in the cafeteria  
one time she said yes  
we stepped to the side  
and danced / my hands  
on the top of her hips  
I felt then what the point  
was of living

## On the Eve

when it's over  
throw me away  
even before it ends  
then forget me  
soon  
you will be happier  
read what I've written  
instead of the emotions

## Google Says So

sign in to like this photo  
said the corporation  
to the viewer of content

## Complaints a Many

day of talking  
everything filling up  
so tired  
so unhinged  
how and when  
can I stop

## Try This Instead of Love

Is 21 years of age or older  
Loves to go shopping  
Is fair and objective  
Is ON TIME  
Is very observant and able to focus on details  
Is fairly intelligent  
Has patience  
Is detail oriented  
Is practical  
Types well  
Is trustworthy  
Explains well in writing  
Is discreet  
Loves to learn  
Handles deadlines  
Has full internet access (at home or at work)

## Romance In The Closeups

if you watched closely  
just focused on his hand  
his fingers just reaching for hers  
as they walked through the valley  
of neon and blasting music  
you'd see under her dress  
her leg moving as she walks  
as they walk and the delicacy of their finger movements  
is a heavy contrast to her moving legs  
carrying a body of substance  
against the pull of the earth  
the pull of her life

## So Long, Sucker

they say the rich are happy again  
buying art like crazy  
paying enough for a piece  
to have made that artist's life a comfort  
instead they enrich all the rich along the chain of ownership  
minus one / the one  
who made it  
the artist though will live forever  
and the rich will die  
just die



## Slipknot

slipping away  
lovers till the end  
words to reckon a life with  
trees keep swaying in breezes  
hands slips into hands  
those who walk walk heavily toward a bright sun  
behind the trees / we find small paths  
and move along them with buttery intentions  
is there water beyond all this  
so we may all drink

## Passive and More Passive

all pluses  
all fullnesses  
we are alone in the positives  
I can't shake the slowness  
that has overtaken me  
like in a woods where the sunset  
paints an orange light  
so unlike the sun  
we woke to

## Descending Twice

no one knows it better  
than those left behind  
that every minute you turn away  
is a minute you cry when you're alone

## Us and It

clouds low / getting lower  
as the temperature gets ready  
for snow after a week of simple cold  
moisture coming in from the coast  
off the ocean filled with false memories  
as if something that isn't one of us  
could tell us about us

## On This Day

they will stand  
one by one  
some will tell tales  
others will weep if they do anything  
the music will be beautiful  
but when it about to end for him  
him for whom they all will gather  
she faced away  
from her fears and sometimes  
away from him and now  
I'm sure she'll cry over this  
when everyone is gone  
when the house grows large

## UnKharmic

where will I be today  
far away in theory  
I'll have no words  
because fatigue  
perhaps an oversnooze  
I hate to travel  
but I love to be places

## Yearning Till the Cows Come Home

here the samples  
are tight skirts  
over dark high stockings  
layers of blues and purples  
then living browns and tans  
the contrasts of hair and skin  
are increased / the labor of tall  
boots seizes the heart and force  
it up into the throat then into the acid rising  
to the mouth and then out in words that either cry  
the lament of yearning and desire of the little cuts of tears  
and sadness / the claims to beauty than the most hopelessly  
scientific artists can bear to utter

## As Tinder

after the stinging iced drizzle  
after the walk from one poured concrete  
building to another we're in the student bar  
drinking a sharp tasting beer with the Caribbean  
music beating up our ears and then  
the pixie with her curled mouth steps up  
to the bar and orders 6 shanks  
of french bread and 6 bottles of Palm beer  
and with her grey skirt over black 'tards  
she turns and walks to the beat  
to her boy with her bread then her beers  
and I'm left with ny feet on the rests of ny bar stool  
and 40 years behind me urging my luck  
to stay dry



## Ask and Receive Quick

geek glasses but  
a sleek smile and polished makeup  
a laughing interaction with a yummy  
guy over a cheap but authentic  
italian dinner complete with wood fire  
all I wanted to do was walk to her table  
take her face in my hands shaped in prayer  
and ask her her  
advice on fast open DNS servers

## In the Spur of Rain

she steps beside the puddles  
her layers under her coat  
defining her flare  
behind her  
the eyes of old remembrances  
can look only  
down

## On a Boggy Day

the birds  
these birds  
fly hopping above puddles  
then into brush and  
nearby the likes  
of a perfect day  
goes on in other  
bushes

## In T' Spinnkopke and the Albanian

in the dark  
of the restaurant  
she flings her hair  
toward one lover then the other  
and the path between them  
grows rougher  
thicker  
as the night lingers  
then pops off

## Memories Still To Come

in the long heart  
of the night  
while rain paints  
streets with houses  
the dark street now black  
and shiny against the heels  
of boots aiming for home  
or lovers in warm flats  
draws the lines anyone  
must obey / where will  
she sleep after her layered tops  
and clinging pants are off  
and piled on yours on the flat floor  
and everything that seemed slow  
now adopts a greased pace

## Everyone Forgets

some of the plans  
need to be unmade  
some of them need  
just adjustments  
but most of all  
someone needs  
to sing while we execute them  
but not like killing

## People Forget

some of the plans  
need to be unmade  
some of them need  
just adjustments  
but most of all  
someone needs  
to sing while we execute them  
but not like killing

## Blown Off Course

I admire the flamingo  
walking across the ice  
legs all a-backwards  
on a mission of discovery



## Simple Tasks

I started the process three times  
it stopped short of true completion three times  
other information is not worth mentioning

## Clearing Mid Afternoon

becoming trapped  
by a strong light pumping into a small clearing  
fresh snow cooling and warming  
at the same time  
a sort of infeasible paradox  
here by a rock  
sitting on a rock  
I've lit a fire even though  
my house is only a half mile off  
because the warmth of a small  
fire in a small clearing lit by a shaft  
of post-snowfall sunlight is the warmest warmth  
in the world not rivalled by a hot fireplace  
a hot stove / a hot furnace pumping  
out tens of thousands of btus  
my warm cap too

## Truth or Simple

of all the pretty songs  
the prettiest is the one  
playing when your  
eyes close

## Orchards Teach Us of Life

in the small orchard  
toward the end of summer  
the pears on the ground  
are filled with bees  
the air's sweet  
the light is getting down  
into the beauty zone  
the pears are too soft  
for me to eat but others  
love them / the blueberries  
are gone and all the other  
vegetables in the garden except  
potatoes and carrots  
and pumpkins too  
I'm reminded it's getting  
to be dying time

## The Urn

viewed from afar  
it's a metal vase on a Steinway  
in a large living room  
weeks after a damn shame  
viewed from the couch  
it's what's left and it's  
not much / not enough  
it's everything

## Apostrophe Over Duress

atmospheric leftovers  
a cautious glance at the tarts  
here cream is unfiltered  
unrepentent  
the waiter brings a tray  
coffee / little spoon / 2 cubes  
then the tart  
strawberry over a rough cheesecake  
outside / the rain  
women skirting puddles  
european layers  
as if the meaning were caught and in the carrybag  
instead / I snap a shot  
of the orange artifacts  
glance at the dark hair  
at the spoon stirring  
then on to the lambdas and their  
functioning parts

## Not Too Good

no such nobody  
singing in here  
people downloading  
music / can you  
believe it

## M. Metaphors

alone in my bed  
the shafts of light  
don't make it to my eyes  
so wakefulness can't thaw



## Father of Deserve

they are brownshirts  
the haters of fairness  
who believe luck is the rightful  
father of deserve  
I find them undeserving  
unrespectable  
the door is behind you

## Then

you enter active dying  
you think back to cool summer nights  
lying in bed with a small breeze blowing in  
you remember believing it impossible  
for a day like this to happen  
then you are back in that room  
that night  
you are standing next to that bed  
and that boy  
you start to tell him how real  
the breeze is  
then

## Sitting

vigil  
sitting by a hospital style bed  
sitting vigil  
reading stories aloud  
poems  
reciting names of relatives / friends  
telling private stories  
holding a hand  
serving shards of ice  
another dose  
vigil / such a calm word  
for the most violent moment  
of anyone's life

## Genius As They Say

little Mozart  
his dad made him practice  
all day with methods  
he'd devised for W's sis  
one of his gifts  
was to incorporate the styles  
and character of other composer's work  
yes a gift

## In a Dark Office

the tentative kiss  
the pause  
a more eager one  
the retreat  
then a return  
but the lights are out  
everyone has left

## Hard to See

lying on the couch  
using a tiny hole  
between my pressed together fingers  
to create a lens  
I watched tv when I was 15  
thumb middle pointer  
it still works  
and I remember  
how fuzzy was  
the color tv  
not worth the effort for  
the quality of the picture  
just for the story

## Afflicted Border

the border consumes them  
down the middle of town  
down the middle of the street  
north-south the street goes  
step across to NM  
step back to TX  
over in NM  
a farmer is plowing rows  
making a circle field  
for the round and round watering machine  
to water with finesse aplomb and accuracy  
he's on the shorter each pass part  
me too

## Again No

in the end  
no progress made  
no worth displayed  
dismay



## Sentimental and Such

in west Texas  
where the border is vertical  
the fields are big circles  
to make watering easy  
north of town is dry quiet cemetery  
pathways and benches  
and a headstone long ready  
someone I know is planning  
to bury his father  
this is how it is every day  
all around the world

## Short Timing It

the party has flung  
I'm filled with dread  
at the work ahead  
needing to be done by  
the end of the week  
then what

## Irregular Contributor

each leaf lets go  
in the breeze it flutters  
as it falls  
each one on the ground  
never to flutter high in the air again  
but the ground  
what a tapestry all the leaves paint  
each one an irregular contributor

## Staring In

thin maples on hillocks  
a swamplike mess between them  
bushes growing up in the wet bottoms  
in winter it's a thin screen  
hiding nothing  
until deep into it  
in summer it's a thick lace  
a thick web  
a wall of green  
and I can be standing only  
4 feet from you in the meadow  
watching you  
watching you stare into the woods  
and never see me  
not even just my eyes

## Purdy

every day  
I feel some of me leaving  
hurry to describe  
hurry to remember  
write fast  
and pretty

## Well Being Unleashed

would you find the lovely times  
abiding the hidden flavors  
let's find the encryption  
and break it with our trusted  
hard nut crackers

## Flying Low

I wish the writing were better  
that the thoughts were better  
my vigor was better  
that I was worthy of what people think of my name  
my endurance was up to it  
that ardor was part of my game  
guess not

## False-i-ness

floor littered in peanut shells  
the servings still decent but shrunk  
the menu cut in half  
the salad dry and its dressing hamstrung  
the women 1 year older and tired  
from not working hard  
away from home again  
my head is aching and my heart is aching  
and I've decided this is the trip  
of the big story



## Calm Song

down from a great height  
looking back  
remembering the cool wind  
spinning from point to point  
sun on the far side and dipping low  
against the purpling distant rise  
I notice the cooling  
the darkness rising  
into my descent  
it's a moment she  
on her bed of birthing  
could never conceive

## Singled Out

in this light her eyes  
single out everyone and separate  
background from threat  
she is lying in wait  
she sparks then ignites  
all flesh in her way evaporates  
she makes her way like this  
she makes herself

## Sailing in Straw

walking the wide field  
sun applied to trees  
which crisscross it  
my dreaming was a lazy dreaming  
I pretend the gamut in my mind  
but none prepares me for the women  
who've wandered in and out  
the colors their eyes turned  
if I only I were able to go back  
and tell that boy to look out for the one  
with pale grey eyes who never looked down  
watch out

## Jerk at Large

the rude outburst  
the angry rejoinder  
how the day turned on it's head  
as the clouds and cold gathered

## Benson Arizona

she's standing behind the counter  
her waitress clothes black with white  
she's holding a wipecloth  
looking at the man or boy  
walking toward her but looking  
at the family passing out tortillas  
and she's smiling the way women  
can smile an almost smile  
and she's wiping her hands on the towel  
he's got his red and white wool cap  
baggy pants / rubber boots  
his skin red paste  
small but dark black moustache  
I wondered while blowing on hot cheese  
whether this is Benson love

## Long Day on the Road

a man  
a burro  
a dog  
an audience  
a sunny street  
some history  
a gay short order cook  
Tombstone

## Clifton Arizona

the swift stream might one  
day overflow and so  
the town has built a kingkong wall  
that closes watertight  
across the road and across  
the railway with ladders on the other side  
like in the movie  
so villagers can see just  
how safe they are

## Burning For You

simply what she wanted  
filled the space between them  
with a furnace she wished to burn in  
and he wished would warm them  
for one / two / even four days  
and nights and  
then be out of fuel



## For a Little

all of them in my dreams  
so happy I've noticed  
shy in the max  
all the paths are proving  
to brew storms  
is there something quiet ahead

## Legacy Ideal

my name is richard gabriel  
if you're reading this  
I'm likely long gone  
some would call it a memoir  
but there isn't much to remember  
this is a story about me trying to find out  
trying to figure out / to come to an understanding  
enough to calm the anxiety that fuels guessing  
I came to be thought of as an accomplished  
writer and computer scientist  
someone wrote on the web  
programmers and writers need to fall in love with language  
learn to think logically  
and come to terms with classical rhetoric  
dick gabriel is a master of all three  
judge yourselves  
I find it not true

## Daughter's Birthday

today is a day I should remember  
I remember its broad outline  
a significant detail

## Chicks Dig Poetry

if she could read her poems aloud  
no!  
write them loudly  
with heavy scritchies  
with light scratches  
then a wah-wah  
a drum beat  
like maybe the big clock ticking  
down down down  
you would know  
no?  
what music means to a room  
filled with air mixed with breaths

## Birthday Dinner Tonight / 23

tonight she seemed  
different / older  
confident / cognizant  
like finally  
a woman

## Special

sometimes something  
happens  
that deserves to be forgotten  
but one day an artist discovers  
its memory and makes it

## **Diametric**

the dream she has  
is the dream I have  
but it's not the same

## For and Against

the will to live  
what does it count for  
how many blows  
does it take  
to pulverize it



## Bugs More

something special  
is nothing special  
tonight

## Love in Line

belt in hand  
standing in line  
ready to pay and then  
I turned and  
she was there  
I knew the coming arc  
then company of the last breath

## +25 Years

at the reunion the couples broke  
apart and reformed / a reformulation  
of the basic laws of physical attraction  
as the quarterback and head cheerleader  
showed everyone how it's done when  
everything is large and half the things are slow

## How Which Way

house of joy  
glum and somber  
children playing and tittling  
days in black & white  
gay glad slow insufficient  
think and decide  
look the land and decide  
search the stories  
decide

## Shattered Until

stumbled across a fact  
another friend lost  
something of me that makes no sense  
I can't sense what it is  
I am lost in regret  
it's regret all the way down now

## When Civilizations Clash

the streets  
we walked along them  
it was cold and getting dark early  
we stopped and had a hot drink  
in a dark café  
you were happy  
when we returned to our warm bed  
we stayed there many many hours  
this is how  
this unexpected congruence  
is how we can tell we're alive

## I Am The Song

long nights squeezing out art  
making every detail perfect  
worrying about the far away city  
and how it would present itself  
was it after all all there would be  
the last push for perfection  
and all the rest pure cleanup  
and self indulgence  
the sad song knows

## Every Home

I will still continue to blame every home  
one sure thing is waking up in a dream world when feelings overflow  
and not allow someone to wait for the next train coming  
weakness is almost unbelievable

if they get away kidnapping every home  
it's the sound of trees swaying in the wind  
like so small you can not believe even the end of the journey  
because it is unreliable

I know what to look for  
a home to return to and walk along this road  
to talk a little something there  
to go take rain flowers  
severe views of how much you swallowed by shadows at night  
why their wish is without every home  
protect yourself for sure  
I'll sleep next to someone who has been in force  
only to be gently goin' on  
every home



## Faithfulness

learning is hard  
too many nerve paths too worn in  
plus things go wrong as always  
now to plan

## Cover Story

sliding under the covers  
meeting the body  
the tingling warmth  
for fun / for real  
what began as the sun set  
ended when the sun set  
again and again

## Memorial on DVD

to hear the memorial  
for the man that came before  
you and after you  
in the life of a woman once loved  
to hear the hole that you made  
that you were

## New Face Very Handsome

the patient received a new beard  
from a donor as part of his new face  
at some points it felt like we had taken a weekend holiday  
everyone was so excited  
three days after the operation  
the doctors had to tackle the unusual problem  
of the patient's growing beard.  
we have had to shave him every three or four days  
we do not use a Gillette razor in case of infection  
so he has a little stubble  
he looks very handsome

## Cavalier

afraid of the meanings  
of the small pains and loss  
of feeling / one could say  
the fill-ins are falling out  
the lingering waking up

# Harper

again I face the enemy  
of common sense  
and I am about to lose for the third time

## All Leak a Joyful JJ

rainbow-like shockwaves  
belching from the crater  
like snakes from a can of nuts

## Plenty and Favors

she has something like beauty  
in store for someone  
undeserving



## Inevitable

she came / sat by me at my table  
with her drink / she threw her hair back  
her very soft bed / down  
her warm skin in the hot windowed sunlight  
later in the week the slowest kiss

## Untrustworthy Parts

in she came  
in through the door and she came  
up to my belly but she was old  
nearly as old as me  
and she started shrugging  
off her coat / her blouse  
from that room I could see  
the bed and the bathroom beyond  
though I wanted to hold her  
nothing I had was able to

## A Deep Hole Nearby

after the meal is done  
and bed awaits  
the intolerable happens  
the fragile happiness of ordinary people

## North Light

outside the window the sky's  
a smudge smeared by the sun's  
just rising / red rows of strict houses  
line the streets off in the distance  
seen from floor 9  
inside / in bed she is asleep  
facing away / breathing like nonsense  
this is the morning of our first night before  
the cause of many sweats  
several negations  
she planned something elaborate  
instead it was an every night thing  
every morning's a smudge  
a smear

## Possessed

sadness is  
the heart's sludge

## Doubtful

lower  
sunk lower  
recover?

# Telling

three mercury tubes  
on a field of milk glass

## Lost

soon a meaning  
declines below  
a horizon



## Bang

to be pulled  
from deep under earth  
how cruel for the stone  
to be filled with wonder  
only to be thrust below  
once more once the waters recede

## Brussels Rainstorm

why hotels  
why the cities  
why the postures along the covered malls  
in the cafés the old ladies drink their chocolated drinks  
on rainy days while men head steadfastly  
toward their work  
and women too  
streets blued and black from wet  
the woman who waits for me wears  
her jealous black coat and carries a folded umbrella  
she seeks warmth  
the wet

## Lights and Hood Flags

the church is nestled  
in a field of headstones  
fog enlightens the foreground  
all else behind is abstracted  
I'm sitting on a bench  
just barely able to see the church  
the stone wall is right in front of me  
across the way I see halos of headlights  
a line of cars coming  
slowly toward me

## In Glum Time

down a sand track  
off a secondary road  
pretty far from a highway  
in a hot deserty place  
in early spring  
a coyote has died  
and is being pulled apart  
by ants and birds  
who will transport his mischief  
by passings on and redistributions  
to the populations of passing nations

## Sleep Baby

too much  
last minute  
bugs too

## Near Dark

the cemetery takes on its nighttime quiet  
all the souls waiting for friends  
for relations head back in for the night  
even Huldah E. Oikle  
whom no one has ever visited

## Wind Shipping

irises finally  
still alive after a winter  
soil still loose and ready to accept  
wind able still to flash the river's diamonds  
warmth though reclining under shade  
waiting for a better story  
to tell

## Time Works

yes it's wet and falling apart quick  
falling down / making a case for forgetting  
everything's moved out  
awaiting the wrecking ball  
the little that's left  
grows littler



## The Story I Told

the woman with the scar  
puts money on her table and mine  
says come  
with me and walks out to undulating streets  
and eeee auhhh sirens 2 over  
and that's the last she says for 2 weeks  
while I slept in her  
bed  
in her flat

## No Evaluation

fairly minor  
less fondly about it  
not making it  
copy semantics  
bring 'em in  
are you there  
what do you think  
low priority accept pile  
not perfect  
good technical / solid technical content  
that's my evaluation

## Exposed

the few are believers  
the rest laugh  
all the work done not worth a thing  
the cost is life

## Just Saying

chocolate Siobhán  
just the thought  
or was it chiffon

## Irish Undertaking

let's make it clear  
the supple way the throat responds  
that the soothing notes of a sung goodbye  
fill the room with the sound of meadows

## Against It

I know you're sick  
of the whining  
I'm sick of whining  
this is the effect  
of too much

## Odd Light

old truck sitting under southwestern sun  
just a chassis and hard rubber tires  
a steering stalk and 4 bent fenders  
a contraption made crudely that worked crudely  
we make better / things shine  
we are remade and nothing better

## This Poem

in the corner of the room  
a woman sits  
she has been reading but the night has taken her  
she sits by a window looking down over a busy street  
busy in the day but now night has taken it  
quiet and unalert / humming from unfathomable satisfaction  
the day was cloudy / sometimes it rained  
rained hard and all the dust and wrappers  
all the cups and trash were washed down into the gutters  
and drains but now the wind is calm / the clouds  
have scuttled away / the night has taken the rage away  
a woman sits  
she has been looking down over a quiet street  
just one lover and another holding themselves upright  
and walking toward home  
but now the night has taken the night away  
and she is reading



## Repeatable

I noticed a big headstone  
new since last fall  
maybe a ton of granite  
but white / light / shiny but not smooth  
near the big mausoleum  
standing watch over the whole cemetery  
near where I'm standing  
looking at parents / grandparents  
behind me the spot I was born  
ahead of me  
yes / ahead of me

## On the Ending of Lost

river running down to the sea  
I'm resting on its bank  
head on a stone  
lying on my side  
sleep attacks  
river running up from the sea  
I'm worrying on its bank

## When It Seems Over

the simple piano melody  
the violin going off / away  
then back / behind are more strings  
whispering chords  
with the story over  
what's to look forward to  
mysteries and ambiguity  
are all there are

**(no subject)**

be the next of kin  
earn your bs ms or phd in psychology  
free trial for 15 days  
we give you free samples  
I await your response

## Sugared

something passed  
I felt its wake  
now the calm

## Sleigh Ride Through the Carpathians

sled coming up the road  
a haysled filled up halfway  
bales in the front  
a man looked down from the driver's seat  
and nodded / I caught the pole holding the tailgate shut  
swung up onto the hay  
and after a minute mostly under it  
on my way to America

## Real vs Dream

imagine the dream  
imagine its clouds and flying  
imagine the puzzle and problem  
imagine the water rising  
the flame at your heels  
the lightning striking  
imagine the task you do  
over and over and over over over over  
now imagine today  
or yesterday or any day  
but don't go so far back  
your memory is again a dream  
which is which?  
the one that sucks  
is your life  
the real one

## Wasps

in the upstairs bedroom  
the windows are open  
a big fan in the next room  
pushes out air which draws  
air in here

the room is hot  
dripping  
I am still stunned  
by the idea of life

the air coming in is cool  
cut grass vapor comes in  
so domestic and groomed

a buzz thrills the screen  
a wasp outside  
even at night  
now I must check  
the pillows / the blankets  
wasps sometimes lie there  
and sting

so stunned  
I'm inclined to lie  
wait for an answer  
to come my way



## Lost

a place with no now  
a time with no place  
something with nothing  
nothing at all

## Galaxies

tonight a wind takes over  
leaves blow off and are trapped in fences  
the window is beaten by branches and rain  
birds in trees face into the wind to shuck it  
their eyes are closed and their feet locked  
inside under warm blankets we huddle  
as far away as you can get the land is ice shards  
and thick layers of strange metals

## **Nuts**

the nuts are out  
fresh on this year's trees  
so much like last year's nuts  
so hard to crack  
but cracked nevertheless

## Caressing

the invisible hand  
caresses the head  
we lie face down and weep  
these are packets from lovers  
and mothers  
the circle from years ago  
is small and is immediately surrounded  
by dark

# Adobe Sucks

anniversary  
ruined by software  
foo on Adobe

## Not Too Far from Holcomb

on the plane  
she looks at the ground  
the ground seems to move beneath  
and some of the designs for planting  
strike her as whimsical  
there are many colors  
straight and curved edges  
some things all the same  
others natural  
she's downcast / somber and unwelcoming  
perhaps her someone is out there  
or down there

## Write I

no one is as factual as the best stories  
they tell themselves stealing your words  
right from the tips your teachers slip you  
the night before you graduate  
and become the greatest writer  
stories have ever known

## Blue Themed Restaurant

eating peanuts whole  
no shells on the floor  
no dust on the table  
the guys are eyeing the lobsters  
whose antennae are wavering  
in a tank of cold water  
the hostess is dressed in shorts and T shirt  
her hair is the color of Polynesia  
as her patrons situate  
she stares at the heavy rain outside  
her eyes wavering



## Up and Down

too many birds  
on a branch  
they snap off  
the branch bounces  
the light shines  
down

## Deadly Fumble

right here the grass  
is cut short and odors the air  
showers tinge it all with every sense's  
idea of green / heavy clouds  
dark clouds and heavy storms  
piles of white snow might seem cold  
but these all are the threads  
of poetry and all the best to you

## **Always Always**

something is broken  
a piece of equipment  
as down and out as a heart  
burned up

## **As Much as It Can Do**

the river knows  
its wisdom is simple  
it simple flows

## I Slept Away My Life

one by one I abandon  
dreams that once compelled me  
I once dreamt to be the youngest  
novelist and last year at age 60  
I finally wrote my first  
my dreams were squashed by laziness  
in this my mother was right  
I got what I deserved  
a long rest on the couch  
and no achievements but bitterness

## Bad House

one day I'll stand in a room  
in a house far off any well worn roads  
and stare at a wall made of black walnut  
veneer and the carpet will be old and cranberry red  
the kitchen will be out of date compared to  
out of date and I'll hear her say we'll take it  
and this will be the last place for me  
and after me who knows what of her  
but that was our deal

## Snippets of Farmage

the heat has been blended  
with grass and hay  
smells rising up into the air  
the hay tomorrow  
will be in windrows  
then later silage in the barn  
the barn's beams are older  
than anything

## Pump Snippet

we had a pump on a small rise  
next to the place a part of the barn used to be  
a handpump that took a prime  
and would spill the water down a wooden race  
into an old iron bathtub covered in porcelain  
chipped and rusted where the cows could get to it  
water from the pump was cold and tasted of metal  
or heavy minerals / it was the tastiest water  
in the world / it was the coldest unfrozen water  
in the world / it was the water I drank after long rides  
just imagine / back from a long bike ride drinking from a metal  
cup hung by the pump and through the orchard  
seeing your house down the road and across it  
this is what rooted to a place means



## Bar and Cycle Mower

the mower used a bar  
with triangular teeth  
sharpened on two sides  
and attached with bolts on the third  
hooked up to a train-like piston  
it jaunted back and forth cutting  
everything in its path  
we pulled it with an old jitney  
it was called that was an old truck  
with two transmissions  
it even cut snakes in half

## Snippets of Farm Smell

under the barn  
is a stall for equipment  
and a deep pool for pee  
above it flows down a slope  
into a wooden drain  
just a sloped spillway with a smoothed over  
dam running behind the cows  
holes spaced out  
the pee peefalls down  
it smells really bad down there  
even open to the air as it is  
this is a barn

## **Snippets of Milk Shack**

the milk house is just a shack  
its walls inside are whitewashed  
a pump pulls water from the ground  
fills an iron tub with a lid  
milk jugs sit in the water cooling the milk  
the floor's cement

## As If On the Same Street, Different Sides, Different Directions

the streets have been wept on and lie checkered by streetlights  
behind me she walks confidently through the door leading to my flat  
as she walks she doubts the decision and keeps an eye open for strangers  
in my flat she folds off her coat and scarf and turns away so I can watch her  
she's chosen a skirt that used to fit but she senses a sensuality in it  
the scarf has left her hair creased and flat / it hangs to one shoulder  
she watches out the window at the shiny black street  
I watch out the window at the shiny black street  
she asks can I use your toilet and her foreign question tingles  
(in it she locks the door and tinkles / she removes everything and leans on the sill)  
in my bedroom I work quickly to delete every drop of longing  
the knob turns / footsteps light but quick / urge and relief

## Curtains For Me

the knob turns  
I hear it down the hall  
what she expects is scented in the air  
in front of me the big red panic button  
unpushed for weeks  
is under the curtains that frame my  
perfect they say  
view of the Seine  
flowing under bateau oil slicks  
snaking lights into my eyes  
door creak  
her shoes are off  
everything seemed natural  
what is that panic button  
hooked up to?

## **Reject the Work, Reject Me**

with so many  
telling me no  
now I start  
to tell it to myself

## The Purpose of Food

you are in every cell in my body  
what happened?  
what do I do now?  
any suggestions?  
what was your purpose?  
why did you want it / me?  
I've found an Ukrainian restaurant that I'm thinking of trying  
I miss your hands touching my face.

## Nothing At All

still wrapped up  
more reason for despair  
more arguments  
more rejections  
too tired to really write



## One Day

I'm sitting in the den  
on a sofa facing the window  
that looks over the yard  
and across the street to the fields  
then to the west  
in another room I hear her humming  
a song from far away  
a melody that romps ahead of itself  
it fades and returns depending on her tasks  
something will make a difference

## Never Were

they will carry her away  
they will stumble with her weight  
she will seem too old to be a woman  
they can't imagine her a girl  
running with dandelions in each fist  
nervous ripples for a few years  
maybe some sentences that don't matter  
then as if she never were  
they call this part life

## Moved

I wrote her letters  
with no return address  
she never looked my way  
she's dead as they come

## Night // Love

they hide  
they rest  
they cram between rocks  
they scatter and float motionless  
in crevices  
under logs  
in vegetation  
even so inhuman  
it's possible to love them

## Goodbye-Ku

things I've said and written  
touch me vulnerability  
feel loneliness  
precise search for the untouchable  
humor words

## Warm Summer Day

watching the fish  
chew algae off rocks  
I am ready  
to sleep myself

## Muddy Road

the sullen ride  
the mud and sand  
a swampy patch that grandfather patched over with logs and a cement pipe  
it's the way they took him  
to the hospital  
and from how it hurt he knew  
never again

## Rose at 2

he had more than a Lisp-term relationship, almost intimate  
their offspring and the total is—lambda papers;)

here the diagnosis on the person:

either the Rev from the nekudyshny, mind you  
or Down Syndrome.

well, in general, yes—if we had six limbs,  
we would hardly rose at 2, as well-handled was not enough,

here we go. A quoted—just your words,

you're just too lazy to make conclusions

I obviously need a power amplifier of thinking



## Fair Fight

the writers all have talent  
I'll put my sadness up against them

## Eating Out: One's Heart

sharp burn on the finger  
a reminder of failure  
the scene wasn't long enough  
to account for ordering bagel sandwiches  
from the busiest deli in town at noon

## The Meaning of More

around me fireworks  
push into the night  
into the sky  
explosions / screaming / big pops  
the city has no fireworks this year  
this means the city  
has more fireworks this year than ever

## Belovéd TV

before I end  
though  
there's one last scene I know you want to read  
like the end of a belovéd tv series or long novel  
you want an emotional close  
you want to see all the characters you love in a chapel holding each other  
smiling  
kissing each other  
not that far  
though  
not that dramatic  
here's the secret to this  
the story you remember is the one that gets the closest to sentimentality  
but still goes unnoticed by the critics.

## Imagine Writing This; Imagine It's About You

wherever you are and whatever you are feeling.....I  
AM SORRY FOR SAYING THOSE BAD THINGS  
ABOUT YOU AND TELLING  
YOU YOUR WORTHLESS AND TO GO DIE, ...  
WILL YOU EVER FORGIVE  
ME FOR SAYING THOSE THINGS.....?  
I HOPE SO, I REALLY DO:o)  
you are the first real person who understands me and listens  
to me, I thank-you for that :O) I hope you come around  
and give me a second chance at being your friend and maybe more  
possibly ? ... give me that second chance if you want too

## Or This

... I didn't mean to dump you ok, ...

3xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

... I am still here and YES, my feelings are the same for  
you, ...

R, ... I haven't dumped you, ok :)

3xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, YES, I did all of that too you,

...

... he has never laid a hand on me ...

... you don't, DON'T need to end your life, ...

... he's just very affectionate and friendly like that and  
also as a friend when your day is going bad and you NEED  
someone to talk to, he's your man, you know, he's the reason  
why I haven't killed myself yet

## Storying It Up

don't let him be just one story  
don't let them all be just one story  
if the stories are not accessible  
make them  
then make more

## Where Did It Go?

summer passing quickly  
only 1 trip to the river  
the careful planning doesn't  
match hoping



## Berlin Long Time Ago

the street they were on was wide wide enough  
not only for wagons and carts pulled by horses to pass  
through but also for horse-pulled streetcars  
filled with people / men and women crossed  
in front of any moving contraption  
that happened down the street perhaps  
because they saw something on the other side  
that drew them or just as likely  
that what was on the side they were  
on displeased them

## Results

keeping it all straight  
requires lots of links and notes  
in your head or in a computer  
the result is a smooth result

## Afraid of Dying

I became exhausted today  
on my ride  
and called for help  
the first time ever  
it was only a little worse  
than when I start to ride  
after a long lapse  
but I went up the hill  
the steep way  
I ate only lightly before  
it was in the middle of the day  
and I went a little too far

## Left Ahead

there is no way home  
story only is left  
make it  
make it  
make it

## Rest In Peace Awhile

in an unbelievably  
hermetically sealed  
spherical inalienable  
maze of light and sound  
seeing imagery expand  
in every direction

## Loud Loud CC

the being beat  
the terse emotions  
how time needs a companion  
where the cloud could  
meet the leaves  
yes roads mean where they lay  
flying off the ramp onto a bridge  
then landing all four wheels on the other side  
time to go

## As I Had

something is not making the heart feel smooth tonight  
I watched the sun like a hole in red paint  
stick up the day and put it in its bootsack  
I saw it all go porcelain reminding me  
of old windows / I put my bare toes  
in a cool stream until the finger fish  
started nibbling the dry skin  
still / I felt alone / the sky had purpled  
then it clouded / it felt like winter  
had backed up into itself

## No Time

if you are reading this  
way in the future when  
2010 seems like a long time ago  
the way 1910 seems like a long time ago to me  
I want to tell you that my age  
is filled with evil idiots  
who believe for example  
that no consideration or sympathy is due  
to those who fall into misfortune  
aside from what churches and jails  
can provide / someone should help  
these souls / I think God has other priorities



## Kalyna Truss

the gray day darkened into night  
that evening the chef prepared her a French meal  
not long after that her face relaxed  
she breathed heavily  
when she had laid down her hair was swept back  
her scar long and ragged and a pink lighter than her skin  
remained exposed for quite a while longer  
than her self-conscious self would have preferred  
but the world kept on  
if she had dreams  
no one could say what they were

## Ethel Tarbox

Ethel arrived and stroked my hair  
while I cried sitting on the back porch  
watching cows pushing toward the water tub  
I must have said something to her  
then she went into the kitchen  
and started to cook / we would  
eat her meal for days

## Curses Her Work

she bends at the knees  
places a sprig of fresh lilac  
just bloomed from the bush  
beside his barn  
she saw two women  
in the field plowing  
the young one driving a tractor  
the other behind on the plow seat but  
they were at work  
and never saw her  
she could hear the shouts and curses

## Augur

his intellect was small  
his creativity nonexistent  
his chances for getting ahead limited  
to pure luck  
dumb luck  
the universe's unexpected little joke  
on everyone else

## Ill Certain

he removed her hands from his sleeves  
rotated himself toward her  
then reached out and pulled her close to him  
he pushed her hands in close to her chest  
then wrapped his arms around her back  
he had her enclosed in his chest  
this pulled her face close to his but lower down  
he could feel her nose  
on the bottom of his jaw and it was cold  
this confirmed—to him—that she had not planned  
a seduction scene and that it was ok  
for him to be holding her like this  
yes it was ok  
it didn't mean anything

## Ill Certain (Sort Flarfed)

his jaw removed her hands from his arms  
his sleeves rotated him toward her  
then reached out and anyone's hands pulled her close to him  
he pushed her in it close to his chest  
then wrapped around back of her  
he was close her cold enclosed chest  
in that his chest pulled her face to his  
but lower down he could feel her nose  
on the bottom of his confirmed—to him—  
planned seduction scene and ok  
for him to be holding her like this yes ok  
didn't mean anything

## Barn Unders

equipment under the barn is stalled  
for a deep pool flows above pee  
until it drains down a slope into just a wooden spillway  
sloped smooth over a dam  
running out behind the cows' holes spaced uniformly  
the pee peefalls down  
bad smells really are down there  
even open to the air as it is  
is this is a barn?

## Upward Disturbance

the reading flew up  
into the goof whose picture  
on the wall signifies a great man  
instead his smile reminded the most serious  
person in the room  
of a watermelon peeler



## Listen and Lapse

who talked the lilacs  
into posing for her poem  
she has to sight read the packaged cream corn  
to get the stream right of consciousness  
that marks the canvas border  
who could possibly be more alive  
than the man on the aisle sleep  
the living bobble head

## Street Show

wicked clean and full of loitering  
the streets' grime is pleasing  
the skateboarders who  
jump and skip across the bumps and bulks  
before them / my eyes are trumped  
by my ears

## I Will Never Go to School

Ki-ai!  
I will never go to school,  
'Cause it's not so nice,  
And it's just so bizarre place.  
I just wanna eat pizza.

Bruce likes a trophy.  
(Italian accent)I feel so bad for you.  
I'm so good for me.  
For me.

But I was paid to fly with you, Batman.  
Why, you are bad, Phil.  
And I can't stand the smell 'cause you make me  
Ewwwww.

Where's the camera?  
Oh my!  
Fit you pants!  
That's something  
Eh, family boy.

Nobody's got shampoo,  
So life is pain for me;  
Now life is pain for you.

Wo, wo, wo, now wait now  
I'd like to thank my mom;  
She bought me this guitar and...  
Jazz, jazz, jazz guitar for few,  
Batman jazz.

Ahh, wow. Oh, Bobby!

Hi, wuss-man, we love you, batman.  
Fat man philanthropy.  
Well, I can't say philathro...Papa.  
Pikachu! It's grossing me.

We might be the jungle group.  
Jazz, jazz guitar for few, blah, blah.  
Thank you, I love to be.  
Ooooh, I once bathed.

You're the man.

Chaka Khan.

No one cares about us.

Look at my leg, look at my hand.

Look at my head, look at my guitar,

Look at my band, look at my head,

Look at my, um...

## I'm Not Going to School

Kill You!  
I'm not going to school  
Because it is not nice  
And it's a really weird place.  
I just want to eat pizza.

Bruce likes the trophy.  
(Italian accent) I feel bad for you.  
I like me.  
For me.

But with you, Batman has to pay to fly.  
Why the bad, I smoke.  
You make me so I can not stand the smell  
Ewwwww.

Where is the camera?  
Oh!  
Customize your pants!  
This is something  
Well, the man of the family.

No need to shampoo  
So for me life is pain;  
Now life is pain for you.

Wow, advice, opinion, now, now wait a minute  
I would like to thank my mom;  
She bought me a guitar, I was...  
While jazz, jazz, jazz guitar  
Batman's jazz.

Oh, wow. Bobby!

Hi, this coward—human, we know you, I love Batman.  
Fat Man fraternity.  
Well, I can tell philathro...Dad.  
Pikachu! He has loved me.

We are a group of jungle.  
Blah, blah, various jazz, jazz guitar.  
I love doe legs, thanks.  
Wow, one bath.

You're the man.

Chose music.  
Nobody cares about us.  
At my feet, my hand Let me see.  
View my head, look at my other  
View image in my head of my group  
My, speech sound, I...

## Last Intro

ladies and gentlemen  
poets and prozers  
draw close and pay heed  
hold on to your earlobes  
fit your pants  
I am proud to present  
I am delighted to John-the-Baptistize  
the ones we stop by the woods for  
the ones the center holds for  
the ones the fire-fangled feathers dangle down for  
Michael and...  
ooh can I say it?  
Michael and...  
ooh can you stand it?  
Michael and...  
ooh just write it  
Michael and the Bustiers

## Regarding Writers

behind me stands  
a great writer and yet the storyteller  
is ashamed to say it too  
people flow through the story  
then reject its structure  
thinking that the second look  
is better  
I am ashamed to be called  
anything



## Self Infusion

the startling woman from flyover country  
turns away from her reflection  
stares in disbelief at the scale  
because her imagined number is not there  
she instead sweats out her brainpower  
her talent her voice her swanky demeanor

turns away and sheds  
her tears into a recycling pump

## Summer Unfounded

will I remember the slanting early evening  
sun rendering grass a dark shade of yellow  
which looks like a light shade of green  
at the top of Summer with a cool breeze  
draining the midday heat  
or will it seem like my youth and too far away  
for any direct effect

## Walking Alone in My Field Which is Long Gone

this is a year  
I never dreamt I'd make it to  
either devious age or self-infliction  
seemed my fate

as I sit and write this  
my thoughts are on how to find  
more time to write  
so when I leave it will be with notes  
to those who stay behind

another year?  
will a project complete?  
progress?

## Unlikely Bar

trying hard  
the paths seem narrower  
my balance fading  
nerves not responding well  
closing time coming up  
last call coming soon

## For Clouds

sometimes the lesson  
is written and other times  
the sky drips it into your eyes  
the way you return the favor  
when the walkaway happens

## Field With Cow

alone in the field  
the cow's neck is permanently  
stretched to the ground  
teeth grab pull grind  
it's just a cow you say  
I say it's only a cow  
but a lone cow in a big field  
eating her way from one end  
to the other

## This Very Cold and Vaporous Night

clouds of vapor  
squirting from manhole covers  
steam from vents down alleys  
windows fogged over  
in a northern city in Winter  
the shapes are wadded against the cold  
it's night and morning's afraid to open its eyes  
I'm heading down a wide street still unplowed  
lights cutting an orange path through the scattering flakes  
still falling in the too cold for snow air  
when the wind calms I look up to the only  
lit window and see a woman's shadow  
moving away / this summing up  
of a life the next thing on the agenda

## Dialectic

up at the window  
a woman's shadow moving past  
her silhouette on the curtain  
down in the street  
a man in the shadows past moving  
his shape etched into the pavement



## Riches

the beautiful woman looks  
her eyes slide away

## Airport Tensioning

the airport houses  
temporarily  
the unattended waitlisted  
who wait and wait  
listless and distracted  
while their planes grow later and later  
until the destination becomes a nightlight  
a small yellowed window  
a narrow street with debris / poor luck  
an undefined sense ones hopes resolves  
to welcome / but no time  
I must get back to waiting

## **Too Tired Tonight**

tonight my eyes are watering  
from too little sleep and too many miles  
the photos I needed I found them  
now my knuckles hurt and it's time for bed

## Around and Around / Last

I strode around the house  
the cabin / the shack  
where I first found love  
a place I helped build 45 years ago  
I touched it  
I cried  
I photographed it every way I could think of  
all that was missing was the companion woman  
to trail behind  
to drop her eyes  
to raise her hands to the sky  
the gray sky knew what to think  
but it can come back  
I can't

## Falling Behind

certain of failing  
I've fallen into the habit  
of trying too hard  
then collapsing in horror  
at the wrenching tweaks to self-sanity

## Without Apparent Danger

the woman in the swaying skirt  
approaches the dangerous man like an ATM  
her hand out / asking her question  
he points / she looks  
it's just past sunset in urbancity  
he steps back in the doorway waiting for his move  
but when he steps out to follow she's gone already  
from our car as we accelerate past we see her down the sidestreet  
her skirt swaying / she like a normal woman  
he looks down the sidewalk / into the street / behind  
he stands hunched over / defeated / deflated / detained

## Please Understand

two men  
fishing on a river  
late afternoon  
using thick white fish meat for bait  
heavy bait  
when their hooks hit the water and sink  
the splash is deep and reverberates off  
the houses across  
the speak Russian and rusty  
all I can make out is  
here / please / understand  
don't understand  
when I left they were sitting on the bank  
below ground level  
only the tops of their seed caps visible  
green / red  
bills facing each other  
moving up and down

## Cheap Wombats

darkness hides in the dark  
under beds / above them too  
it's worse with squirrels  
they're nuts



## Future Pilferage

the future looks like a bad version of the past  
I am sick of trying to be something I don't like being  
if only I could do what I want before the clock strikes 12  
and moondrops burst

## Traditional Salvation

after the sunset  
writing this  
auburn and orange clouds  
over a porcelain blue sky  
above pewter gray low flat clouds  
hot / humid / green grass just mown  
I am writing this  
wondering why I can't be the sky  
and finish what I need to  
to say goodbye as many times as time  
allows / just one day left  
I need to return soon  
I will postpone my goodbyes  
till then / then I will speak them  
until enough time has passed

## Laughing While Driving: Guilty

she strolls from her house  
(across from Sowicks')  
to town square every day  
from afar or if  
you're a woman she walks tall and straight  
but if  
you're a closeby man  
everything she has of note  
swings to best effect  
alas she's old now  
and her best effect  
is comedy

## Flimsy

flying away again  
leaving it all behind and the small things  
falling apart / memory is there to serve  
but lies / my time to write it is limited  
by the need to live but to not write it  
is the equivalent of the worst

## Inconveniently Conventional

tonight there is no night to remember  
the sawdust tastes the sampler and waffles  
I've seen the skies bebuggered with spindrifft  
the best words are the ones erased  
over and over I find the twin rhymes  
everyone ditches their covers when it resembles fluff  
my age is inappropriate for my age

## Chas Palmer

they smile  
they seem ready for a long life  
we could look back on nearly all of them  
and the rest perhaps remember nothing any more  
but they were eager kids then  
after lunch on a cool day  
sitting in the grass  
standing in front of the school  
the gradient from sweet to bitter

## Servants All

when all the talk is of air fresheners  
and the suffering of many makes wails through the land  
the leaders of creativity summon their wits  
to the side of the grave where many wait their turns to speak and lament  
but when they alight the pedestal the light fails  
their thoughts flee  
the smell of the air freshens and the laughing begins once more

## Finishing

sounds / dogs / light breeze / traffic  
cooling finally  
sweating all day  
I wish I were more alive



## To Me

so you think you're a Camaro  
playing a part in a snowstorm  
take the wrong way home  
see if you get there  
oh yeah day  
girl by my side  
I lie high

## Intangible Writing

we are like a forest  
blending together like legs  
behind a chicken  
I'm writing my life out  
but sentences are limited  
and I have no sense of structure  
I'm pleased with the descriptions  
and I hope just one after another will work  
I want to make something happen  
I stop writing  
get up  
get ready for bed  
sleep

## Slab

I remember laying  
that slab / smoothing out the concrete  
with a long 2 by 4 riding on the rails of the form  
we poured into / long ago / 45 years ago  
gone now / everything but that slab  
additions to it / the fireplace  
made from stones we took from the Swift River  
the house above is gone / where I was first found  
where some things ended  
gone by my hand

## Progress Uneasiness

Kalya easy

Powell easy

my mother / how to make her not like a mother

but like a young girl in the tale she tells

and like a mother in how she tells it

## Sharp Dressed Pain

pain in the back  
hard to sit / stand  
can't stand it  
hard to think through all of it  
it came on slow  
like a strain getting worse  
I hope it doesn't lead to the leg thing

## Underneath a Layer of Clouds

heavy clouds overhead  
below them but far away  
someone looks out her bedroom  
window hoping for the call  
the knock the whisper  
and it comes

it's wrong though  
but she makes do  
she has prepared otherwise  
but places it all out  
warms up the warm places

later she caresses the cool window  
drips of rain have splattered onto it  
the clouds have delivered their judgment  
I was only 100 miles away by then

## Everywhere

now there is a memorial  
not more than a mile from their farm  
what can be remembered  
is only on the pages now  
and even they need to resist the sweeping erasures  
the trains each day make between the two

## All of It and What About that Rope?

wanted hoecakes  
went to Cracker Barrel  
where I scratched the surface  
what I hoped for were quiet dirt roads  
a homemade rope swing hanging  
from an oak in the yard  
dusty tobacco fields  
unnoticed bullet holes in floorboards  
and lots of food cooked on a wood-burning stove  
grown on the family farm  
all of it burned at the edges and inward



## Impossible Story to Write

one day driving  
a gravel road way off  
the interstate in the SW  
I picked up a hitchhiker  
it was the last thing I ever did

## Hate Begets

the stunning hatred  
by the enriched of the impoverished  
paints the picture of hatred  
I will use on the haters

## Not a Strain Not a Pain

walking beneath a canopy  
of oaks no moon to sight by  
I'll struck by how few steps  
are left to my legs

## Laboring Today

dope smokers next door celebrate  
the victory of labor over business  
years ago by lighting up from the fruit  
of illegal gardens / there must be a truth  
in here somewhere

## A Team

once upon a time there was a bridge  
over a river where many mysterious things  
were left unfathomed and the meanings  
of pieces here and pieces there seem to hang  
from a rope from the roadbed over the toiling water  
really which is laughing and really it's just water  
anyway coming down from the hills  
salt water coming in from the ocean  
hidden just miles away but deeper than real thinking  
not that you'd know it from the papers  
which are disappearing anyway into the cyber  
where words are free and only the idle  
can grab onto the ideal of patronic living and making  
I pity the fools who believe only in the pursuit  
of happiness money

## Parental Disavowal

as far as happiness is concerned  
upstairs is smaller than down  
we had our fun but then everyone came  
home and the bottles were hardly hidden  
this is what the weak get

## Everything I Mean Everything

...looks at him each time her line ends  
and his guitar answers back  
she ends  
and as his guitar ascends  
she turns her back and away  
nodding with the back beat  
this I tell you is the secret to everything

## Music Commons

everything worthwhile is made  
the way good improvised is made  
support in the commons defined by the song  
with good individual talent and performance  
so much better than a fist fight



## Waiting or Guarding

I found her in the woods  
lying beneath a tree  
her head open from a stone  
lodged in the ground and unmoving for thousands of years  
I called help on my cell / described where she was  
I waited by her  
standing by her / guarding the spot  
picking each leaf that fell from the birches above  
off her clothes  
off her hair

## PLoP

small flies gnats really  
bombing mosquitoes  
the curving striding  
path by the Sagamon  
coming out after a bit  
by the sunsinger  
the readers expand their books  
and papa del's delivers

## Focus on Ideas or Focus on Food?

I'm too old now  
to worry about arguing politics  
especially in lilliput  
where nothing matters

## Technique As Discovery

I seem to work so slowly now  
or my looking ahead head  
is faster than my doing head  
my technique can't approach my discovery  
I am at the singularity that we exercise for  
we exercise in anticipation

## Black Pearl Sings

we had to leave  
the play early  
it wasn't so great  
we spoke all the way home  
of how to end it  
and thus made it better  
than any critic admits

## A Sudden

the storm worsens but no one puts their scarf on  
the wind picks up and trees tip their hats  
the hail that otherwise would be swallowed like wrong thoughts  
beats the green bridge toward an early repainting  
the river as usual notices only the scratchings on its belly  
its wide curves swell like youths getting ready for sex  
I grow annoyed then weary from the many things that are too long

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## Does It Represent Sadness?

he stood there bleeding  
blood from holes in his clothes  
from his coat pockets as he held his hands under them  
catching the flow but instead all was wrong  
blue the blood blue flowing blue  
staining his catching hands blue  
the puddle deepening around him blue



## From The Dark

sometimes the night's so black  
so dark the city is the only thing  
lights / windows / sweet hushed conversations  
behind curtains and under cover

## See Or Make

two years horrid  
in their back to back trance  
their seizures of joy and spitting spiritlessness  
I wish I could see it  
understand it / instead I must make those two years

## So This Is What Autumn Is Like

fries too burnt like their acronym  
burgers greasy too  
summer's almost over and the prime help's gone  
near swamps maples are turning  
women are wearing layers and jeans  
what I found was my reactions to it slowing  
wishing for rain and a warm chair to read in  
thinking of what it will feel like for caregivers  
to roll me on my side to tend to my sores

## Autumn for Fools

moon up wind low  
cool / cold  
rain soon I am waiting for everything  
to collapse and nothing clever  
matters once more

## Corner Cafe

many choose early twilight  
to move from hard to soft  
and it matters that the wrinkles fade out  
by dark / that the colors in the skirt  
grow vibrant as the moon rises  
told it's better to watch with care  
they choose instead to walk in delight

## For Science

ashes flying down a night street  
dust alongside it and motes of sand  
from the bowels of a grinding under trucks  
it all clings to the upwind sides of rocks and stones  
could they be the ideas left behind  
the loves / obligations unmet  
some residue that proves interesting theories

## At Our Dinner

say what you will  
but wait your turn  
and that should happen any time now  
any time now  
any time  
any

## One Observation

some of the best trees  
are rooted in wet land  
with dry winds above  
and axes far far away



## Another Observation

the fireplace sits on its slab  
an Easter Island freak  
the slab opens out like an unfolded box  
everything I've loved is gone

## Memory Like A Camera

strangely the camera remembers it  
more yellow than I do  
the water calmer / the sky more sudden  
I am inclined to believe neither  
because both are me

## Unfinished Nightmare

the worst storm was late for hail  
it blew a sullen note without respite  
for an afternoon and a night  
surfaces took the worst at first  
later the limbs then trunks  
I remember the warmth of the bed

## Under the Lens

one of the lenses  
grabbed the light as it flowed from the flowing water  
passing under the bridge split from its upriver  
alternative / I snapped and here it is  
undergoing a strange sharpening  
at the hands of imagining

## October 27

how many took their radios to the cemetery  
on my mother's birthday in 2004  
so their fathers / their grandfathers  
or mothers or grandmothers could listen  
as the Red Sox finally won the Series  
was it everyone who cared

## Self Made

self-made man  
a backwoods savant  
grew up alone  
imagined his own language  
discovered and created his own science  
with no one to help  
built a culture of his own design  
created his own city  
his own civilization  
filled it with people he raised and taught  
and they made him rich  
he is the self-made man  
the backwoods savant  
we are here by his hand  
we are imaginary beings in his mind  
this is the word he invented

## Fabulous Montréal

many stories are fashioned from bitterness  
the ones that happen in Montréal  
siphon their excess from overcold air  
slip beneath the river's current like chlorox jugs  
the woman in the window weeps after I've passed  
she hopes one day to visit my grave

## Long Attitude

if you were to kick any pebble  
it will have been dry land forever  
red dirt will stain you  
many looming arms await  
as you move away toward the wet  
along with this comes the season of sleep



## Finer Details

heaviness the fatigue  
lack of vision slow reactions  
time is passing quickly  
and the gap ahead is approaching now

## On The Fall Road

two things are excitable  
on a lonely road  
we walk hand in hand and everyone we know knows  
we are in love forever  
the changing leaves prove it  
the camera has caught it perfectly  
now we are as separate  
as x and anti  
so far away no forces mingle  
and what we are certain of  
fails every test

## A Great Philosopher Once

on the logic of drawing  
history from ancient documents  
especially from testimonies  
a work that leads the dilapidated  
mind to conclude that drawing  
and logic are unconnected  
and I will testify to that

## It Has Come To This

The director of research at DARPA  
Wanted his scientists smarter.  
So he forced them confused  
By their brains made infused  
With the abductive thickets of Kafka

## In The End

who is able to get it done  
the explainer who writes his dissertation  
or the jotter who code just the smallest thing  
but it is the right thing

## Along the Strand

sad about it  
all the pitfalls  
broken / disappointed  
too much this time

## Imagine and Imagine Again

when she was lying  
on her mother's chest  
day and night  
I wasn't able to imagine  
sending her email  
like anybody else

## Maybe The Most Disappointing

as each day goes by and I don't keep myself alert  
I grow closer to the day when there will be no point  
tired and weak  
thought slowing and enthusiasm dripping away  
I still remember when I believed I could be the youngest novelist



## Me

who is willing to admit  
that the common belief is usually wrong  
that scholars and artists work hard  
that scientists need art to produce  
true science / that guessing and being skilled  
at it are the heart of the matter

## Furnace Heat

too many times and without many doubts  
you wonder how the news can turn into insights  
you wonder how politicians can lie without noticing  
it's all just theater I suppose  
and the hatred that goes with it  
the lying I mean

## Why Everyone Should Hate Them

one day a CEO pretended  
to be a leader  
he put his pants on differently that day  
he tried buying a latté from Duncan Donuts  
he wondered whether that was the right spelling  
but he couldn't tell if it mattered since he  
remembers distinctly inventing English  
while his mother flipped the pages  
each night but he remembered thinking  
he didn't really need her and all those  
germ-like chromosomes  
he was self made

## 29<sup>th</sup> Floor

the lights are blinking  
a little on a little off  
I am certain civilization is out there  
somewhere I think in the dark  
but spiked by the colored lights  
that make up how people watch tv  
and all that stuff like that  
in the darkness that makes  
night cities torn from land

## In Sparks I Say

at the pizza shop not a peep  
not a look in the casino  
or over the shoulder out the door  
even the end is over  
now the little caresses  
are scratching from grown nails

## Follow Through

when the night isn't  
happy to see you  
the dark will always open its door  
and swallow you like a grave

## Above The Fold

we talked and the news  
was my going pro leaving  
passion behind  
all the ones craving  
a leader weeping  
for loss

## What She Told Me In Totally Different Words

ready to quit  
ready for the end to bloom  
I want to just sit now and remember  
sit remember and write it all down  
not with one ounce of art  
just the plainest words  
poorly put together and sailing  
my story into my childrens' disbelieving eyes



## Among the First Things

the first thing is to worry  
what all the women think  
then fill the tub with bubbles  
and step back

## Unscrupulous

you said my writing  
made the dirt circle around you  
and the sky's rain  
dry before hitting your face  
how many of these are possible  
and what of the stains  
history made

## Abduction

how does it happen  
bowl of shit  
no paper  
women's room

## Alongside the Short Ride

short night  
tired to the limits of endurance  
who dreams these things up

## Aura of Smoke

saturated then filtered  
final like flies fleeing  
I wish the first way was wondered  
first like big origins  
and then wakefulness

## At the Photo Trough

some pictures conventionally pretty  
others abstract and conceptual  
we fought for position  
but only our large bodies were in the way  
our attentions drawn divergently  
the results could not be more  
different

## Days Ahead and Behind

in a day or so the day will be marked  
as sometimes days are  
important to not many  
the birthday of a mother  
long gone  
but protruding into the mind  
like a memory knife

## Simpleton

easy to travel with  
the simple notebook filled with flattery  
never without it we are never without words  
just remember / don't fall asleep



## Maybe I Should Follow Her

she doesn't remember it either  
but the day was important  
94 years ago today  
she became / though actually it was earlier  
I recall my time in the womb  
as a pressure punctuated  
by a feeling just like stone should be  
but if she looked like me as a girl  
I should think like her now  
all there is is her sadness  
what an interruption

## Definition: The Romance Is Over

first we see it your way  
then we talk about dessert  
finally we see it your way

## Dreary Night

fixing things just ruins them  
cut fingers / stuff not working  
too much work to do  
always and it's raining too

## FrOst Apophysis Oxidizer Wine or Qosmic

don't get it this thing isn't working right  
i just want electric sheep not Frost  
will somebody please tell me what I'm doing wrong  
I just want to download electric sheep

## On A Day in the Gray Past

born when / a drizzly sky  
dark at night / my parents  
were scared but they went dutifully  
to the hospital in the morning  
a short short distance to her father's resting place  
and later theirs too  
she told me it was many hours  
then the forceps  
I bear the scars still  
I feel the sharpness  
fading day by day

## Forging The Truth One Word At A Time

skipping along  
dreaming of the long story  
worried on words  
shifting from finger to finger  
and putting it all down  
paper is what it's all about baby

## Stupido

tonight in our land  
the stupid took one of the reins  
and soon the horse of our country  
will circle and buck  
as the dumb pull in all directions  
and the smart pull in one  
the Red Sox have won  
so there is more luck to share

## One Night Out on the Town

when you stumble ahead  
what you need is for someone ahead of you  
to be the pole you grab on to  
today  
is it you



## Joyous Green

at the bridge many promises were made  
joy whipped through the low branches  
and overly green leaves determined  
in late spring to break a record  
when the photographer asked us to smile  
all but one did / and that one would  
except for the pain

## At The Bridge

the photos don't show it  
but the water isn't blue  
it's a figment of some application's  
imagination / and you  
didn't think they  
had them

## DIA My Pretty

the regional terminal  
is randomly filled  
there are only sweets here to eat  
people look as worn as the windbruised plains  
hunched striated lurchlike lowstepping  
or maybe  
this is the waiting room  
for casting a slow-move-zombie film  
errr uhhh

## Speaking of Drinks

at dinner recipes for infusions  
blueberries / sugar in layers piled  
to the top of a bottle  
fill with vodka  
set in the sun for a month  
or this  
3 gallons of whisky  
1 gallon benedictine  
1 gallon of lemon juice  
or maybe  
the absolute amounts were less

## No One in Front

abundance under stress  
versus scarcity  
does scale fade engineering out  
long-lived  
long-running systems  
can they help

## Back Walking

the cold which was the air  
pressed against her new coat  
and she laughed while telling us  
she was a 2

## Furious Smirking

along the river  
yellow trees blow out  
their colors  
but the river remains green  
and a little blue

## Is It Truth?

the town resists itself  
fills its gaps with knives  
but the cafe's food transcends  
the bitter road and opposing sidewalks  
that lie outside



## Art of Fun

some of the images are colored  
artificially by artists who hate  
the world as it is and try to make  
it over but there are some artists  
who work only with color  
on it with it over it  
they are funny

## Near Holcomb

sky's striated today  
high plains / light cold wind  
we've all heard what happens around here  
where the cold and wind combine in November  
hide when you hear the train  
hide when the wind stops

## For A Minute I Thought

will people gather and greet  
will the food be fresh and made with love  
when they all arrive  
and walk to her reach and greet her  
their hands held out and trembling  
will I seem like someone to deserve all this  
my pictures remind them  
the work endure and strengthen determination  
or will I end as I begun  
on a drizzly dark day with no one around  
nothing rising on the horizon

## Is That a Piano

in the street  
a narrow legged woman  
walks and her coat  
slaps her ass as  
she walks past  
my eye composes the scene  
for a poem  
for a photo  
her gesture / the walk away  
her target is any other  
her scarf wrapped tight  
her herring coat trimmed in black  
fur and her hair in a euro bun  
the light sky is limited to the hours  
I can't imagine  
and without the words  
without the pictures  
what hope is there but  
the bench of wanting

## Chappelle Restaurant

she rambles to her table  
where she places her napkin  
on her lap and forks rice  
into her mouth before speaking  
in low hair hanging ripples  
to the man waiting for paradise

## She In Her Private

now I've watched her pacing her living  
room hour by hour  
the alley reflects many lights  
from bedrooms / from bathrooms  
and from my point by the far building wall  
beneath leaking pipes her image  
dries my tears and wrings out the energy from the night  
you'd think she'd look down  
one day science will prove using the theory of reflection  
that that and everything like it  
are impossible

## Steve Orlen One Night

one night this week while I toiled at things like this  
a great man moseyed on with the muse on his arm  
he wrote circles around everyone but none of us knew  
because the music was kept soft the implications  
imprecise and limited until the moment she took  
him by the arm and the alarm  
of great mystery and buoyancy gripped our pens

## Put The Weight On Me

in Brussels tonight the windows wept  
the inversion of heat and cold  
dry and moist drew beads on every glass  
men in bars paused / thinking they heard their lovers call  
women at their toilets dropped their combs  
and knelt as in prayer to find them  
only those with pens and notebooks in hand  
didn't heed the gentle ripple but instead  
felt their burdens grow heavy / their share of the load



## Offensive

someplace a kind word is being said now  
about the name remembered most  
the words spoken most  
we get what we deserve and more  
because we get it all  
as it should be

## Clear Lack of Meaning

I suppose back there it's still raining  
that the drops from roof edges  
remain constant in their attention  
to their own details  
what of the woman who fries her dinner  
moves it to the table  
eats it while watching the news near midnight  
then washes her plate and pan / knife and fork  
all the while stark naked  
with no one thinking of sex  
not even you

## November 22, 1963

the day / in a pep rally for the Sachems  
all wearing green / it was Friday  
learning of the death we were sent home early  
my mother and I watched the repetitive coverage  
in b&w in '63 / I shot a magic marker picture  
of the assassin in the window in the living room  
with bbs / how crazy / then a weekend of funerary events  
then everything went downward

## Design Paradigm

lots of things break  
some over and over  
it's part of technology  
which is designed to spec  
rather than to purpose

## Tripsic Durchens

A smart bird never dies in flight,  
A semi-fish with whales never fights.  
Don't peanut your coffee in the midst of blue,  
Don't carry a gun that is filled with glue.  
Pine trees and shellfish doubly refrained,  
And the hobster that chortles will never crummel again.  
Blonde glasses reflect orange snow,  
No, Noel, you can't go twice in a row.  
Myxomycetes with vigor anew,  
Tremmled and throbbled all over the stew.  
Ergo, Tripsic Durchens.

## Just a Memory

the apartment living room was packed  
bed at one end / table in the middle  
old chairs all around / a bow window third floor  
in the kitchen an oil stove still worked  
and a small table / from there I can see into back yards  
off the kitchen a bedroom with a high bed and dresser  
off the living room a large closet  
toilet off the landing outside the kitchen  
always cold Thanksgiving / everyone talking but me  
nothing to watch on tv  
dozing / back and forth to each room  
the photo of my father by the piano (gone)  
the stuffed hawk / the cactus  
why did I never think to bring a camera

## Abducting the Past

not far from here someone else's past  
is drifting around the bend  
it doesn't seem so long ago  
but the shades of colors have brightened  
and the clarity of the water has made its differences  
such as in the early evening just when it gets dark  
the black water flows with a creaminess  
that belies the rocks below  
there is only one way to watch what happened to them  
take the small facts and the short stories  
and ride like a horseman over behind them  
beside them and spin the past out any way  
that makes it all fit fine with them and with you

## Beginning the Drive

and so she drove back to the farm  
—so many chores to do now  
and tomorrow back to the factory  
to sew overlooking the Merrimack  
spewed in filth and what no one wants  
—her only consolation in the ground  
and he will only grow colder by little bits  
as the cold presses slowly through the vault  
and then the coffin / she was last to see him  
both alive and dead and she vows to neither forget  
nor tell what she's seen or what it means



## On The Drive

after the stop sign she sped up quickly  
and the cop behind the sign quickly caught up  
told her she was going to fast and she said  
“I was just getting going” and he said  
“I wouldn’t want to see you once you got going”  
and that’s when he noticed her dress fancy but  
smelling of mothballs and the streaks down her cheeks  
and asked and she said she was returning from her father’s  
burial to milk the cows feed the chickens and bed down the rest  
before cooking supper for her drunken mother  
and he looked at her in the cool air and still twitching light  
for a minute before stepping back folding his ticket pad  
and saying thank you miss

## Almost Home

she stopped by the pond less than a quarter mile  
from the house / got out and found a rock to sit on  
and from there she listened by didn't look as the pond  
came alive with frogs and similar things jumping in  
and the frogs making their sonorous low fragmented laments  
she could hear the bats making their quick turns by her ears  
and up the hill mostly orchard and chicken patch  
she could hear the threats and screams in Russian  
that would form the matrix of her every evening  
for the next eight years and who knows how that  
would go because like a frog hiding under a log  
in the pond she would rather hold her breath  
than let the world know where her bubbles  
would rise

## Finally Home But Never At Home

little did she know this would be the easiest night  
her mother locked in her room and drinking  
crying and singing songs from a different place  
the food from the funeral was still out and she  
placed most of it in the ice box and the rest  
she piled on a pair of plates thinking one would be for her mother  
she ate slowly ate and sipped from the glass of raw milk  
she poured from the ice box and listened  
to the cows complaining the chickens fussing  
the leaves tossing in the light breeze and watched  
the light turn perfect of photographs but she never  
took any never wrote down what she saw or thought  
and thus she sentenced all who came after but especially me  
to create it again

## What Happened Today?

today it was hot  
we sweated  
we walked  
we saw the cassowaries  
we grew very tired then slept  
ask a better question next

## On a Back Walk

walking behind her tonight  
the air hanging sultry and languid  
her black shorts highlighted her white  
white skin on the backs of her legs  
I was proud to walk there  
even in the heat and soak  
she will one day be proud of this herself

## Dock Pissed

one 1/2 mile from here  
Etihad Stadium  
Docklands Melbourne  
sometimes a voice is clear  
but usually just a low rumble  
and flash bulbs  
and even over the dark harbor  
it all sounds so Irish

## Unable

not pissed but mental exhaustion  
not able to take on 2 things at once  
it happened before and took months to clear  
I felt it coming and couldn't stop it  
I am far from home and unable

## Near the City Gardens

the crow spoke  
loud sick caw  
then a sweet quiet lament  
from a tree whose type is unknown to me  
on a street I never was on before today  
in a hot muggy city I'll never visit again  
but that crow made me feel welcome  
even though his head was hung low  
and he seemed to sneer  
I found it an honor and a comfort  
more than many would give a stranger  
to their land



## **Dreary & Asleep**

sometimes the rain is a blessing  
other times it hurts like a quick cut  
in the end all that matters is the color  
of the sky and the direction of the clouds

## Perilous Journey

the poem was read and the making began  
from the light that made it into the room  
a small portion was dedicated to clarity and positive vibes  
from now on the end of speech is like a light that focuses too close  
who will vouch for the sadness when it rambles past  
and disappears into melancholy and then bliss

## Syndrome

at the next table a young man  
suffering from down  
he would turn when the nonstoptalker at my table spoke  
he looked intently then twisted his mouth  
into a pretzel to signal the craziness he heard  
they served him a food he had never eaten  
he forked the food up to his nose then sniffed and put it down  
did it again / again / again  
then he'd turn to stare at the others at his table eating the same thing  
and he'd fork it into his mouth but touch it only with his tongue  
then fork it down onto the plate  
again / again / again  
then our man would talk  
then the food would be smelled  
then tasted  
for an hour maybe more  
why hide our thoughts when we could be like this

## Is life Just the Universe?

yesterday Steve Orlen  
today Dean Young  
all the poets are dead or dying  
it's the thing to do no  
all the greats have  
and so it must be de rigueur  
but wait they all do  
good and bad so this must reduce  
as it always does to life

## Deserving

the diners barked loudly  
I suppose it was laughter  
but I felt it was more an animal call  
I started to yell like Fat Albert  
hey hey hey  
and they roared louder  
everyone in the restaurant believed  
the diners were crazy  
for laughing the way  
Fat Albert yelled

## That's It Hanging on the Shed

hard trip from a warm land  
to this / the dry plane air  
made sleeping a raw chore  
then the whole Dean Young thing  
many problems with VMware and Ubuntu too  
a bird sang a pretty song last week

## About My Mother

she walked away from the farm  
toward the pond they used to try to save her house  
by summer the new house was nearly done  
the builder ignored her instructions  
and her mother's / on the day she died  
she realized no one ever had and that on that  
other day she knew no one ever would  
for years she never cried  
no matter when you think of her this  
will be true / will have been true  
in my novel that featured her  
I couldn't get a grasp on her  
I will need to try again  
trying is so trying

## Gotcha

is it my right to know  
the lives my parents lived  
or is there a right to secrecy  
they have and have exercised  
little do they know that my alternative  
plan is to invent then for myself



## Undeserving

there is a sickness in the land  
I've seen it before when some claim  
others don't deserve  
but the some do  
when even the undeserving agree  
it's plain we've fallen off a cliff we never saw  
but will regret until we collectively are nobodies  
and all of us are undeserving

## Somewhere I Wish I Could Imagine

down a long rained on street  
sitting narrowly like a low row between two high rows  
of displeased apartments  
we could for example  
imagine through picturing the women who live there  
ignore the men / all they want is down by the water  
or maybe we could find books filled with stories  
that already capture them  
instead I propose  
we watch their shadows on the curtains  
venetian blinds / on the drapes  
maybe we'll recognize the woman who  
madly walks nude all evening in her parlor  
imagining she's entertaining the only  
man we would find interesting  
who dips his head in appreciation  
after each sip and each swaying turn  
while holding himself dearly in his  
other hand

## Portland Taught Me

science is laughing at us  
we believe science is perfect knowledge  
but it's our knowledge  
and we have things like republicans  
so we really can't talk about reliability  
now can we

## Furthest

if there were a casual way  
to put it all aside and just  
do what's really needed  
light would complain  
it all happened so fast

## Closed

behind me years ago  
I heard the complicated clicks  
I didn't recognize  
as time passed they grew louder  
into slams  
possibilities disappearing

## Confused Night

I imagined a heavy rain  
outside while inside  
in bed I dreamed of luscious pastimes  
but the rain grew colder and more insistent  
each minute  
above a plane slowed on its way to land  
it seemed low and I pictured it  
slicing through the rain  
dreams like planes like rain

## **Don't Worry**

a poem seems strange  
only when you stop reading it

## Give More

it's just a bridge  
but the water under it doesn't think so  
it's a destination  
a place to return to  
the pretty green color  
the sullen piers piercing downstream flow  
blunting the tide's upstream  
while sitting on the bank  
I've vowed never to stop  
writing of it



## Work and More Work

the wheelbarrow they've always had  
is filled with bushel baskets  
of pears and apples  
now that it's October it's  
time to move them from the barn cellar  
to the new house cellar  
handy for cooking & snacks  
in the background a sadness rises

## Together

we vowed to grow old together  
we grew up  
instead of learning to love each other  
more we learned to seek our pleasures elsewhere  
we had this in common  
you would have thought it a strength  
we cracked  
we broke  
now we've simply grown old

## Art In Braidwood

birds 4 sale

\$666

apply within

trailer trash design

## Disneyland Dream

something about the past  
about the '50s  
makes the mouth water  
reckoning the best is past  
the present stagnates  
the thirst for being best  
forces the throat to grasp  
I remember when the prevailing  
feeling was hope not fear

## Framed

just think of the differences  
between youth and old age  
how little you can do about it  
how much it hurts

## Shamed

late / the hotel room is small but robust  
I'm standing by the window  
the cold outside has chilled the glass  
from it a harsh sensation forms in my nose  
below two people walk  
their breath whisps upward toward  
me and perhaps their thoughts too  
a foreign city far north of anywhere  
after a while watching the two walk  
across the courtyard expanse into an alley  
I turn and take two steps toward the bed  
before remembering the strange body  
warming it / lifting the edge of the feather duvet  
I brace for a night of devotion

## make sound and movements

hello

I am China dinosaur factory

hope that you know our product more

also hope that we can establish long-term cooperative relation

examine all the interfaces

connected to the 220V AC power when all interfaces ready

turn the power switch and then products start to work

there is an infrared sensors in the control box

it will going to standby when nobody come by after a regular working

when someone approach the infrared sensor

products will start to work—

## Uncomfortable Little Hops

I watched her walking down a street  
in the north of Europe / an alley really  
made of stones for people to stroll  
and she was holding the arm of a man  
who walked steadily on the cobbles  
but she I noticed this walked in little hops  
even though it was raining  
too the wind was rushing down the alley into their faces  
her hair which was curled was twirling  
but she continued to stare like pup love  
into the bottom of his chin  
he soldiered on knowing  
one must suppose and I suppose  
everyone on the street and looking down or into it  
did too  
he was in for one comfortable ride  
later



## Firefox All Wet

just wedged  
sometimes a system  
just isn't so systematic

## Time and Madness

listening at the door  
for one down the corridor to close  
just as another opens  
some other time I was sitting on the floor  
in front of an open fire in an strangely  
constructed fireplace in the far north  
in a cabin on a frozen lake covered as was the cabin  
in a deep layer of fresh snow and behind me  
lying on the bed her head pressed against my cheek  
from behind / her hair obscuring my face and shoulders  
a woman is face down and naked even though the blue  
is so cold it's ice and snow outside

this is about time passing  
doing what we don't want  
fear drives us using  
a mechanism that makes no sense  
and drived mathematics into the mad corner

**Imagine Writing This;  
Imagine It's About You**

*A Collection of Poems from 2011*

Richard P. Gabriel

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## **Years and Years**

years and years  
this last year ended  
with a long recovery from fatigue  
with people disappointed  
with a few more things not working  
as usual the writing rebegins  
more and more

## Dreaming of Dreaming of California

I used to walk down the road toward Billy's  
when winter was beginning but snow hadn't fallen yet  
down toward the pond  
on either side of the narrow barely paved road  
the trees were like pasted together twigs  
etching black on the cloudy white sky  
and deep back into the woods the tangle  
turned to a textured solid black  
or I'd walk out into the big field  
brown from the beginnings of dead regrowth after the last harvest  
past the rock no one could exhume  
back into the back field rimmed with the same twiggy trees  
and green pines / crows made their rough song  
up in them and chickadees would softly sing their names  
my head held the song California Dreamin' and I would play it over and over  
the direction from my house to the back field was toward California  
I imagined the songwriters and songsingers  
from a cold place like this  
but maybe not / maybe not  
wherever they were I moved to California  
and with that move grew my nostalgia  
for wanting to move there

## Barn Dreaming

our old barn was once my mother's old barn  
and before that her father's old barn  
before that I've found out  
it was several generations  
of sons' and fathers' old barn  
hand hewn beams weren't a sign of poverty and poor tools  
but of antiquity  
so were the rough nails in the siding  
the worn smooth slats in the cow stalls  
were not quaintly smoothed for the comfort of the cows  
but by the necks of cows rubbing over the course of centuries  
we don't think it of our country but parts of it are old  
as old as some parts of Europe we travel great distances to see  
in one corner near the front behind a place for farm tools  
a door with leather hinges and latch hid a hard carved  
seat with a hole to the underside of the barn  
next to where we parked the side delivery  
where water from an underground spring came up  
and formed a creek that formed a stream that formed a brook  
that emptied into the river that emptied to the nearby ocean  
which connected this country with that  
my wish though was to have owned that barn long enough  
to know how valuable it must have been  
and to have sex in the hay loft  
yeah / both of those

## Old Album Never Explained

once I knew  
I could see it  
she was older than he  
their glasses were off for better pictures  
taken by Nana  
he wore a hat to disguise his hairline  
he wore sharp clothes the way all Lithuanians  
I ever knew did  
he wore a wedding ring  
(long gone)  
and she did too  
(less long but still long gone)  
the bags under her eyes  
from work on the farm they posed on  
or age  
all around those pictures on that cold fall day  
I think their wedding day  
I saw the heavy work that was required  
dirty work too  
including love

## **Hill Making**

my place is on a hill  
surrounded by trees  
but with clear views  
in several directions  
along with a dictionary  
and a way to write  
I'll take care of the rest



## Contradictions + Snow

the walk across the bridge  
makes him tremble  
it shakes when cars go by  
there are no walkways  
so he steps up on a curb as they pass  
the snow is not coming heavy now  
but he can hear the flakes hiss as they melt  
when they hit the fast flowing water  
he can hear the water slipping past the piers  
it's near dusk so he is afraid of not being seen  
it's near where he was raised so he is afraid  
of being seen

## Annoyed Arriver

outside the oldest hotel  
snow sleet snow sleet  
small flakes and hard drops  
the sidewalk is slick only on the metal lift doors  
the brick is as old as it gets  
above the orange sky is just low clouds spitting  
a woman with a formfitting down coat  
steps in front of me  
holds out her hand  
asks  
photo?

## Chinatown

at the wedding  
a classy show even though the religion hung heavy  
many gestures / many players  
some (joyful / tearful) some with grudges  
later the reception and banquet  
was food food foodfoodfood food food  
we left with thoughts left behind  
and lives being lived on the double

## **Boston**

hard cold wind  
coming off the relentless sea  
we are walking directly into it  
on our way to Union Oyster House  
we are walking into it  
on our way from Union Oyster House  
such a place as this it is

## Afraidness

who worries about the meaning of death  
what will happen when the curtain falls  
when the darkness will come when days are less certain  
why there is something and not nothing  
where the grass will part and the lowering begin  
women are wise in knowing now is the essence  
their plans execute quickly

## Indictment

he is a loser  
a failure early in life  
he looked to blame others and institutions  
for his own failings  
for him  
his life was a cup of failure  
a load of non-achievements  
a future of no promise

## Laughing Again

will it all turn out well  
the too much is starting once more  
I will be diminished  
but all that's ahead is diminishment  
why all the depression  
they all asked

## Our Road

I have never lost my cloak of poverty  
growing up on a farm where everything was falling apart  
my father built houses / the two I knew best  
have fallen apart  
he was fired many times  
and I have been too  
he grew depressed except when speaking to strangers  
and I have too  
I've grown tired / feel myself falling down  
firm around my shoulders  
that cloak  
firm and never slipping



## James Schiller Theme Song

Kurkjian, Gabriel

<Intro> C F...C Am F G

<Verse>

C Am F G      C Am F G

James Schiller is for me-ee-ee-ee-ee, oooo. (yeah)

C Am F G      C Am F G

Vote for Jimmie-ee-ee-ee-ee-ee, vote for Jimmie S. Oooo.

C Am F G      C Am F G

He's the man (yeah) we want to vote for, oooo.

C Am F G      C Am F G

Vote for Jimmie or I'll pick up and throw you out the door.

F G C

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

F G C

Yeah, yeah, yeah,

F G C

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

G&K: Instrumental! Hear we go! Wooo, whoooo! All right!

<lead>

Inaudible: (Bullcorn!) (Aw Shucks!) (So sweet!) (Well, I'll be a suck-egg mule!)

(Hear me Talkin'!)(At's Right)(Hey, hey! Wooo, whooo!) (Heh!)

(Here I come, here I come, here come the Romper Stomper!) (Good God!)

(Anhh, hanhh!) (G:Ahhh, yeah! 'At's right!) (G: Hear me, talkin'!)

<Airplane>

G: Ahhh, yeah.

K: Hunh! Down the creek! Goin' down the delta!

G: Anhh, Bull Corn.

K: Shoot-I reckon.

G: Well, I'll be a suck-egg mule!

K: Here I come, here I come again.

G: Watch it, watch out, watch out now, here he comes, here he comes.

K: James...

G&K: Ahhh, yeah!

G: Ahh, hear me talkin', now. Hunh, here I come. Make it funky, there.

G: Make it slow and easy, there.

K: I like it slow.  
G: Make it funky.  
K: Nice and sweet.  
G: Ah, let's have that good soul walk.  
K: <No!>

K: Hear me talkin'.

G: Hey, hey, unh, hunh, and I'll say it again  
K: 'At's right.  
G: Ahh, let me hear ya.  
G: Hunh!

<lead flub>

G: Ahhh, good timing.  
K: He we are at the Agape Inn.  
G: Make it mellow.  
K: Hah! Hear me makin' it mellow, now.  
G: Here comes the Romper Stomper.  
K: Here, here I come, now.

<K: Wait a minute. See, when we come to a G....>

G: Unh, hunh.  
K: Oh, yeah.  
K: Listen to him, listen to him talk now.

G: Unh, hunh.  
G: Lay it on him nice and easy.  
K: 'At's right, now.  
G: Hah!  
G: Watch out, watch out: Here comes the Romper Stomper!  
G: Here he comes. Watch out.  
K: Here I come, here comes the Romper Stomper.  
G: Watch out for the Romper Stomper!  
K: Here I come, here comes the Romper Stomper.  
G: Watch out for the Romper Stomper!  
K: Here I come, here comes the Romper Stomper.  
G: Watch out for the Romper Stomper!  
K: Here I come, here comes the Romper Stomper.

<Verse>

James Schiller is for me, oooo.  
(Well, let me hear you talkin' now)  
Vote for Jimmie, vote for Jimmie S. Oooo.

(Oh yeah, lay it on him right now, come on, let's go! Watch out!)

He's the man (heh!) we want to vote for, oooo. (yeah!)

Vote for Jimmie or I'll pick up and throw you ou-wow-wow-wow-whoa-whoa-whoa....

G: <whisper> That's right.

G: Ah, yeah.

K: Oh, it's so sweet.

K: Even the Romper Stomper, it brings a tear to his eye.

K: Let's fade out now.

G: That's so mellow.

G&K: Hey, hey, hey, wooo, whooo. That's right, and I'll say it again.

K: End it!

G: Big ending.

G: It's all over now.

K: Oooh.

## Old Adages

I've learned to expect  
that in those things I care least about  
I do not grow better at them  
and the rest  
I'm not that good at either

## Here's What Tired Means

who cares what the words are  
why worry about who will read it  
because no one will  
why do anything more than just keep alive  
as long as you can  
why work yourself overly  
because really who cares

## Who Hates It

playing for keeps  
the pale water is an anchor to desire  
sitting on the floor reading last week's  
London Sunday Times to catch the phrasing differences  
the song that played over and over  
was a Swiss techno slow song about love  
and the rain washed over the windows  
and down the drains back down deep  
into what makes civilization livable

## Easy Money

catch a squirrel  
sedate it with strychnine  
put on a smock coat  
grabs its paws  
twist its tail  
lay it out on your arm  
sell it to a farmer's boy

## Foreign Leftovers

the night event is passed  
the sheets are lightly damp  
one sits on the couch fingering  
her hair back into place  
her slightly hanging full breasts  
sway beautifully  
the other lies on her side facing me  
her breast sticking to my arm  
her eyes drape mine  
one window's blinds are slightly open  
the lights stripe everything behind us  
the night is in the past



## The Good Book

she carried the book  
from the shelf in the barn  
where her father had stored it for easy reference  
how to plant plants and nurture them  
how to tend to cows horses rabbits and chickens  
grafting making beer crushing grapes  
he was gone  
her mother had killed him  
now she needed to know those things  
and how to cook take care of things in the house  
she is gone  
I have the book now

## Speak of Impossible

we carried them there  
something they never expected  
never would expect  
never could expect  
a place they rarely visited  
that I know of  
she planted geraniums  
in front of her nh house  
he never visited anyone's resting place  
but look at it / three colors only  
green the most in late spring  
a deep blue if you look the right direction  
and some grays some stone colors maybe some light reds  
reds from geraniums and the yellows that go with green  
bright greens and shade greens  
you could ask this question  
did they in the end love you  
were they ever proud  
did they worry you were so far away and never called  
see the clear watered river now flowing like sharp glass  
did they ever sit here where you sometimes now sit  
by the river near the green bridge  
did they seem to each other to love each other  
which secrets did they tell each other  
watch me stand back and recreate it all for them  
this is something no one could expect

## Looking At

many hopes  
small ones that grow  
the hedges that block  
our old yard is now overgrown  
filled with shade we never imagined  
even when the oak was tall and full  
and the shag-bark hickory was tall and dropping nuts  
now it's all fallen down / the house rotten  
it is falling into itself its forgetting just barely  
keeping up

## Or Not Much

I missed the tribute  
but I can console because I didn't know of it  
this means of course no one thought to tell me  
which tells me  
what they think  
of me which is nothing

## Oh No

really amazing  
how fame is it's own thing  
famous for nothing really  
but famous enough  
that when people who treat the famous man as ordinary  
because he seems so  
they hide their faces and cry oh  
no  
when they learn his name  
and they really mean  
their cries of despair

## Too Far Gone

I remember the sidewalk from our kitchen door  
to the road  
the thick tall oak we later cut down  
the shagbark hickory spewing nuts  
a stone we could never get out of the ground  
that would rip at our mowers  
the short blue spruces now 40' tall  
the outline of the garden still apparent  
but surrounded by brush  
the pictures are pictures of me too  
such a horrible sight

## Lasting Wish

I wish for this  
a young woman from Europe  
would come and say  
I will be your patron  
and all you need to do is write  
and walk along the river with me  
every day or to a park  
or down side streets and alleys  
I will cook and provide  
talk write walk  
bring your wife along

## Identity Mismatched

hello  
I used to be Dick Gabriel  
the rising star  
the new computer scientist  
the skeptic with the cutting wit  
the happy father  
the deep lover  
the avid bicyclist  
the rock climber  
the lead guitarist  
the poet  
the book writer  
the writer of fiction  
the entrancing speaker  
the ceo the president the cto the fellow the vp the de the staff member  
long dark thick shining hair  
black pensive beard  
soft loving eyes  
legs like timbers  
modest but adept athlete  
programmer designer  
spooky creative thinker  
photographer of note  
many remember me but today as they walk up  
there is no recognition / they walk past  
wondering were those eyes familiar  
this list maps to a list to falsehoods  
my journey turns these corners  
my parents' graves  
my friends' graves  
a great writer's grave  
where I married once  
where I grew up and how I wish it were still mine  
and this keyboard trying to find when to write it all  
because some still believe I am Dick Gabriel  
but I am not him for ten years now  
my wife says maybe more



## Contrary To

I am built for weeping  
for carrying only small loads  
for forgetting quickly and easily  
the strength now of my mind  
is its weakness

## Just Ask the Peace

as time's passed  
my computer setup's gotten better  
now I have computers all around  
they are like slaves or friends  
or purposeful enemies  
writing in little notebooks  
everything I type and many  
things I say  
just waiting for some prosecutor  
to just ask

## Bent Over and Over

what if they were well off  
before he died  
maybe my mother didn't understand that  
just figuring that the nice cars were commonplace  
and all the things that made them look poor  
to townsfolk were merely traditions they chose  
like the heavy breads and kielbasa and sour cabbage  
then he died  
and the source of good luck and money ran out  
she and her mother became poor  
then that's all she ever remembered  
like a tree struck young by a truck  
and unable to remember life without the kink

## Some Streets

two things  
one place right now  
a boy is under a streetlight  
kissing a girl the first time  
and after she will tell him it was nice  
another place right now  
a girl is on a dark street  
being kissed by a boy for the first time  
after her sense of approbation will kick in  
and she will tell him it was nice

## Away From Every Place Called Home

with you the windblown streets  
feel of warmth / once these streets  
sat beneath the river and though those days  
seemed the worst / only the next year  
would happen / but with you  
I walked in the darkness  
who wouldn't need the light near dawn  
to go on

## Again in Cold Europe

sipping an espresso at the table  
by the window on the second floor  
her heavy fur-collared coat hanging  
from the back of her chair  
a book open in front of her  
and below shoppers crowd the covered  
mall just an old alley covered  
by translucent glass held by lacework lead  
she watches the handholders below  
straying away from the rain slowing down  
to browse nothing they like aside from themselves  
in the windows / or perhaps it's the chocolates  
then her small cup still heaving with hot black  
finally the book spragging philosophy or words of imagination  
she can have anyone she wishes  
she doesn't look over here

## Bisbee Princess in a Joint of Coffee

so many of the colors are upset  
with each other even though none  
is a shade past pastel  
but the woman's pants  
as she watches intently the movie on her macbook  
bear a design too intricate and formal  
to be the design of a professional  
such attention to detail to the pants  
of a woman so unpure-lighted  
that her coffee continues to heat up  
even as time passes and her breath  
repeatedly blows over the lips  
of her cup

## Nordic Trainstorming

on the train  
after a long plane ride  
once we were out of the city  
headed for a distant place  
she handed me her ipod  
and played a song sung  
by a woman with an icy voice  
toned by warmed vowels  
I took it as words she  
wished to say but had no words for  
later she proved I was right  
that night / with her body heat



## Snowfound

back where I grew up  
the snow's piled up almost 100 feet  
by bulldozers and dump trucks  
because there is no place to put it  
collected from roads and driveways  
you'd think with all the state and nearby states  
there'd be plenty of room but you need roads  
to get to where you dump it

to be snowed in with a source or two of warmth  
plenty of food and means to drink and all  
is what it means to be alive / a man  
mind and culture pushing out the raving cold  
then around the bend the snowplow veers  
then pushes the snow up the bank in vain  
the snow like a wake filling in behind  
the snow now is up to mid-window  
blankets and warmth  
something sweetly wet

## Torrential Sadness

as I listen to the sad song playing on the computer I write on  
I can also feel myself dying  
not metaphorically I can feel the parts of me I once cherished  
as immortal stopping dead  
it made me think  
in Egypt I am as good as dead  
in Cambodia  
in Indonesia  
no one there experiences me  
I don't experience there or anyone there  
I am dead to those places  
dead to most places on the earth  
and all the other places in the universe  
dead can't be so bad  
I already mostly am

## Pain Ahead

the only hope I feel  
is hope for characters in stories  
and novels / hope for the youths I know  
in their lives ahead  
hope for me is now only for diminished pain

## Road Home

darkness early and a cold wind  
overhanging clouds trees holding still  
onto snow fallen over days  
to the west I feel a pull to leave  
but once I do the pull will be reversed  
like a fish returning near death to spawn near home  
is this what's called fate  
or faith

## Four Years After Death

in 2007 I started to program  
credits for a conference I was running  
at that time I realized it was the culmination  
of my career  
the music I chose to play while the credits rolled  
was sad electronica from Portugal  
the feeling was right  
it was the culmination

## Wrinkled Inklings

some of the days are floaters  
others are tied to an image or a place  
finding the balance is a running joke  
some of the poets I know actually  
believe in themselves

## A Possible Distance

finding the distance  
making it as broad as possible  
like the hot press of love merely abandoned  
no goodbyes after never a hello  
just a kind of yearning  
then the long decline  
as it gets sanded down  
until all that's left is a few songs  
I don't like anymore

## Who Are They / Who They Are

yes I see them  
standing / sitting on cool grass  
my mother at one end near relatives  
of kids I would one day know  
but the boy who stands out the most  
his arms are folded in front of him  
his elbows are on his knees  
he sits in the grass  
hunched over and his heels dug in  
his toes pointed straight up  
and he is glancing up and to the side  
toward the camera  
as if everything going on was just a lame joke  
all this in 1933  
when it was thought we thought  
impossible to be hip



## Are Brown

unimaginable today  
seen from 1000 years ago  
which feeble attempts  
will be recalled in another  
for example did the students  
in front of Merrimac High School in 1933  
suspect I would be looking at the school picture  
being taken right then as I write this

## Last To See Them

tell me of the essentials  
this crowd by the school is fully dispersed now  
I am the last to disperse  
but I was alone by then  
they caught me in B&W

## Snow Angles

too much snow they say  
up into everything  
ice dams breaking roofs  
heating through the roof  
reminds me of a winter back in to '60s  
when it piled to the roof  
ours was steep enough to survive  
everything now has fallen in

## Unbeneathable

which real is real  
the one in our memories or the one  
we later write down  
the one others can read  
like a puzzle or a mystery  
is my life a mystery  
meaning there is no right answer  
meaning there is no wrong answer  
right?

## Advice to Run By

find the people who shout the loudest  
who make claims about themselves  
who believe the self-unbelievable  
then write about them  
warn others of them  
then run for your lives

## About You Ma

Ma / before you join your schoolmates  
in front of the school for the yearly picture  
let me tell you something you won't believe  
first / I will be your son  
second / even though your copy of this picture will burn in 1942  
and no one you know will have a copy  
I will find a copy & photograph it with a digital camera  
restore it to its near pristine condition  
and display it on my computer monitor as a background image  
and today 78 years later I will look at you and your schoolmates  
while I write this terrible poem

## Under the Night

tonight the tears won't stop  
I have this deep pity and regret  
I have already moved into the deep past  
reserved for the oldest  
these pains worry me

## She Never Told

she's walking down the road  
toward the river  
I am hidden behind the stand of trees  
she's wearing a fine but homemade dress  
her short dark hair is curled in the humid late spring air  
she moves so swiftly  
her body sways like it never did when she was old  
if she happens to look back and see me  
she'll see someone she won't meet for years  
her son plotting her story



## Under A Sky Noted For Its Brevity

oh the rain that falls fills the river  
soaks the fields which will turn yellow green in the spring  
rust / decay / a collapse  
she was unable to stop it and barns collapsed  
the outside walls grayed under sun and rain  
without repair it all decayed  
none of her tears stopped that  
none of mine can make a story of it

## The Great Writer

he is a fool laughing outrageously  
writing like a god  
he is obsessed with his father's suicide  
and writes that character over and over  
unreflectively / believing it therapy  
now I see him as easy target  
forget the smart questions  
I wanted to ask / here are  
the dumb ones

## Unguent

man up your skin  
transcendental and approached  
information is hiding from me  
these words fly past its head  
slicing off the tips of its hair

## Potsdam 1910 Winter

the clouds he saw  
were low and dark on their undersides  
patterned like pillows packed like tiles  
early Berlin light filled the cracks between  
and overall the light was filtered through city haze  
smoke and ash the result of burning  
urging ahead the city's awakening  
and purging into the day  
he was excited by the place they sat  
by the distressed river  
he was scared by the thought of moving on

## Figure Active

her coat is filled out  
her breath a white braid to just above her head  
she is willing for me to touch her hands  
I wish our eyes would close simultaneously

## Some Foreign Country

she like all  
of us are removed far  
from the place her dreams  
as extravagant as they once were  
started as small as her and what seemed  
imaginable became un- and she learned to forget to weep

## On To Fly

the poem written that night  
after the day posts what happened  
while the poem written the night  
before posits what will

## Or Bits

smiling faces directed at the camera  
now at me / some other day at those who read this  
most now dead / they were at their beginnings  
with nothing left to do but let them unfold  
but all I see is information not kids  
and what seems like hope is just  
a configuration of ink



## Reunion of Strangers

they danced to disco as a way to remember  
their childhoods and though most of them lumbered and sweated  
two of them made a clear picture of what their youth had been  
the hunk and cheerleader / they danced dance after dance  
while their husband and wife sat near me sipping cokes  
and trying to triangulate their wife and husband  
and themselves too / looking and wondering  
how fate would figure that night

## Have and Have More

one by one the sparrows  
clip each plum petal off the branch  
climbing up until the branch is bare  
then hopping to the next and clipping clipping  
why would a bird remove each petal from a blooming fruit tree  
ask the one who has it all and asks for more

## Her Father's Knife

she had her favorite knife so long  
it had worn down from a good 8 inches to less than 4  
she wouldn't let anyone else use it  
on that day my wife asked her to use it on our short hike  
she resisted / said no / said we'd lose it  
but we promised  
my father my wife and I hiked up to the ridge  
sat on a rock to eat  
my wife peeling a cucumber with the knife  
let it fly off the cliff  
we searched for hours  
nearly till dark  
the knife was lost  
my mother never said a thing  
I've heard her weeping ever since

## Day Fall

the girl walked up the hill  
from the simple 4-room school  
carrying a bag of books and papers  
walking past the homes of the children  
who teased her daily / her and her  
brother / in the town square the rough bus  
waited to take those few who lived beyond  
the village home to farms and isolated houses  
she rarely smiled even at the farm to beloved father  
who rarely yelled at her / rarely raised his hand  
one day she would run the farm alone  
except for a mother always drunk

## Black Holes Are Life

falling into the black  
eyes closed  
the pull is so strong it feels like no pull at all  
they say when you open your eyes  
you will see the light that leads you out  
my eyes have been open forever here  
and that grows clear are the scratch marks  
that make up the black

## Revery

the pull is hard  
all that had raised me up before  
is gone or imagined  
some days I sleep more than half  
feeling is leaving my body / my heart  
on the shore I long for the waves to take me  
small and few

## Just Get On Board

sometimes I awaken to singing  
the voice comes to me like warm butter  
from the other room where she is working  
without thinking of the meaning or the reach  
of the song into other ears / other hearts  
soothing as it is it's not meant for me  
that thought would throw her off  
throttle her throat and stifle the song  
everyone's chances grow thinner

## Milky Way

yes it's amazing  
to be hacked on FB  
who'd a thunk  
the possessive's a giveaway  
and the poor writing  
says ain't me



## Clearing Voices

strange reading someone else's memoir  
of the places near where I grew up  
and how that writer disguised  
places like combining Skip's and Hodgie's  
into Skippys / mysterious ponds  
that don't exist and directions that lead  
nowhere like every memoir / every  
one of them leading back to their boring  
centered guess where writers  
me me me

## Simple Wishes And A Day

sneered at today  
my stock falling  
but tonight I am ready  
for sleep and lots of it  
at least I don't fly into the nest  
of earthquakes my buddy does

## Merrimack

the river smelled of oil and plastic  
dead fish and sewage  
in the winter the ice would form  
over brown bubbles  
bad enough to cause  
15 years of nightmares  
now the fish leap by joy from the river in summer  
and eagles nest above its banks  
only after though my ties have long been broken

## Her

his decision factored in her dowry  
in this case a farm  
her ability to cook  
an anchor in a new country  
and someone less threatening  
less thrilling  
than Kalyna Truss

## Agency

I am in a field  
no one not even birds  
no gnats no bugs  
no worms even under me  
the sky would be blue  
but it's gone too  
now the field  
now me

## Unison

once all the girls were on stage  
the song took one slow turn  
then pushed into the loud ending  
the slow turn though ran low and clean  
his voice smooth and clear  
you could watch all their hips

## Time Sucks

the swaying trees  
the blowing wind  
the fast moving clouds  
the birds flying away  
the insects burrowing deep  
the rain coming sideways  
my body refusing to operate

## Hospice Likens

when they decide it's time  
for me to die and cart  
me off to a stone building in the mountains  
make sure those mountains are covered  
with hardwood / that there is a twin rutted  
gravel road leading up to it  
and pines scattered in those birch and maple woods  
so I can smell the farm I grew up on  
because as they all sit and watch crying  
as if I weren't there all I'll be doing  
is reliving ever minute of my life on the farm  
timing my departure with my departure



## Fear of Flying

in two days I travel  
halfway around the world again  
and through I've flown a million miles or more  
and never made a serious mistake  
I still fear a blunder that will send me away  
forever unable to return  
why so much doubt

## Saturday; Parents Gone

driving to Salisbury  
to get a slice or three each  
of Cristy's beach pizza in the Volksw  
then back to the farm  
to watch a horror movie  
pulled in by tall antenna  
from Rhode Island  
we'd be lucky if there were enough  
contrast in the snow to know  
how many characters etc  
were on the screen at any time  
we'd imagine the rest

## Always Scared

when my parents left for the weekend  
to the place in NH I would revel in the freedom  
except the fear each night  
beyond rational neighbors  
I carried a sharpened knife after dark  
held it like a lover until I fell asleep  
40 years later I can finally let go

## My Fast Friend

fear's been by my side since birth  
I remember the time my mother dropped  
me at Steve Kimbrell's to walk 3 blocks  
to the elementary school where we went  
on Tuesday nights to learn how to dance  
and he was away and I cried every step  
of the way from fear of being alone  
for the class we'd been in for weeks and weeks  
my mother drove up to the school before class started  
picked me up and took me home  
did she know  
did she suspect  
did she hang back and watch

## The Road / The Only One

the road

I am on it walking fast

as I can toward the setting sun

a haloed bulb through a low light fog

reaching only to the tops of pruned shade

trees lining the road and I'm certain that behind

me my shadow is sharp and long / distorted

by my angle to the sun / my head small but long

///

ahead of me my better companion casts his shadow

over me and over mine when he moves ahead

quickly / more quickly than I can move

the sun after all is busy setting

and my companion is faster

indistinct but faster

## Pernambuco

inside the circle the pros sing  
they dance with oblivious european influences  
some american too / it's Brazil you see  
the circle claps and can't help but move  
a little / sway / feet a/shuffle  
but outside the woman who has selected  
the silkiest dress dances lightly and the dress  
bobs seductively / each little move moves it  
more than it deserves / more than I deserve

## Obvious

they ask  
why can't you speak  
they wait for the answer  
but it's because...

## After Smiling

god the fatigue  
the heavy throat  
I need sleep  
and no one to ever bother  
me



## South Girl

raised in a country  
where travel once  
was forbidden  
she now  
is everywhere

## Circle of Circularity

in the favela girl  
walks back to her shanty  
with a bundle of papayas  
she acquired by being a girl  
walking alone on the streets  
surrounding the favela  
where she was into  
that girl

## Unencumbered

she's a doll  
a ripe one  
she leads us to all manner  
in her sleek accent

## They Stepped Past Me

two old men  
outside eating shrimp  
two young hookers  
one young one not so  
the young one  
black hair low silk wrap dress  
breasts defined moves like the sea or  
a samba saying look at me look  
at me look at  
me look

## We're All Dead and This Is Hell

the streets by night  
through tinted taxi windows  
looks great but we all know  
we're at one of the 7  
gates of hell

## Christmas J

I dream of white Christmas  
exactly like those which J used to know  
where treetops shine  
and children hear questions  
he hears the bells of sledges  
he hears the bells of snow

I dream o' da white Christmas  
with each map of Christmas  
that J might write  
his days are merry and shining  
all his Christmases are white cans

## Barzeelian Tango Or Samba

across the street the Brazilian woman  
steps in short steps by her man  
and though he is invisible to me  
she is demure and her long long brown hair  
hardly twists when she glances side to side  
one time toward me

## **Traveling Home**

I test my fears tonight  
finding my way home  
all I need is to get out of this country  
and into mine and then my brain  
will be an asset



## Please Help

I should be writing this  
when I'll be asleep  
after a ride a trip  
from half way around the world  
the other way  
the vertical way  
people are good here  
but fear is a closer friend

## Over Too Much

nothing went wrong on my trip home  
but nevertheless time was taken off  
my clock / I can feel those minutes gone now  
many things seem wrong  
and getting wronger by the minute

## Very Practical

this would be when I'd go to Florida  
to pack up and close up  
get ready for the drive north  
heat driven back and the cold ahead  
her insults unending and lessons on how to drive  
walking from the motels to restaurants and drive ins  
grocery stores and figuring out how to get online  
finally we'd learn the place was snowed under  
and we'd hire a skip loader to clear the driveway  
or find out the well stopped working and hire an artesian well driller  
or the roof would have fallen in and we'd plot  
how to end it all / end everything right then and there

## I Hope Steve Likes This

words coming in like darts  
connections irregular or lost  
spies report truth as if assignments  
while on a street in the dark  
I reported the woman who walking  
away rolled her hips like  
a big no saying yes

## Is Life Simple

there's a long road  
that eventually crosses a bridge  
on the other side it's just as long  
we start at one end of the bridge  
and end at the other  
this is how simple life is

## Right Now

by now every choice  
has been made  
no new homes  
no new wives  
no kids anymore  
what I've got is all I'll ever have  
and that's being taken away

## **It Can Be**

shivering coughing  
throat raw  
too sick to write  
that's how bad

## Lesson With Meanings Galore

the wind in the pine tops  
the wind through the windows midday  
sometimes the wind blows the sea air to me  
sometimes smoke from fires upriver  
always wind means something's hot and rising  
only not here



## Why Is That?

how can he be  
but he really isn't  
better than his father  
who could capture a place  
but wrote short things  
the fame world ignores  
and like me  
he has no accent of his origin

## Water Under

large blocks of ice flowing downriver  
under the bridge then beyond  
long melted now  
how like everything

## When The Eyes Don't Focus

too later for another chance  
do the right thing versus do  
what you need to do  
I would still own the farm  
I would have known myself better  
I would have happier work  
I would not write about another chance

## Passing

I don't think he'll make  
it through the night  
someone with knowledge  
will say one day  
and I'll know if  
I hear it that  
the second doorway  
is opening and it will / it can be said  
that through this world  
I passed

## A Funny Joke

someone told me  
you've lost the will to live  
I told her no I have lost will  
but the will to work only to live  
not the will to do my life's work

## Demoted

if the end is the bottom  
of a dark pit then today  
I was lowered a good  
portion of the way  
and asked to thank  
them for it

## From An Old Movie

a street unchanged for forty  
years / I walk up one side then up  
the other / most windows sport dead  
flies in fly-stick poses and at least one  
newspaper ten years old / a woman passes  
young and sporting / she is every curve  
and tonight the dream I'll forget tomorrow  
will be about her taking up an odd position  
in a bed I'll fall into somewhere along  
that street

## Ronnie D's

Ronnie was devoted  
friend  
father  
brother  
and husband  
he was a simple and loving man  
cherished his family  
his work  
his dog Bella  
his cars  
and motorcycle  
though his challenges were many  
Ronnie never complained  
he lived his life  
giving to others  
touched so many  
with his caring ways  
we will miss him clearly



## Forgiveness

enough pain  
to keep a big man  
down / in bed and weeping  
nothing warm can lure him out

## My Profession Fails Again

who in their right mind  
puts up with the horsehit  
programmers make us do

## Visit Soon

I feel ready for a visit  
for the chance to sit and watch  
to photograph  
to write and revise / to dig deeper  
into the past or paint it  
onto the wall and stare  
until great writers leap back from the dead  
and praise or shred  
I plan to stare  
at them  
at the water rushing by  
one way or another  
I am dedicated

## Technical Logic

musicians can't resist nostalgia  
they take a melancholy song  
and sadden it year by year  
now in my old age I can listen  
to songs that shaped me  
and the shaping seems misshapen  
it's all very wonderful  
and technological

## And More To Make

once I had a big bed in the band room  
and I listened to music on big speakers  
and a loud amplifier that eventually in California  
lost its transistor mind and I threw it into a dump  
I can still remember the day  
the toss of that amp and its preamp  
the hot day and sweat  
the bad taste still in my mouth  
just more mistakes

## A Road Not Findable

there weren't many birches  
on our farm / only in the woods  
behind the L shaped field  
in the crook of the L  
an old dump with bedsprings  
parts of cars or trucks  
who could tell with the rust  
and vines / a road led to the very back  
field where we buried my dog  
the behind that a stand of young birches  
white bark punctuated with black slashes  
I spent many hours of my life  
walking that hidden and woodsy road

## Where / I

our farm had several roads on it  
in the woods  
mostly in tall pine woods  
little undergrowth  
these roads were old  
connected different parts of the woods  
for logging  
for hauling from one field to another  
or maybe once there were buildings there  
maybe one of them leads to me

## I Love Atmospheric Noise

pick a random place  
and it's the ocean  
pick a random time  
and it's not now  
no matter how improbable  
now sounds it was inevitable  
not that long ago or nearly so  
or so it seems / there is a possible  
lessness to it / this is true in the margins  
of our understanding / in the fractures  
of our reality / somewhere at the corner  
of order and chaos



## Reversiness

back there prettiness  
is getting ready for my visit  
as in setting a lure  
baiting a trap  
the one I escaped from when  
I thought the hatred my family felt  
was poison and the depth of dumbness  
imbuing the place beyond my patience  
then there was the lure of the warmth  
sunniness of the place of the other  
the other and I joined  
near the lure actually  
now my finals plans are in the making  
I look at all this as a macrocosm  
of myself

## Fields and Seas

she promised  
to guide me to the end of the pier  
to stand there with a look of humanity  
until I disappeared

## No More I Love You

I used to watch shows  
where the featured character  
would be told “you’re too good  
for them not to want to steal  
you” and I’d  
think yeah that’s me but  
last night I didn’t  
and it was that I just didn’t  
I really didn’t

## She

she of course dressed perfectly  
and so made herself respectable  
as a choice / who could argue  
clever or sincere

## After Being Alone Too Long

if you're in a foreign city  
what is it to be lonely  
imagine the woman walking ahead of you  
in the cold north air her boot backs kicking  
up the back of her coat  
what would be wrong to take her  
to your room / warm together  
create a possible world  
explore different us  
after a light sleep in the night  
by the lights of the city in through the window  
shades not pulled I watch her uncover  
and walk silently to the toilet  
then minutes later her telltale shadow  
returns and pretending to sleep as a spouse  
I reach around her and fall back  
into a real sleep

## Bin Laden

when I started writing these  
poem a days  
it was not long until  
New York was taken down  
and now tonight right this minute  
as I write this I am hearing on the radio  
that the man responsible is dead  
though I hate for people to die  
or be killed tonight I am considering  
an exception

## Alexander's Test

who imagines  
smart imaginations are tied to **this**  
many things can be  
we are interested only  
in  
ones that might be  
are not  
haven't been treated like this  
surprise  
and are pretty once  
the tears dry

## Looking Up / Touching Down

I met her on a dustblown street  
in the deep southwest  
we grabbed a coffee even in the heat  
later she took me to her desert tent  
where we watched the second show  
the dustblown sky and the magic possibilities  
of others



## Forensic Sentiment

outside / the warm air  
the yellowed green  
a breeze that doesn't know its way around  
the grass upon the ground is still cool  
this is where I'll lay my head / my self  
in a better world such dozing off  
would drip away and become  
the right end

## I Got In The Way

the perfect man  
for the perfect woman  
much conspires  
to keep them apart  
circumstances  
time / centuries / seconds  
a bit of land  
a spit of sea  
maybe me

## High Over Me

one constant  
my life long  
music running through my head  
listening  
playing  
I wonder how long after  
it will linger

## My ~~Problem~~ Music

speaking of music  
the song playing now  
over and over  
the one I listened to  
while waiting up  
for my daughter to sleep  
not long after she was born  
I recall the sadness and the rain outside  
the view down to the highway  
where carlights told just two stories  
that was the highest place I ever lived  
the woman the wrong woman  
weren't they all  
all I needed was me

## Some That I've Broken

here is something everybody  
already knows / the road  
you believe goes on forever  
ends at a river / hits it  
square on and your trip from that point on  
will be either an effortless drift  
in a time like Spring or  
a hard swim against a cruel current  
then either it ends  
or the sea will greet you with the widest  
smile a world can smile

## Don't Fear

I look forward  
to the time when what I do  
won't be attempted  
when the critics are off in a bar drinking  
and their only topic will be  
I wonder if anyone's trying  
that these days

## Toward Yuma

tomorrow the road  
hot I hope  
we'll drive all day and drink coffee like Cubans  
eat bad food  
lots of it  
maybe wonder  
on some evenings  
where life is hiding  
when the sun's too bright  
and the night's too shining

## Toward Yuma

the road to Yuma  
swells heated  
I lost what's behind me  
now in front beckons



## Blithely Unaware

well enough  
well nothing here  
the uninformidable sandwich  
that I hope is soon long gone  
will be left behind  
somewhere just as all else has been  
or will be

## Who Finds You

here in Yuma the roads are well kept  
and lead to the border  
many of the buildings  
fake you out with their despair  
it might seem hot but the townsfolk  
just laugh  
we ate too much  
now the room is too loud  
I feel gone

## Lost Perk

the will not to press forward  
apparently is essence  
for when it's gone  
tears and long naps  
follow on

## Sadly

the woman with red hair  
white skin very white  
lace dress with some green  
she smiled pretty at her  
date?  
she was older than she wanted to look  
the backs of her hands were stained with spots  
she spoke well  
watched him with wide wide eyes  
I left before I could see what followed on  
sadly

## Brightness

the pictures are keen  
to be taken and played  
over again / I love  
the margins and the colors  
that can be faded

## Flush Wet

and for that I credit  
the faults of oddly made things  
that they can adapt to wildness  
I notice that for example  
strange shapes appear  
sometimes and sometimes  
the clarity is so sharp the corners  
of my eyes tear up  
I am grateful for these few years of life  
so unlike the margins

## Billboards

from behind him  
I can see her eyes  
green looking up at him  
she is more attentive than he can ever be  
he seems looking in the air  
straight ahead  
maybe down toward her  
never mind  
she is intense  
me too wondering  
who has ever looked like that at me  
he and I  
people like us will never know

## Say Goodbye To The World

the house sits owned  
by a government branch  
the notice claims wonder who lives there  
how that person or those persons  
can make their choice legal  
the world I lived in 40 years ago  
was one I owned enough of to be able  
to walk for hours without retracing  
my steps / crossing yes retracing no  
others' lives are continuous  
mine is in spurts with players all different  
eras / an era I wished to revisit  
is that one / the one where I had my own  
and enough



## Of All Things Living

like all the other times  
this time I felt slow and old  
I the behemoth hunched and sad  
if only I could go down one side  
into health and happiness  
or down the other to quiet  
so unlike the disquiet

## Talking to the Grave Guys

today nearby a grave was filled  
first by the box gold with her name  
Beatrice Yeo 1919–2011  
inside that the coffin  
holding something like her  
second by tractor scoops of soil  
spread and tamped by a handheld shovel  
and tamper / then a layer of loam  
a flat namestone / then the cuts sections  
of turf and what do you know  
the world is a little more like it was in 1919  
but its shape tipped in the direction  
of Beatrice Yeo

## Small Mouth

fisherman infest the banks  
their talk infuriates  
a smallmouth bass in salt water  
that's a first for me  
I've never heard of catching a smallmouth  
bass in salt water  
first time I ever caught a smallmouth bass  
in salt water like this / this is new  
catching a smallmouth bass in salt  
water / ok man I left your medal at home  
ok now so cool it and get out of my frame

## With Butter

she can't help it  
bipolar he says  
her brain racing to begin  
each new thought before the old one  
is all out / so she says things  
like bastard when you joke  
you'll leave them at the restaurant  
but it's just her with her  
critic trailing behind  
then she orders rolls and cornbread  
for my trip home

## On Flying Out

show me why where I lived  
should be forgotten  
why my memories are worth so little  
I write them down I write them  
I revise them / and why not  
they are the only truths  
I find worth keeping

## Last Thing on the Merrimack

the fisherman saying let's rock 'n' roll  
strolls in his snow boots shorts and tee shirt  
into the river with his 10ft pole and when  
he's armpit deep he flings the weight hook and line  
out to the middle of the widest part of the river then  
walks back to the bank and plants his rod  
against a tree and that's what we  
call folks fishin'

## Dream Anchor

what we call dreaming  
is our brain's last hold  
on the real lest sleep  
so resembling death  
is lulled too far toward  
the imaginary and becomes  
what is resembles and the brain  
pulls the mind into the abyss  
and all right again with the  
world locally speaking

## Surely It's Love

my mother was right  
about my flaw  
soon to become  
a fatal one



## Stars Up On The Hill

the fields I remember  
are gone now  
either grown over with junk trees  
or with homes I never lived in  
when I see them though  
the look the same  
do my eyes lie  
or does the world itself

## Now I Feel Better

I learned today  
I shouldn't compare myself  
to the best in the world  
only those I grew up with  
because where you start and end up  
is a better measure than only  
where you end up

## As If Thinking Too Hard

tonight my head went  
all sweaty after a good cup of coffee  
and I wonder what sort  
of bad sign this could be  
yet another and brief like all the rest

## Consumable

what is this sadness  
who made it and how  
bad can it get  
like a pair of geraniums planted by a headstone  
first one side of me then  
the other will be eaten by a fat thought  
the started its life about  
the same time I did

## Fostering

the decisions made  
must stand  
the test of time  
if we are to trust to make  
them ever again

## It Starts With a Call

the call / the phone  
ringing like that then the voice  
on the other end / I knew her  
and she said Helen  
Helen the hospital  
shall I get the message  
on the other end of the wire  
stretched from the house  
to the pole pole to pole  
into town and Ethel on that other end  
time to go  
the hospital  
and the end

## How She Left

heavy rain wind  
heavy thunder but before  
sharp quick lightning  
a spark across the window  
she's afraid but cannot move  
her insides twist and the blood comes  
she remembers the time  
when she was little  
and the lightning past her head  
exploded the picture of Jesus  
all that might have happened that night too  
but she decided to die first

## **Simplicity Ends**

deep thunder and high flash lightning  
scared her  
to death



## Too Small Too Tall

finding the right  
takes about the right  
amount of time

## Forgivable

when I asked him  
why he died  
all he answered was when  
he said only facts could be told  
that the world that surrounds the living  
is filled only with facts  
truth he said  
didn't factor  
I thought he sighed

## Paris Riff

before his words were  
like the swan who glides  
in the water so  
smooth on a smooth  
surface so clear and sharp so  
silent and crisp as they easy-speak  
before he spoke he was  
as the swan walking  
stumbling fearful on dried leaves  
as he began to speak it was  
as the swan steps onto the water  
to glide like the slight curled smile on  
the tips of her lips

## Affinity or Absence

does wanting count  
who built that in  
hunger I can understand  
desire makes sense  
but the want  
the lack  
the absence  
how could that come from nothing  
except by affinity

## Who Gets It?

after decades  
to hear music clearly  
my father would be in tears  
imagination versus ears  
he took imagination  
and was a musician  
I ears and am a listener

## No Memory of It

how to zero memory  
forget everything fast  
with the fewest lasting effects  
so it's not possible to remember  
when and how you forgot

## **Sitting Around**

she still has  
her ice grey eyes  
her voice is still constricted  
do I still wish?  
should I?

## **No Art This Time**

I suppose she wondered  
who I had become  
and why I'd shy away  
we're not young and not again  
when she walks away this time  
all it will be is walking away



## Summer What

the stems ride high  
I'm vaulting the flowers  
hoping for clean clearance  
meanwhile a good gleaming sound  
blurts from the speakers  
making this writing hard and ugly

## After All

she was standing by the river  
facing it late one night  
from what I could see the water was black  
and the red lights locating the piers  
smeared their red on the black  
the bridge was green and its lights  
she had something important to say  
to me but she never saw me arrive  
never heard me walk nearly up to her  
stand behind her stare at her from behind  
both of us perplexed by the water  
by what we had planned to say  
instead I left / really left  
she never followed  
I guess we said it all

## After More

I settled in a flat place  
absent trees or even tall brush  
so though my eyes had little power  
it felt like I could see forever  
never spellbound by her turned away from me  
backside view and the tendernesses  
I saw lying beneath

## Her And Me

what happened was that the past  
disappeared / once time had passed  
it was gone / even photographs could  
be held aside / no more / I own the past  
and the look on my mother's face  
at 17 kneeling one row deep in the grass  
with her friends beside her tell me this moment  
was one the never crossed her mind  
during her long and sadness streaming life  
and what a disappointment I was for her

## And Passion

I wish the beauty of music  
making it in small groups  
could instill the great talks  
the scientific presentations  
to see several working together  
to make it all make  
sense would make  
the world of science safe  
for thought

## Locked In Decision

outside the window  
sky lit by the city  
cold air draws beads of sweat  
from the hotel room  
inside she has settled under the feathery duvet  
is resting her head on her hand  
elbow creasing the pillow  
it's not late and the night will be long  
the morning and afternoon too  
we are camped and will never leave  
voluntarily

## One Night In Boston

his living room was unlit  
aside from small spots on his McIntosh  
and TEAC tape player  
a reading light / his flat  
on Beacon near the Hill  
dark wood where wood would be  
red Turkish carpet and deep blue chairs  
he drank cognac and commented on my taste in music  
the first urban man I ever met  
he stared me down  
he crushed me using culture  
I was / I became / I remain  
a farm boy

## Now There

right now a woodchuck  
is sitting by an entrance to his burrow  
in the cemetery where he lives back East  
if I could I would be there near him  
watching the sky darken but  
not all the way as the city just over the trees  
fights with infinite dark  
waiting just outside our eyesight



## The Last Bit

I can't shake it  
I am unable to find joy  
anywhere / eyes so sad  
they all say / why would  
I want that / how can I escape it  
is this what it all comes  
down to

## **So What If**

beneath the heat  
layers of sweat  
unpliable thoughts  
what if perfection  
were the worst thing

## **Down and Down**

every day  
I lose something else that seemed valuable  
and the depression grins

## Berlin Story (i)

once in Berlin  
I found her running into a doorway off the main street  
into small village  
a café / a bistro / a market  
and flats all the way up  
I lived there with her my  
whole life just to see what  
that would be  
like

## At The Top of The Stairs

she didn't care  
we didn't talk  
we spoke so differently  
only our movements were the same  
her clothes were layered  
and her tight pants came  
to a point / we ate too many times  
and after her shower we laced up  
then the dreams

## 1880s or So

we moved through the tall yellow grass  
on the other side of a green stand of pines and such  
near a river running green and brown at the end of winter  
looking for a place to camp / to build a fire of twigs  
then larger boughs / our aim simply a hefty  
meal of sofky followed by a night of tight sleep  
in rough but heavy and many blankets

## **Berlin Story 2**

an unknown girl in the corner  
waiting for a chance to take a picture  
stands in plaid skirt and furlined coat  
bookbag in one hand and camera hanging  
from her neck / her perch is the crease  
of two smooth tall stone building walls  
she made me cry / her wet hair did  
I needed her

## Berlin Story 3

sitting with his coffee perched in one hand  
holding the tall cup from its top  
he smiles at the deep mocha flavor it sacrifices to him  
his short hair and short mustache make  
him out to be my age  
his ribbed sweater make  
him from a different place  
he is spiked by a few low lights  
hanging above the bar where he sits  
reflections are blurred / I think  
another coffee awaits or perhaps  
my dinner with her requires me



## **Another**

almost every day  
a setback  
some important  
some annoying  
but I get laid low

## **Faithless Again**

a spread of sand awaits  
red under a red sky and sun  
sprinkled about spots of green and burnt brown  
some rock and some would say minerals  
once thoughts roamed here

## **Shortest Story**

a quick flash across the sky  
we awake and reach  
comes a cracking roar  
then a hard rain  
finally a dreamless sleep

## Stay And Watch

never thought I'd see a date  
like today's / perhaps the edge of the century  
as I figured what age death began  
funny how memories hang on  
how the bits lie or diffuse  
the length of truth shortens  
just while the length of shadows  
draws the opposite

## To Far Away

the land is yellow with wheat  
or green with produce and grass  
green with trees some with white trunks  
it looks like home could look  
were I to go I think I would weep  
into the rivers and kiss the soil  
if I could see the grave of a relative  
I would jump for joy then hug the ground  
this would me I had found me

## Pining

so warm / hot and the distance  
is in the way again  
I sit here and stare / the photos  
as important as the different stations  
of devotion / I wish I could stop  
all this flailing and concentrate  
on remembrance / and making up

## More of Same

why oh why  
does everything go wrong  
like this / diagnostics  
tingling fingers  
bad ram  
panics / everything is crap

## Selection Committee

they ask me to do  
what I am unable to do  
the sound of my name has just  
reached them / I shouted it  
decades ago



## Turns To Go

I was on the bed  
lying sick at heart and wondering  
about the future of the next five  
minutes when she stood up  
and all I could see was her soft skirt  
wrapping her legs  
she left the room  
taking everything important

## Cambridge The Other One

song for worse is better  
Notting Hillbillies  
Mark Knopfler  
a dollar a day  
get my money  
get my pay

## So There

it takes longer to figure things out  
not thinking of everything that's not constant  
64 bit versus 32 bit  
something not contended with so far  
but I did figure it out  
and the Apple Genius didn't

## Lineman

the song is a longing  
there is the one  
then there is the echo  
which is the truth  
it's a call to a place  
that holds only you  
and desires  
they speak of the "other"  
when we speak of people  
in this song the place that calls  
in an other / it's where you live forever  
and the land reflects your emotions  
you live every day there a sad but perfect day  
everyone who knew you once wonders  
where you are / they may look but they  
never find / you can be there with the one  
you've loved but can't attain  
it's like a heaven but it's a hot dry flat dusty Kansas

## The Space Between a Man and His Metaphor

the space  
the dust blowing  
scraps blowing down the street  
the sadness filling every sunlit place  
the sadness hiding in the shadows waiting  
for me to pass by / to hijack any optimism let  
alone the happiness  
the space

## Obscure But Unknown

taking a nap  
talking all night  
thrusting into the wrong situation  
making a beautiful photo HDR and deleting  
the originals / such details  
defy arrangement / one just happens  
they just happen / my head snaps up  
when the sleep deepens when I sleep  
while sitting in front of my workstation

## Built For This

out in the grass strip  
between bike path and road  
the rabbits munch and though the walkers  
and bikers come within inches they  
never stop pulling at the grass  
lying as if in seductive repose  
or pointing their ears a different direction  
but when a crow hangs above floating past  
they freeze / scurry for the berm and slough beyond  
and crouch in the tall swamp grass  
by the shore birds and egrets  
afraid being made in them

## Still On

the past  
the memory of it  
drains out my eyes  
and falls like tears  
on the dry ground  
it will remain



## I'm Forever

I do not know how often I am  
in the last 3 years sobbing on the bed throwing  
too often I had wanted to make the public authorities  
exercise my freedom of religion worm  
even the medical officer was sent  
the ORF is my story processed in a detailed documentation  
all this only because I have a good Pastafari  
but I've been patiently...  
eat!

today I could on the Vienna office  
get my new credit-card-driver's license  
in the photo can be seen clearly  
I am wearing a colander on her head  
my affiliation with the Church of the FSM  
demonstrates I'm partying my mind  
my religious freedom Sun

laugh at me for 10 minutes  
in the office dead nobody understands  
it is divine  
(and this time even literally)

golden travel times to break!  
I'm sure I've gotten from now on  
every routine control of the whole program:  
safety vest  
warning triangle  
first aid  
repair kit  
registration certificate  
bubbles

## Unfree

every day the cries  
grow sharper  
longer  
spurred by the littlest things  
all I can do is listen to the music  
repeating all night

## Crazy Like It Is

her voice sweet as it is  
makes me stare  
at the floor  
so it is with the singing voice  
of a melancholy woman  
singing of love  
or her life

## Signal Tonight

so it's the winter  
the middle of it  
when it gets close to dark  
the sun's been low  
already a long time  
this means the streetlights  
will glow a sickly yellow  
well into the night  
maybe beyond  
well beyond  
sickly yellow  
till snow melts

## Quick Downhill Ride

down the road the smells  
tarweed eucalyptus dried grass  
wind in the oaks  
fog through the wind gap ahead  
some smell the faint salt in the breeze  
such a perfumery  
such a touching blend  
the perfect balance out  
there has no reflection  
just rejection

## We Got 'Em

the size of a person's craziness  
grows with the ingestion  
of silly words  
silly sentences  
silly speeches

## During or After a Storm

would I have been able  
to open the door and be a savior  
her life draining away  
the pain like nothing before  
whose name did she say  
to herself last  
which face came to mind  
which scene in her life  
real or imagined  
regret / fear / anger / hate  
disappointment  
what did she believe  
ultimately  
her life was for

## How It Starts

first the cracks in the tv signal  
then flashes across the bottoms of clouds  
roiling flashes and vibrations in the black puffed clouds  
next a long low rock-like rumble that shakes the concrete slab  
beneath her / and she is alone in the heat  
and dark from the power stopping  
and everything around and in her fading black  
from the pains in her gut and she runs on the toilet  
she knows no more storms will come



## **Bitch**

caught Ayn broken down by the side of the road  
she croaked help me  
“do it yourself”

## Hunger for Amazement

black water under a green  
bridge yellow lights  
crescent moon rising  
middle of the night  
the fear dogs are barking  
running closer

## North Fear

ok I never go there  
it never has been home  
I'm afraid of the whispering pines  
when the wind is cold  
and comes off the lakes  
it would force me inside  
to the stove fire and solid bed  
too close

## Last Time Too

after I rested my forehead  
on the cold glass  
fifteen floors up in a hotel in the north  
I smelled the old smell from home  
of the cold air dropping down the surface  
of the glass and I stared at the lights  
from uncovered or partially curtained windows  
in the row of flats down and to the right  
on a street that angled past the back of the hotel  
past one of them I thought I saw a woman  
unclothed or nearly so I couldn't tell she moved  
so fast past the window and I stood back just a fraction  
and reflected I saw a woman unclothed or nearly so I couldn't  
tell she moved so fast out of the bathroom into  
a bed about to be shared for the first time

## Envelope Please

the snow and scattered ice  
on the road didn't slow me  
down when I was young  
and biking from farm to bridge  
and beyond meant only storing  
things to remember when biking  
became hard

## Take Heart Most Worried Souls

the comfort of being forgotten  
and knowing that you have been  
if you worry you won't be  
take heart in the fact that it's a necessary  
part of the physics of existence  
which itself will one day be forgotten

## I Have Found the Heated Misery / Mystery / Solitude

the point of the repeating  
repeating lonely chords  
the repetition / repeating the words  
the line / the hope abandoned  
when they add an end to the song  
they show how little they know  
of the nature / of life

## Old Old Stock

my father worked in tubes  
built radios / amplifiers  
he had many but now 12  
years past his passing  
the boxes are near empty  
all that're left have been used  
and haven't been stored well  
their age then will make them  
weak / make their song rough and soft  
make them resemble all who have  
handled them



## Bad Boys

to be humble when you're great  
is like handing a bandage to the man you've punched  
to be humble when you suck  
is like telling the truth outside the confessional

## **Humility Squared**

I am the feeble vessel  
that embodies an uncommon  
but foul tasting too-old wine

## Political Shame

better to lie  
or repeat lies  
better to be on the side of evil  
or just stupid

## Stories For All Occasions

no matter what happens beneath  
the story happens above  
taking in everything  
stretching what lies above  
so it's so smooth so strange  
so wonderful

## Only At Her Best

I saw her working  
hard in the weight room  
lifting via a machine  
small weights but she  
sweat all the same  
and looking at me  
she clearly saw no  
one to shy away from

## Why She Did It

she left the farm  
sold it  
to finally forget how it happened  
how her father was killed  
how he died  
and her role in it

## She Did All My Work

where was she  
what did she do when she found out  
did she find out  
did the police talk to her  
did she plan the funeral  
did she stand there while they spoke of him  
did she hold back and watch them fill in the hole  
why did she believe I was no good

## Against Will

the water so black  
the bridge above haunts in green  
if your gaze softens the water's surface melts  
something about the place  
fills death with dread



## If What?

what if she never knew  
just a question in her head  
as her mother drank herself over the edge  
what if driving the tractor  
with her mother behind working the mower  
she thought of tipping the machine  
what if when she saw the snakes racing away  
she thought of jumping and letting  
things happen  
things happen is what the neighbors said  
what the police said what her brother said  
what the priest said before cutting the kielbasa in half  
everyone was drunk one day afterward  
she could see what that meant  
what a killer that was

## Story Matters

if only I had known some of this story  
I could have asked  
I could have tried different times  
my that's why my father told me  
he would stand by her no matter what  
he knew the story and her role in it  
knew she couldn't live alone with it

## Story Unravelling

they reported he had been poked  
hard in the abdomen a week or two  
earlier and this was a re-injury  
what if that first poke was the truth  
and the human kick was covered up  
by it / what if my mother thought of this

## All Figures

it was to save everyone's reputation  
to think a woman could do that to a man  
and what did the man do to deserve it  
they believed he would live  
but he didn't and an assault  
became a killing  
they all had mean streaks  
it's what drew them together  
what drew their blueprints

## But Too Late

I picture her  
sitting in the hay  
in the loft  
maybe on the rafter just above  
hay smell cow piss chickens  
thinking through the options  
no one was about to die  
only the shame facing the family  
the nosy neighbors who once seemed  
so fit and friendly  
talking and talking to the others  
to the chief / the day was too hot  
for thinking and the hay still not  
quite dry fumed her as she sat  
crying then thinking  
the lie would work because everyone down  
the road each way knew of the accident last  
week and this week's would be the same  
a double accident / a sharp horse-driven  
jab in the same place / the tongue of the wagon  
years later she told me it was the horse's kick  
the better lie

## By The Stones and Dusk

she ran through the fields  
and down the little forest road to the back back  
field then to the stone wall  
at the base of the oak she dug  
to the box of jars  
unlatched it and drank  
amber in the bottle  
and through the maple leaves  
in the younger field to the West  
he had died in Amesbury  
despite the hope that hung  
over them all

!

gorgeous galaxies celebrate  
Hubble's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday  
when beauty and science collide  
a collision of past and present  
evidence and theory collide  
with galactic proportions

## What About Now

they never understood  
I put it to their parenthood  
but then I think do I never understand  
my daughter my children  
they thought me stupid in lots of ways  
everyone is smart the way they can be smart  
what would my father think  
of this tube amp playing right now



## Steep Hills

time is running out

I grow tired

I struggle to get back strength

worry worry

## Us Just Us

when I say I grew up a century ago  
it's not some figurative claim  
the way we lived alone out there  
on the western edge of our small town  
we mostly made grew or cut down  
everything we needed  
isolation was so constant  
we never noticed that the whole  
world was us

## Smells

the vexing problem of place  
the stitchery where she sewed soles to uppers  
the farm of hay and animals  
work everywhere  
working at a machine above the river  
it smells of shit  
working with a pitchfork in the barn  
it smells of shit  
the problem is vexing  
because there is no purchase

## Guess Where?

I have something to tell you Ma  
what's that  
I'm pregnant  
when are you due  
right now  
quick I scrubbed the bathroom floor  
it's the cleanest place in the house  
thanks ma

## Lasting

how many hours or days  
maybe a week of pain  
fear before the final storm  
scared resenting the unfairness  
of living beyond those who would help her  
she never loved me too much to keep me away  
but respected me too little

## Twelve Dead

the cars seemed to have exploded  
doors gone  
hoods gone trunk lids gone  
at the bottom of a little gulch  
the road dipped through  
blood like paint blown  
out a severed commercial spray painter  
we drove past  
the drivers it seemed from the little glimpse I had of them  
and what the Sunday night gathered crowd remarked  
we elderly and the victims their families  
coming back from the White Mountains  
where we were headed  
we cursed the delay

## Wrong Some More

everything down  
trip coming up  
scrambling as usual

## Poor Duncan

she up and married  
someone else after a to  
me fairy tale romance  
with a casual friend  
they both were photographers  
and she trusted only  
him to do it right and well  
and it was a true feeling she  
had to ask him to picture her  
and another wedding in the woods  
and he did  
his casual blog post couldn't hide  
what it did to him



## God Says “For Your Memory Only”

people who try to value  
education by using money  
are sick little puppies

the light this late afternoon  
in Portland was beyond perfection  
and my camera in my room  
by accident

## PDX / Looking Out

cars down the highway  
across the tarmac  
emergency vehicles  
sirening toward a disaster  
(but now they are returning)  
little smears of cloud  
but the light is pure and filtered  
by some great artist  
I wish I could be the one  
to paint the memories  
of those dead who wish  
they were not  
I picture each gazing up  
like one whose petition to leave  
was made nobly and inconclusively  
I picture one whose instincts  
for some other is like to children  
but whose instinct for me  
is other

## Red Metal and In Thought

I was sitting in a great building  
tall overlooking the city and the river six  
blocks away night but not late  
across the way sat a great building  
lights on all up and down  
some rooms looked like offices  
some like apartments  
never a person in sight  
one by one  
or in coincident groups  
the lights went out  
hours it took but I watched  
unblinking and in a funk  
until it was all black  
except the lights from my great  
building which lit that great  
building and its blood leaking  
red roof

## Connectors

so I said  
to the shiny redhead  
posing in the math stacks  
are we on the same side  
of love's surface  
or not and

## Grand And Boring

nothing like fear  
keeping you up  
advising the sweat  
I live now to tell  
teach some might say  
but it's just the fabulous story  
all the great thinkers have surged ahead  
time for a slowpoke like me  
to turn off the jets  
straining to keep up  
the peloton is long gone  
time to tell stories

## Not The Innocent Woman

against ideology

I claim it was not the clearcut  
answer / Nana was not the innocent  
woman who killed out of preservation  
and exonerated because men are violent  
and women innocent  
she still provided the moonshine  
the milk the geese the turkeys the pigs  
the eggs to the important people in town  
and the neighbors closed ranks  
so nothing but the story my mother made up  
was given to the chief

## I Remember I Was Sad

she hopped onto the frame  
of my bike / her legs over on one side  
and I took her for a short ride up the street  
into New hampshire  
I recited my social security number  
I just got my card  
these were just a couple of the old  
things I remember

## **Love & The Shiny Ark**

the sadness that arises  
when the land that was once yours  
and cherished is now someone else's  
and has been trashed



## California Undreaming

I miss big weather  
here we get a heavy rain  
sometimes / hot but not  
scorching / I miss the blizzards  
the thunderstorms all summer  
the hail the floods even  
trees down leaves all missing  
days that make wish I were here  
the make here the perfect dream  
it's the longing I miss  
having makes me sad

## Dropping Down

where I'm from September means get  
ready for endings / just a couple  
of months until earliest dark days  
and already the trees act it there  
then

## No Free Lunch

soon the creative partners  
will well up and wish  
their strange likes on me  
without thinking  
I'll write them down  
automatic writing?  
no it's manual

## Hold

in the trunk of my car I'll  
carry a hand spade a bottle  
and mulch to spruce  
up the little garden  
I've built time after time  
by the stone that marks their passing  
in hopes it'll  
take

## Inner Bound

oh yes the pretty woman  
said and then  
I whisked us both  
to the middle of the bridge which  
spun around smartly but slow  
with four tight men  
turning the crank  
we sat at either end of the twisted apart span  
while the tall boat with sail furled motored  
up the river but with the tide  
toward that unpronouncable thing  
everyone fears / then loves

## Bad Neighborhood

after years I still  
fear the river  
the water in it  
clear as it can be  
I can watch fishermen wade  
up to their armpits  
but I still can't get closer than three feet  
I suppose when god remakes hell  
into the east side of heaven  
some old timers won't be able to walk the sidewalks  
for fear of a drive by

## August

who cares about the poor  
their lives and health are wastelands  
we the rich hope they die soon  
that's why we take their health care away  
that's why when they retire we give them nothing  
I mean it's their fault for not knowing  
that as good businessmen  
we were lying the whole time

## Thinking of Hard Things

writing a simple sentence  
reminds me of elegance  
the awkward intercourse  
of function and aesthetics  
a minimalist that cannot  
be revised



## In A North

walking the hard wind streets  
I saw a galvanized door  
with a big red A  
on it and inside  
upstairs in a sweet bedroom  
I imagined the young two  
coupling and for them  
it's all a new start with no scar  
long in healing  
and me / I was cold  
getting colder  
able only  
to walk slower and slower

## 1937 as If Important

the last of the cars are drove away  
the one on the horse too is gone  
around the bend and up the hill  
behind her a stone drops on the wood  
just lowered into the ground  
on the other side of her leaning on a trunk  
beyond earshot two men smoke and wait  
she can smell it / it smells like loneliness  
looking down at the oak box  
she crosses the threshold from girl to bitch

## On My Way

coming into Boston tonight  
I saw all the lights spread out  
like that thing Eliot said things spread out like  
kind of yellow or maybe some orange too  
car lights flashlighting roads  
and each other  
I was scrunched into a window seat  
but an exit so lots of leg room  
several of the women were gorgeous  
they probably still are  
I got into the house  
and only everything had moved somewhere else  
outside the reflecting window  
only the dark

## Nothing Else / Nothing More

the river was running high  
with a full moon at noon  
everything was pulled apart  
and so the river was running high  
that and the heavy flooding last week  
what I remember are the stories I heard  
of floods of yore / once the past is the past  
everything's a story / get busy learning  
how stories go

## Body Politeness

lots of days are when beautiful  
women are born and each is a harm  
to many / perhaps you have seen  
one trying to climb up onto a tractor  
in a tight pencil skirt and even though  
nothing showed everything  
was seen

## Femme

with her wide hips  
she rotates from her back to her side  
her legs lead  
her black hairs hangs back  
through it all  
made of things we cannot name  
she moves all who see  
slashing down the street  
sitting slowly in a held out chair  
at the most expensive restaurant  
a man can afford  
whatever they try  
she is more

## Green to Red Confusion

in the beautiful park  
we call the final resting place  
even the trees mention their mortality  
which we think of as humanity  
sometimes but it's really just death

# WTF

a layer of salt  
kosher preferred  
sea salt otherwise  
then the steak  
a layer of salt  
kosher preferred  
sea salt otherwise  
warm stewed tomoatoes  
welcome to the Pine Club



## Slight Love

of course the ships still quell  
the desire to languish  
by water dreams act out  
the final instruments hang back  
like a thorn unwilling to prick  
once I sat by a big bay  
and wondered how much order  
could be tolerated not just by  
the fiends flying by and leaping  
but by the sharp sun that turned  
the pretty woman's face a bit red  
and then redder

## In The Dark A River A Loved

we saw the water  
we saw it blacker  
than any night  
nearby lonely women  
tended their beds  
they loved their windows  
from them the river seemed silver  
and the wind up from the sea  
was warm and caressing  
every day they walked down to the bank  
wearing their best skirts and dresses  
listening from behind the trees  
you could hear the sway of the music  
they walked in time to  
everything was ripe  
only one thing wasn't

## Into the Soul

a rollicking beat  
melancholy chords and melody  
to this I entered the cemetery  
for the last time this late afternoon  
I think they would have stopped to listen  
were they around / in theory they were  
but the actual of it never made much sense  
to me / I hope they would recognize  
the best of my melancholy / how  
it could become with sweat art

## River My Friend

the river doesn't expect  
makeup and fashion style  
it doesn't care who gave birth to you  
it doesn't need you and it eats the sad  
runoff from hills and fields and beyond  
that the mountains and high lakes  
it is the color of its bed or of its depth  
it would gladly take you to the sea  
or beyond  
it is always ready

## One Last Time

in the shadow of the hangar  
pools of light from the parts being taken apart  
tangle your toes and sandaled feet  
no one near you is beautiful  
yet you seek and seek them  
some of your thoughts are hinged  
when you thought they were un  
you marvel that you keep trying  
passionless / hankering for your mind  
to soar

## Falling Deep

standing by the road  
cars swerve past  
on the bridge / I step  
up onto the silly curb  
the bridge shakes side to side  
one day it could be gone  
everything I mean

## One Warm Night In September

some of the worst times were had while the door was open  
in the outside people walked by the house  
in the doorway we made love  
30 feet from the street  
we did something that cannot be spoken of

## Sidewalk Scene By Outdoor Café

in the mustard  
dress with the flared skirt  
a woman walks away  
but it feels to my eyes  
that she's walking here  
for me / for that's  
how they do it  
for me



# Splash

perhaps I won't make the trip  
wouldn't that be a trip?

## Who Flees

the haunted desert reclaims  
its green / its kindling  
so many of its fears  
surface at night in the cold of space  
hide beneath in the heat of high heavens

## Away and Far

where my imagination flees  
the waters flow  
the bridge spans  
the cold air rises  
up to spark the fires of Winter  
give me the strength to find  
a way  
any way  
back

## Lifelingers

sporadic  
cold rain / Spring with its yellowed green  
dripping heat and frappes  
cold rain / Fall with it's greened yellows  
snow of concealment  
the visits are not continuous  
everything's in a jerk  
and finally appearing

## To The Heap

they in turn embraced this  
gruff emissary from the exotic  
intimidating but newly  
chic world of technology  
Gabriel's dissonant desiccated plainchant blank  
verse was dark disturbing distant candid calculating and desperate  
at once florid yet monochromatic  
it could "cons-up" a soul  
in a single haunting searing stanza  
and remand it remorselessly insouciantly  
to the heap in the next

## Along With It

it struck me the narrative  
didn't fit the crime  
time to suffer the consequences  
of deep laughter

## Lying Lessons

a pretty picture  
made from poor things  
and squinting eyes  
the shades have rolled off  
the sky saturated  
sharp / sharpened  
it becomes memory

## Desperate Fear of Seeing

there's a beauty to a place  
even when the skies threaten  
to grow dark and though it's a threat  
it happens on a timetable  
all these years I had the directions wrong  
everything wrong  
my strategy was empty and I pushed reluctantly  
for fear of having nothing but my lack of long vision  
made for intermittent strong focus like a horsepowered engine  
just banging each cylinder's heart out  
pounding like a heart



## Deserts To Me

there are little fears  
just right across the street  
sometimes the street's so heated  
from a faraway thing like a judgment  
but white hot from boiled emotions  
that feet fear the heated touch on the soles  
behind me / I am on one side  
of such a street / stands a bar where men stand  
and wobble as they soothe their throats  
attack their senses / is nothing in there  
where are the gentle ones who seem  
always to weep / this makes me think  
of cooling rain and maybe a deep rest

## The Long And Short of It

sometimes a month is all there is  
the phrase our time together  
makes its round through amnesia  
and back  
in a room nearby perhaps downstairs  
a piano sounds deep chords  
given all this all  
I can imagine are the rooms up on the second floor  
lit late and shadows passing by  
as I stand against a tree trunk wet from days of rain  
to me the world is nothing but moments like this  
strung together until they reach a month

## What Messed It Up

there is quite a capture  
the hard drive scrambled  
behavior unlike civilization  
cautious but  
seems back

## More White / More Heat

here is something worth supposing  
that the joy at the start balances  
melancholy at the end but really  
it's just a tilt / a long sad one  
but that sadness is someone else's  
not part of the original equation  
some might say a long joyous one  
if the point were to mess  
with my mind

## Losing Lessons

I saw a small stone  
just below the river's top  
I wondered whether it was there  
the first time I crossed that bridge  
50 years ago / as I sit here in the bulb  
of light my computer makes  
it seems so not long ago but  
math and biology say it is  
and such a small stone  
perhaps it was larger then  
like my vision  
my hopes

## That's How They Do It

I remember walking from the bus to my front door  
high school in the 60s  
if I walked that same path today it would be through ruins

## Dreadful Reflection

reading of my life  
as written by an new era Oscar Wilde  
I picture our farm and it's heavy farm smells  
hay drying after mowing  
cow dung and piss and yes the raw milk  
the odd metal smell of cold New England well water in a metal cooling tank  
pears and apples fallen from an old productive orchard  
rotting in September sun and yellow jackets sampling them late in the season  
their vision for a great son went bad early  
my crossed eyes and lazy habits  
my mother compelled to do schoolwork for me and then later my classmates thinking me a genius  
rejections by good schools and a band instead of steady work  
no girls no women she knew there was no future in her future and none for me but that came second  
my father who struggled against her without the weapons men have of fist and liquor  
he was cowed and I felt him cowering downstairs many nights when her yelling started  
I know I know it's never fair Ma  
"one of the few genuine Renaissance men to emerge from the OO milieu"  
"scholar, scientist, poet, performance artist, entrepreneur, musician, essayist, and yes, hacker"  
they'd laugh tell me they told their friends I became a plumber  
it's nothing the world would ever think even tolerate that's how they'd see it

## Magic Of Writing

how amazing  
how writing it down  
clears it up



## Intaglio

writing like a tango  
rhythms and twinned sounds  
the beauty of beautiful language  
is hard to describe plainly

## Under Nuts

imagine the great encounter  
from the perspective of an acorn  
or a shag bark hickory nut  
in deep grass just turning  
as autumn rolls on  
I can picture it but it's in my imagination only  
such a place

## 30 Hadley Road

the stone wall  
so long ago sitting there as families come and go  
then my turn  
I'd run from one side to the other  
imagine  
enough land that it sits astride  
a stretch of road  
my land on this side  
my land on that side  
enough land that to walk from one end to the other  
through woods  
takes half an hour  
half an hour  
to be ripped from it  
in the name of a love long ago divorced  
and its replacement long ago divorced  
when I could have that land now  
to live on  
instead of this

## Music Being Always

when I sat in the padded rocker  
in the pool room in Merrimac  
I listened to music played on tube amps  
tubes / their glow  
a warm but clear tone  
I listened each song over and over  
a soundtrack for my thinking  
today is the same  
tonight  
right now

## Lost Side of Town

why do they keep asking me  
I can't judge  
I have no qualification  
how can I say no without rejecting

## You're Still With Her

music with chords that strain  
whiny voice / words that make no sense  
except sadness / and a way to find me  
I listen / what else is there to do  
then I stop when the cricket chirps  
as an accent to the song and years alter  
I'll stun myself by hearing that chirp  
again at the same spot in the song  
the fruit of a too-expensive system  
built of accuracy and disguise

## If Only

if only I could work faster  
or better  
or more focused  
or could do things that people value

## Fear of All

not long now  
and my journey through volunteer work  
will be over and I can concentrate on simple work  
I hope that's soon enough to save my job



## Deep In Woods One Road Passed

look deep into these woods  
everything filtered through young leaves  
ferns on the ground  
granite piled where ice dropped it  
still cool this is the end of spring  
I've stopped to look here  
wishing two roads would fork  
still there's only one

## Up Close and Far Away

writing to a photo  
like jerking to porn  
built long ago  
it looks strong and stout  
but standing on it I feel  
it stammers when cars mount it  
it takes little picturing to see it  
falling into the river and then  
where would I be  
what reason would be there  
to continue

## From Across the Way and Lighting the Bridge

I've seen the lights  
that just barely light  
the darkly flowering water  
that rises up from rocks beneath  
Rocks Village Bridge and I see  
that water black and whishing  
past the piers and rocks by the shore  
where I sit and wander through  
my past while the camera like  
madman's helper gathers what little  
light there is that will soon  
make this dark place a place filled  
with probing searing light

## When It's Weirder Than AI

unnamed man to Larry:  
it's a dog eat dog world Larry  
I'm wearing my adult black thong today  
concierge looking on:  
sweet / call  
the dog catcher

## And Why The Fuck Not

worlds spin away  
out  
control of self intangible  
I watch them run away

**No**

why does my mind  
drop sense  
so often

## John McCarthy

a great man dead tonight  
the first night in many years  
the world will be without a man  
as smart as him  
he was kind to me  
as a man might be to a child

## Simple Impossible

I am so much  
no one my feet have  
no feeling and everything  
else is following close behind



## Asking For Little

so I'm asking  
who's applauding  
the barriers are up  
I've said my sad goodbye  
make it goodbyes

## Time Etc Passes

I feel myself  
I am alone in dark  
no one is under any impression  
I feel mistakes piling up  
no one would want to help me  
perhaps it's time for passing

## Who Am I To

I am what passes for passing  
my future looks like a bad past  
someone might have after  
losing everything  
I am new to this age I achieve  
I forego the living part of it

## While That Song Plays

a slow song will be playing  
a sad one  
as the few who care walk what's left  
of me up the shallow hill  
to where those who brought me here  
have departed from  
I will be long away  
forever away  
but I believe it will feel  
like nothing just as I don't remember from before  
symmetry teaches us  
and its breakage into three parts  
imparts the sadness that defines beauty

## On Eve

the meaning of tomorrow is the beginning  
of the dark world  
this is when I came  
it rained I heard  
it was cold  
or was it a mist  
what everyone does is cherish  
the idea of bringing a child  
near all the events lies  
a river I still visit  
it has flowed my whole  
life and will / will have  
far beyond either side  
I've told it many things  
it's witnessed many things  
I've passed over it many times  
sometimes it responds with black  
sometimes blue  
usually brown  
it senses my sadness  
disappointment  
but I got it from the river  
it knows itself

## And On A Day Just Like Today

we find a path  
any of them lead to a place like here  
and just ahead  
no matter how I go  
the path ends  
stops or dwindles away  
but gone  
once  
it all seemed so hopeful

## God Sees Death

anyhow it was day then like today  
hot / green grass just cut and a breeze  
from a sea or river sneaking past  
small windows designed to keep a house  
standing and winterness out  
when my father showed me how to use  
the hammering machine that kicks and locks  
grooved and tongued oak flooring in place

today in the dumpster those floorboards  
hang gathered and ripped from the floor  
he measured and crafted and I  
could have taken one to mark my own envelope  
instead I wondered about the braces  
at each end and why I was drawn to this house  
40+ years later to witness what should never  
be witnessed by anyone (except god?)

## Once or Twice

another long trip  
adjusting  
who is here worth seeing  
well or available  
no one  
staying home  
more



## Art of Creation

novel to the point of surprise  
crafted beyond attention  
still as the culture allows

## Colombine

and so she spoke in low deep tones  
she said she was ill  
but it was pure love  
for me / for you  
she knows not us

## Illusion Together

tonight walking away  
I stopped / looked up / to watch the couple  
being pictured into the setting sun  
reflector light on their dark sides  
I couldn't see her face / her back to me  
she kissed once / & you know / he stoned up his face  
but she kissed again then  
she / you know / turned back toward the dark direction  
on the balcony and I continued down  
the stairs to the train station  
being ordinary and returning  
felt attractive my plan  
become ordinary / remain  
write only the walked-on floor

what I picture / walk the fields  
past the dawn of darkness  
when cold comes and comes only  
an echo stirs each yellowed hollow stem  
the last word I'll write has found its curtain

## Bye Bye I Guess

it's official  
the start of something fulfilling  
never started for my fear  
of being so overmatched

## As Usual

the streets are sparsely built upon  
whenever a possible tryst blooms  
a drop of rain drops  
as usual I look up into the windows lit from inside  
and deduce from the shadows I see  
the light of the lives living there

## Searching for the Leslie

when the floor stops moving  
who will stay on their feet  
who will shout for another round  
who will stumble into oblivion

## Fits and Starts

driving by the river  
in my head an adorable female  
voice narrates progress in flat  
detail / she spells it out  
in other words  
in other words  
in the plainest words  
and simplest sentences  
anyone could find  
if they looked until  
eternity called it quits

## Don't Need to Imagine

laying back listening  
to the same song over and over  
a kind of dulling and spiritual trance  
building up from a day everything aims  
to forget / I did it then in a cold  
room with poor quality  
and today on sweet good old tubes  
the result's the same  
a nostalgia only endings can cure



## Not Special

when there weren't many people  
I still was not special  
the land I grew up on was discarded land  
swampy / filled with garbage trees grown  
up against all inconveniences  
only in a few places did the pines grow thick and tall  
the floor beneath them smooth and refreshing  
when the air heated and wet you  
little bits of heath and mushrooms  
I'd make a small leanto of snapped off pine bows  
and piles of pine leaves layered into a bed  
even in a light rain I'd stay warm / dry  
far enough from home that even my mother  
screaming heartily for me made little more  
than a slight stir in the leaves maple trees  
presented me all summer

## Greyish

the farm was so beautiful once  
the stone walls clear and distinct  
the fields trimmed right to the edges  
large enough that when autumn turned to winter  
I could roam the cut down fields and hours  
looking simply at the way nature played out  
in front of me / and the promise  
was always forever and a warm house

## Blackish

not it's not even a farm  
but plots of land for homes  
most rundown / the pine woods  
have been cleared out and now  
it's just a ragged field  
any dream to walk the field  
again tremendous to its end  
will little more than a wisp  
be real

## Looking Back and Forth

my mother watched me I'm sure  
in my crib bed and saw my imperfections  
all of which I still endure  
imagined my life playing out  
and she confirmed in spots her diagnosis correct  
I would never amount to much  
partly because amounting to in my realm is unfathomable  
partly because she was just right

## Strike Anywhere

it seems like the past smelled  
more / odors plainer stronger  
when leaves turned we raked and burned them  
the world smelled of smoke  
next came romance  
finally a long stretch of day to day relentlessness  
and one last apology

## Voyeur

in the 15<sup>th</sup> floor apartment  
the woman wearing only  
her imagination steps over  
her lover unthinking and unfeeling  
perhaps in sleep on the floor lit  
only by signs below reflected off  
her white dove ceiling  
I watched from the adjacent hotel

## Never Imagine When You Can Cry

down a wet street  
stained blue by tv lights and other lights  
from flats hunched close around it  
in an autumn city in a north part of an old country  
a woman heading toward something that will tingle her  
wears her leather coat and hugging leggings  
under a short skirt and within leather boots  
like them all she wears a beige scarf around her important neck  
me I stand at the crossroads to this narrow place  
watch her walk away not hurried but eager  
unaccustomed to chivalry I have no hat no cap  
all I can do is grow wet maybe cold  
what I see is her tempting trap working  
as always

## Diner Time

night after night I  
sit in the allnight diner till  
after 3am sipping dark and bitter coffee  
eating stale pie  
waiting  
two blocks down the studied blonde  
brushes her hair then ties it in a tail  
in front of her mirror she does this  
over / over / over  
till it's past 4am past 5am past dawn  
when she arrives I'm on my cot and sleeping  
I guess  
it's all and only  
a guess



## Darkness Become Grey

we are the strange improbability  
I am drifting toward the drain hole  
I popped out of once but it never made sense  
people who cared lamented my poor luck  
feel it then  
I didn't but  
I do now

## And So A Man Wrote on Sunday

there's a word I call foul  
they save the word  
with the creation of truth  
why sad to say  
single out the crisis  
utterly fantastic / clear / real  
against technical expertise  
our discourse is badly distorted

## I Think

she deserved better than me  
she knew that the minute I was born  
also during the minutes before she died  
when she realized that her devotion  
to her father forced me west and far away  
so she was alone and afraid  
when her old heart stopped

## When It's All Dark

in winter around here  
the moon can come up slowly but perceptually  
behind a pine and a bank  
of fog extending across the Bay  
to the mountains across  
in a close by room a woman  
sits by her puzzle and works  
it out piece by bit  
where I sit the damp is lapping just outside  
she has tried to dull my urge  
to keep at it but she is quiet  
and her way is to wear out the urges  
through quiet / the moon rises  
later each night until it is such a foreigner  
it's sometimes hard to notice

## Budapestulance

I recall the fear in Budapest  
when I realized  
I was in too deep  
I have never been  
in up to a respectable body  
part since

## Frilly Apron

we'd walk from our car parked down the street  
Thanksgiving afternoon while the women and Mike  
cleaned up / being my mother  
my father's mother and Mike stepgrandfather  
he wore a frilly apron every year  
the food was heavy and much  
we'd walk to Castle Island not really an island  
but a spit off South Boston  
then the bunkers were still open and we'd climb  
in to view the lines of fire out to the Harbor  
we'd watch American Press shove off and head to sea  
we never talked much  
no stories of his playing down by the water  
no houses pointed out no apartments  
no names / he was as strange here as I was  
I lacked mature curiosity  
I never asked  
he is gone now  
they all are

## Lament for Me

I'm buying up things now  
which I'll keep and use until I die  
my last bike / my last amplifier  
my last computer  
soon I'll have no money  
I will be lost and lonely  
I feel that way already  
nothing makes me happy  
only stories keep me going  
I want to sleep forever  
that strong light and odd pressured feeling  
awaits / it wasn't bad before  
and I await it coming on

## Saying Hello While Saying Goodbye

just finished writing  
the letter that will promote  
a friend as her career takes off  
as mine tapers off  
this I hope is the last one I'll write  
I'm tired of it



## Fell Away

her hair every way like ripe wheat  
in that part of Kansas that calls and calls  
I can see only the back of her and the orbit  
of her blowing hair and her mission  
is over since she is walking back from the edge  
of the macadam road and she hasn't / never  
will see me upwind on the road / she  
will never forget me because I was only nothing  
her eyes never passing over me but I  
will never lose my imagination of longing

she closes her ranch door behind her  
I drive west to the desert and mourn

## Brussels Maybe

cities where streets are tangled  
up are best in rain  
at night  
when window lights piece each cobblestone  
and lovers entangled as their longing for eternity  
requires are dressed like kids  
like milfs in Paris  
around each corner espresso calls  
and oddly tomatoey cheap italian dishes  
northern europe is what I picture  
when all there is left is picturing

## Snowbound

snow piled on snow  
dug out down to gravel and dirt  
black streaks in fresh heavy snow  
piled up to the eaves  
inside it's warm from dry wood burning hot  
in a heavy old woodstove and we sit around it  
and read through the day  
waiting for everything  
to be something different

## Leave Me Burning

the beauty of brick  
seen all at once  
but never together  
pieces to pieces  
stitch to stitch

## Look Don't Touch

leave imagining  
the shapes of women to me  
take it for granted  
that I'll clothe them tightly  
angle them against the sun  
just perfectly  
don't worry that I'll picture  
someone no one  
wants to see  
I've had plenty of time  
to watch and learn

## Creepy and Uncomfortable

an uncomfortable woman  
sits on a park bench 2 feet  
from a creepy man holding a color chart  
she is not pretty but attractive never  
the less / no never  
but from my angle her hips flare  
to a wide point that says oh sex  
behind them traffic in the distance  
crosses through the park and it's summer  
in a northern American city in the east  
I imagine a soundtrack with a high pitched but sultry sax  
playing something with a southern backbeat  
she looks plainly with darting eyes at the man holding  
the color chart and he glances languidly at her  
I describe it like a cinema because it is  
it is not my memory but something stored in bits  
on my computer  
an ad for an expensive digital movie camera so  
real that the woman really  
was uncomfortable and I thought somehow  
I was that man

## South of South

in a room walled with dark woods  
cut from forests south of the equator  
in a part of a former crown country  
known for endless summer and hot humid nights  
a woman dressed in nothing awakes  
and puts on her panties as a gesture  
in a grand pantomime resembling  
the lives of minor mammals

## Something Happening

what can be noticed  
who has found the best road  
these are questions that open up  
the problem of people  
if what we can see matters so much  
what need is there for the real



## Come Back Home

think of a long hill  
really a field  
covered in snow  
and two men  
or a man and a boy  
sliding down it  
on a metal toboggan  
they must steer  
if the ride be good  
through a narrow gate  
with stone walls and steep drops  
on either side  
think of why they would do it  
soon a poem like this will be all that remains

## **Now This Is Pessimism**

whose name will they carve  
on my headstone

## Dying Time

oh what fun to learn  
you haven't the agility anymore  
to pour water into a christmas  
tree reservoir

## Hits Home

the woman next to me  
in the seafood restaurant  
wore an offwhite lace skirt  
down to her ankles  
from there to midhigh  
all was visible  
thereafter nothing was  
the economics of romance

## Highrock

a crazy man sang  
in a chorus  
they said he poured himself  
entirely into the music  
so much that he pour all  
of himself out of himself  
he was crazy  
I saw him

## Don't You Hate It

the bridge is not going  
to make it  
traffic lights at either end  
so traffic is one way only  
I felt it trembling last summer  
light an old man having trouble  
holding a spoon and passing soup  
or making gestures intended as love  
the mechanics are wearing down  
it is an old bridge

## Forward and Backward

the river flow carried  
sheets / ice  
thin but resilient to the wash  
the river's surface then  
piecewise linear  
because water freezes flat  
almost / the sun angled  
itself to a bit of orange  
onto all that  
the ice and the turbulent flow  
my friend and I caught  
up from years of absence behind  
gearing up for the absence ahead

## By The Road

out in my car I sat and saw  
them carving out the insides of my old house  
already the roof had been raised 2 feet  
and the rooms where my grandmother lived  
were gone / later they held my band  
I listened a lot there  
I typed the essays for Meredith there  
walls inside were down  
gaps between boards I knew never had them  
at the back of the garage  
they worked with air being pumped out  
to keep out what they thought was dangerous  
imagine watching the young tear down your life  
like that / it was like that



## Never

I have found the secret to regret  
it's to push your crumbs into a little  
box in your head and push it over there  
over to the side / on it place a sticker  
and write the words you want to say  
when asked about the crumbs in that box  
never open the box  
never

## Celebration Not Quite

looking at lists

I regret mine is so short

## Entropy For Dummies

you know  
things fall apart  
this is how we know time is flowing  
it makes time into grinch

## My Boy's Life

where are my friends  
hiding it seems  
my best did not stand up for me  
when I needed him most

## Assumption

it has settled on me  
that nothing was ever special  
all my small moves forward  
filled only some space and lots of time  
I am ready to sit out the rest of my time  
bothering no one  
doing not much as is my habit

## Sincerity

where I remember Christmas best  
is being changed being nearly torn down  
it's not my place though I call it that  
I am missing most of my life

## What Clings

when the camera snaps  
you the future will make its own take  
on what you were doing  
thinking being  
as if you were a magnet  
for stories that might float by

## Clutter Memorial Up

now the memorial  
some say this means  
the story's ended  
but for years to come  
cars will drive slowly  
and quietly down the elm lane  
see the house  
then back slowly and quietly up  
trains will pass by too  
this place will be the center



## Bulldog Tank

fifteen and I wanted  
the toys children receive  
they and I viewed this Christmas  
as the end forever  
of childhood and innocence  
why not  
since then I've spent my life  
hunched over something  
the only telltale of time  
is the something

## An Island Somewhere

today preparing to be alone  
I bought a stainless-steel Martini  
glass from REI  
with an unscrewable stem  
and I wondered whether this would increase  
enjoyment or decrease it

## Wild Day

this day this night  
38 years ago was the beginning of magic  
it seemed as young as we were  
and I so taken with the idea of a woman  
tonight I watch the beautiful ones  
who unlike the one I married  
with last forever  
sparkling

## And Cold

down by the river just one street up from it  
the night before Christmas is not a night  
to watch women promenading but  
there one was and I could see by the way her legs  
thrust her hips that she was wearing a wool  
skirt a short one that rested on her ass  
the way I wish my fingertips could and so  
I walked half a block behind her heading west  
toward the rail station and when she mounted  
the stairs up to the concrete platform  
I found a bench in the small triangle park across the street  
and from there I watched her pace and wait  
and I watched the water like oil drag black past  
the bridge piers and sporadic stones  
and every adjective I thought for those minutes  
before the train snatched her away  
reflected my heart and went something  
like it's a yellow light on black water tonight  
and cold

## Or Impossible

from between two brick warehouses  
a bright gold light streams onto the square  
cobble and wet from a winter storm  
that passed earlier in the day  
standing there in her boots and heavy black coat  
scarf and hat is the woman every man would love  
but they don't know her and she is bent on the river  
whose animated surface conceals the bitterness of black beneath  
I'm standing in the shadow beneath a fire escape at the back  
of an abandoned shoe factory watching her steps on cobbles  
to the river wall protecting the city  
I imagine her in candlelight in an apartment overlooking us here  
face down and the curves of her back and legs and ass  
creamy in that yellow light and I imagine my feelings  
rising from the past and curling like fog rising from the black water river  
after a warm rain and everything else that is rare

## Lines and Flat

I've stopped at the edge of a macadam road  
a small ditch on either side and then a small grassy rise  
before the fields stretch away filled with wheat  
I've stopped between two poles and between  
a simple pair of wires stretch and curve down  
the wind that teases the grass and wheat plays  
these wires in low pitched harmony  
whose melody plays in my memories of the girl  
who never loved me though I did every small  
thing I could think of / her hair would play well  
in this symphony / wheat / grass / line tones  
except these poles and everything in this scene stretches  
to a horizon / the one we start at over there  
the other there

## Dig It

all my poems have this in common  
night / yellow lights / blue rain  
the cold / small movements  
a woman who doesn't care  
narrator adrift / alone / afraid  
and once or twice ashamed

## Indifference

how can what we once owned  
seem like ours forever  
land for instance  
like a friend who comes to know us  
does it welcome us back  
years later after the abuse  
of difference



## Better Than Two

smooth and unappetizing  
water draining a high plateau  
leaving and leaving fast  
watching someone undress  
tell me everything you want to do

## On Coldness

back there the snow and cold embrace  
the ones loved but lost  
down the street that mirrors the river  
a couple walks toward their small apartment  
above a liquor store down by the square  
when they get to the rail bridge he will stop  
and she will just after and they won't kiss though  
you expected it / he will cry for just a minute  
she won't ask but will look up the street  
to the farthest streetlight and remember  
when she met her first love just right there

## Backing Into The Fringe / A Thicket

no one is on the freezing street  
and the surprising strong wind  
that blows old things in dizzy paths  
down the one way all things eventually go  
no one is there to see it  
to see the shadows blue in the yellowed light  
only a few windows have light  
and only one bare / hanging like a noose  
with a big wrapped loop tied between the bulb  
and the ceiling / you ask  
then who saw all this  
who reported it  
and I / the lone/ly poet replies  
first by opening my mouth  
and letting nothing emerge I close it again forever  
take up a pen and a piece of paper snatched like a memory  
from the sheets swirling past on the street  
lonely imagination and write  
for hours days years decades  
maybe one day you'll read it  
read where these snippets come from that seem  
to never be seen but everyone understands  
once the report is in  
I am like on the front

Nothing Else  
Nothing More

*A Collection of Poems from 2012*

Richard P. Gabriel

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## Hard To Believe Feat of Domination

one year / and during that year one day  
the wind midwinter came up from the north  
just as one leaf fell from the tall oak  
at the far end of the old bridge  
and the leaf blew down the center of that bridge  
from one end to the other  
a length akin to a good life  
when shrunk to oak leaf size  
I would have been there to see it  
had final feeling been farther  
upstream / the river that flows beneath

## **In Montenegro**

in a small plaza in a small city in a small country  
too far east to be in the public's mind a part of Europe  
a small statue sits on a resolute pedestal  
and though no one knows who sculpted it  
and what it means though it seems to be a man  
or a manlike figure from fantasy  
the sculptor had more skill and talent  
than me even though his labors were  
few and mine many

## Old Barn Ago

I could push the big barn door aside  
inside the main spine was wide enough  
for a full hay wagon and a pair of wide horses  
one side for cows and a small coop  
the other for half and feed / lots of tools  
and what passed for indoor plumbing  
just a fancy wood seat and cover  
and a drop down below the barn  
where cow piss collected and drained  
by ditch to Cobbler's Creek  
you could love in the hay  
bales or loose  
no one worried about fire though  
all were careful  
and for all that it's all  
gone and nothing of it will return  
no matter how much love is pored into it

## **A Man Invents His Ego**

no one more ridiculous  
than the man who mistakes  
his inventions for the labor  
of mankind



## Half of My Heart

on a small stage in a part of the bar  
built off the back of the first floor  
street level but five stories above the back lot  
separating the old factory from the river wall and river beyond  
the band has set up and the drummer seems to be pounding  
but the sound is slight and tight  
of his drums as if sheathed in lambskin  
the guitars are strumming but each string  
is muted by the meat of a hand's heel  
the woman's voice weaves above the tick of rhythm  
and soothing short strums setting down  
just to the left or to the right of the beat  
and running over the ends of lines  
and by her face I can tell she's not in this northeast river town  
but somewhere where boots are the real walk  
and the moon owns the long nights above the wine  
of cut grass and wheat / her hand in mine  
we walk to the back of the day

## A Table Where No One Sits

time to invent  
a new woman who is crying  
in the rain on a small street  
in the cold part of Paris  
as the apartments around her  
darken for the onset of quick warm sex  
then a night of warm sleeping  
but she / her skin won't behave  
her heart rings a phone when no one's home  
the guitar she hears is out of tune  
just this little bit but she nods along anyway  
and still  
she is crying  
crying all night

## All The People Laughed

my past dissolves each day  
some hard bit turns soft  
then floats away  
or crumbles into light dirt  
the hard effort my father put into his creations  
is no match for time's strong laughter  
every nail he hammered weeps  
as it's pulled from its dried out beam  
he never knew how to build houses  
he invented all that

## **No Country For Smart People**

the country I live in  
has given permission to its citizens  
to be as stupid as they like  
and by god they are taking advantage of it  
like a banker on a foreclosure binge

## Tumble on You

there is a blend of red and pink  
in the sky tonight  
no one with a phone can keep it to themselves  
the wires are hot with word spreading  
as the night cools the comments drift away  
to the West I suppose  
aside from the sky-made excitement  
everything is so predictable

## Commonalities

when all you have is a thin wisp cloud  
in front of a full moon  
the thought of romance flies out the window

## Vague and Dark

imprecision grabbed the spotlight  
everyone was illuminated  
just that little bit

## The Curved Tracks to the South

I suppose it's snowing  
under trees little islands persist  
I pretend I'm there lighting a small fire  
outside a shelter I made from pine boughs  
the snow will cover it in my dreams  
and I'll stay warm all through the snowy night  
only once will I wake when a train not far off  
sounds and sounds as it passes me by  
only that one time will I wake



## Little Else

Snooks learned her dog door late  
she would sniff and search its edges  
pushing with her nose until she was sure  
then in or out  
out into the woods to chase what she could  
back in for food and water a warm place to bed down  
when she grew too old to run my father  
put her down and we buried her in the backmost field  
while he did it down in the back yard and she cried out  
I lay in my bed upstairs just above  
my memory is as clear as a memory can be  
of this

## Heaviness of Sad

tonight is the second  
in a row of total despair  
a screwup in my medication delivery  
and I worry about having to do without  
for months / these are things that happen  
more frequently and I find myself in tears  
much more

## How Smart Is Too Smart?

today I found what was lost  
I had put it in the place I knew  
I would eventually look into  
the suitcase yet unpacked from  
my last trip / today I went to  
unpack it and there...

## Oriente

when things started to fall apart  
I was listening to a mournful electronic song  
with piano composed and played in an old country  
its design was to mesmerize  
to calm down  
so that the end unlike a surprise  
was a completion

## Very Every

every day the struggle is harder  
every day a new curveball  
today it's news of the audit

## Convergence

look at the farm  
old and inherited from several ages earlier  
look at my grandparents  
killing each other and drinking to kill  
look at my parents  
failures in every sense the smartest man can think of  
look at me

## All Tired

sitting here writing  
I realize my day has come and gone  
and what little is left  
will barely carry me to the end

## Tired and Defeated

dark and stormy night  
I fell asleep in front of the tv  
after a heavy meal  
like an old platform collapsing



## Old Barn Tales

the old jitney pulled the metal treaded wooden wheeled wagon  
into the barn where my father threw bales up to me  
and I stacked them quick and straight  
here on the bale side / the other the loose hay side  
soon I was up to the first layer of rafters and there  
I sat waiting for the next load and cooling off  
sweat in my t-shirt stinking of almost dry hay  
many years later this memory would be stripped from me  
and though it's likely accurate / true even  
it's made up just like everything is

## Deep In Snow

shaping up to be a lousy year  
working on what I care nothing about  
when time is short it becomes precious  
when time is long it's just as precious  
but a precious of a different color

## Freshet

I pretend I can be loved  
and then as suddenly  
we've gone to dinner and she is in my room  
rain outside and cold from a winter night  
she stops and stands in front of my chair  
I bend to her belly and kiss it and just then  
the ages blend and the backs of my fingers  
are like the smallest wind on the warmest day  
floating almost just above her back and down toward her heels  
somewhere in the middle the song begins

## Fall Lower

in any scene worth remembering  
worked out in fiction or in the minds  
of men there is always the one left behind  
or sinking in the river or fallen off the cliff  
by accident or diminishment  
pray for yourself for  
one day it will be you

## Quitter

I can almost not stand it any more  
waves of obligations  
all in conflict  
all stressed as important  
when can I give up

## On Luck

on a sunny days she sat  
with her friends in from of her high school  
and unsmiling never thought I'd see  
her that way

## Get Small

in a small world people can be small  
there are no reasons to try to climb  
or climb over / I would be small  
if only I had just the things I need  
and a computer to write with  
I would be the smallest thing ever

## Life Time

a long and constant still  
one rough stroke of hard wind  
a long and constant still



## Days Still Left

when I imagine talking to my mother  
we don't say important things  
we don't discuss each other  
in fact nothing we say illuminates the other  
so how if we are typical  
can anyone know

## Left Behind

I used to worry that I wasn't be asked enough  
that people didn't appreciate my talent  
now that it's proven I have little or none  
I don't mind the dust kicked up  
pebbles thrashing the road around me  
the specular sunset seen through them  
as the car of everything peels out and away

## There I Be

I taught myself  
to paint the color of my skin  
which I did by trying all colors  
painted on my skin until  
I couldn't tell whether I had painted or not  
this is similar to how I learned my own voice  
speaking until my voice disappeared  
and then there I was

## What Hope Looks Like

homes built in hope  
in a dry desert and a cold one  
they stand abandoned  
unsold  
no one needs to show why build  
their back yards  
look like piles of sand

## Now You Know

my parents were tremendous failures  
but they found a way to be simply happy  
I am similar but without the happiness

## Swift River

learning to drive  
they took me in Winter to a narrow  
mountain road with a steep drop  
to a swift river  
and with snow still on the road I drove  
to where the road was closed to traffic  
and back / the Volkswagen was hot  
from a poorly designed but fierce  
heater driven directly from the heat  
of the rear engine and it smelled  
being new of paint  
it seems so quaint and far away

## **Ludus, Inc.**

you believe you deserve otherwise  
this is a house of champions  
it does not submit to you  
you submit to it  
one must learn to kneel if he is ever to rise  
a necessary lesson if you are to one day join the champions of this house  
these are the words of the master to the slave  
these are the words of the employer

## Joppa Flats It Seems

the boat slips past the last  
town on a river that is black as night  
and swift as a mind about to change  
it heads for the vast ocean where some  
say all boats launch  
but near this journey's end  
the boat is filled with needles and old complaints  
instead of the eagles and trees spinning their loves  
the boat is up to its gunwales with the irrelevant  
and unneeded / the boat if it can  
is sad



## Inconclusive

the whole world came by  
and made a mess by paying less  
attention than a moth to the dark side  
of the room  
two words were said  
and one was no

## Such a Deep Sadness

so many young faces  
in the photo from 1933  
a high school  
how many left  
the question tells us all we need to know

## Regretful

just one more visit  
timing of curiosity  
and exploration

## Not Tonight

I've watched her for years  
wearing her long hair in a tail  
tonight she stood talking to her man  
hair down and back straight  
I couldn't recognize her

## The Main Thing

her head burrowed in the space  
between neck and shoulder  
her back bathed in blue coming from the imagination  
of a cinematographer  
her hair blue in its black  
washes one way then another  
outside the window wind  
tempts the glass with water and flex  
her hips bend forward  
bend back  
across it all every bit  
the lighthouse fashions the scene  
solid bright  
she though remains undistracted

## Alone All

wave on wave  
people flickering through time  
all the beauty and envy  
all those focused no farther  
than the scale of their arms  
each of them fearfully gone away

## By The Time

the past reals up  
memories old surpass new  
when the old ways repeat  
the mind digs in  
what my father made no longer  
lasts and I am one

## Andrej Pejic Loves Them All

today all the hot girls are boys  
even posing for push-up bra ads in fashion mags  
I watched a group of beer-filth men flee in rage  
crabbing backward to corner's edge  
when they saw him coming  
legs braziled waxen  
but he smiled at me  
and all beauty became one beauty



## The Pessimistic Reading

what people expect of me  
no longer makes sense  
I need to find a way out  
or prepare for a decline  
in poverty

## Futility

writing is fading  
I'm feeling the bottom of the pit  
even as the hot tubes  
make pure music like what I imagined  
when I was just uninvolved

## PDX

it's raining  
somewhere  
where  
a woman is hoping sleep will fill her  
life's dreams with tiptoeing magic  
and feather tip touches just off  
the center of her spine  
rain  
in it's beautiful blue night wet

JMC

humanity came to me  
in the form of a genius grieving  
from loss

## Singing in the Wires

people write their songs  
with chords closeby each other  
to splash that longing feel  
like anointing a penitent  
and then they sit and listen  
over / over in the cold room  
as the heater works it up  
but the walls and windows  
will always remain cold  
cold as a C next to a B,

## All The Leaves Are Brown

one supposes the low cold clouds  
filled with snow and looking it  
are the reason Winters here  
are lessons in middle ground  
or subtlety / my mind is set on walking  
from one end of the farm to the other  
through fields some and woods mostly  
woods bare with gray trunks and the woods  
floor brown and creaking  
later in life this scene would be a memory  
and all writing about it would sound warmer  
than the scene itself which is bitter  
in every way something can be

## Not Mine Any More

imagine having your own pond  
that froze every year and all your friends  
would come skate on it  
not right next to your house  
but down the road a bit  
takes 5 or 10 minutes to walk there  
a little stream coming in  
a little stream going out  
and perhaps an old beaver dam to make it  
I think I once tried to make a little raft there  
or I should have

## Decreased Accuracy At Small Scale

I suspect  
there's a little me inside me  
who thinks bad and speaks it  
but that model  
doesn't have to pay  
I do



## When Your Butt Answers

To, hello, hey hello hello.

Okay bye.

Hello.

Park.

Hello.

Yo.

Bye.

Okay bye.

Bye hello.

Bye.

Hey, here, hey.

Yeah, bye.

Hello, hey.

Prosper, everything is okay.

Hey.

Thanks, call alright.

## Lost in Wording

something is wrong  
my emails are off  
I say non things  
I need something

## Odd Fallings

snow just barely harder than fluff  
falling on fall leaves just barely past yellow  
fills the woods with a sharp noise  
somewhere above the droppings have been formed  
by the up & down & up & down of rain  
finally dropping through the last layer of cold  
to me it's all low clouds & a fire waiting after all

## Like Kalispell Only Different

the genuine places  
can't be found  
because the roads leading to them  
are covered by sand  
or filled in with grass

## Flow Alone

the river  
is just a path  
what we love about it  
is its transience

## Bridge Anomaly

standing at one end of the bridge  
facing north one night  
I watch the silhouette  
of someone crossing over  
ahead of me  
I wondered of it  
he was once behind

## Quick Intro

she hurried to the gym  
late for her match  
when she about to check in  
she turned and opened  
then she was gone

## Home To Roost

it's all  
about to end  
it feels like  
misery to have it like  
my parents had it



## No More Dead

sinking / falling / failing  
how many roads are closing off  
so many mistakes  
I am the last vulture

## Too Long Ago

when I look back  
it will never be my job that comes to mind  
I wanted always to the world  
unimaginably  
but to live is to pay  
why do only people know this

## When Words Grow Apart

I must find a way  
to just work and not care  
treat work as a job  
and job as necessity  
not joy / just one letter  
apart but one end of the alphabet  
to the other

## Numbers Scribbled Too Fast

the scorecard lies  
because we score ourselves  
when the bottom bottoms out  
and our pace is quickest  
so the world slips by  
and by

## Her, Walking Away

the woman walking away  
beautiful and trim  
her legs are bare  
designed for movement  
they serve attraction  
I fall further behind

## Quick Sick

grievously ill  
sleeping for more than a day  
at a time  
this portends the nature  
of endings  
it seems so calm

## Homesteading

not far from Honolulu  
on the west coast of the island  
there's a tent city filled and decaying  
always crossing the road are two  
dark dogs

## Restaurant Mysterioso

they arrived irregularly  
and once in their seats  
the waitress photoed them holding their IDs  
one upside down  
all over 30  
what did they want  
why were they here  
why did one of them bring them each orchids  
who were they?



## Somewhere Cold

something feels not right  
body mind spirit  
like the sad girl  
in Montréal who never  
cheers up

## Up Up And Away

the trail of smoke or  
vapor laboring to move  
as a whole seemed to come  
from somewhere behind me  
but what I saw was  
it rising up and outward  
no center holding any more  
than any other  
how strong an image  
it looked to once project  
when it still was rising smoke  
maybe just curling  
then I saw it was me  
the part I thought so highly of  
and what I was was  
the ash shell  
that is always only  
what is left

## After It's Drifted Away

hello

I am the person

who used to be

Richard Gabriel

## Coincidentally

the day she walked into the wheatgrass bar  
was the day I walked out of the wheatgrass bar

## Unrepulsive

plans are easy to make  
fun to talk about  
like gloves seeking ears to cover  
the fist of the outside oak tree  
is hovering above and hoping  
to open

against this the tree merely yawns  
its leaves open to the sun  
open to the rain

## The Betty White Show

the tv won't stop  
I've watched it all my life and I'm old  
some tv stars from when I first remember it  
are still on  
Betty White for one  
old shows  
when I watch them now  
are fresh but boring  
because they repeat their things  
the best thing about new tv  
is the pictures are really clear  
I remember watching horror movies  
that were nothing but a dull shadow  
against snow  
and wobbly sound  
I'm old all right

## How Can It Go

behind my house  
there was a rushing stream one year  
I was surprised to find it  
and going back years later  
I never did again

## Speaking Public

how tired can you get  
wasting away  
people who fan for you  
you read on  
your voice falters  
they believe it frailty of old age  
they love you  
you remain



## Memory Ruts

will the bridge spring back  
after repairs that tear it apart  
held together as I knew it since a child  
since my mother was a child  
since her parents crossed it  
on the trip to the farm  
the first time  
maybe there's a history there  
I could invent  
and wear like memory  
ruts into my mind

## Outward / Inward

rolling onward with work  
that doesn't matter to any  
but me and soon cut loose  
I will need to fade

## Caught In The Act

hard work today  
bad news tonight

## Google Wave Goodbye

when you become the product  
everything about you is sold  
some parts are like the infinite copies  
computers can make of some things  
others have side effects  
and those parts are never retrieved

## By The Time

I once watched her pack  
up and drive off  
and when the call came  
her asking how to fix the car that wouldn't start  
I tried to help  
years later when she wanted me  
she couldn't believe  
I would really go

## The Future is Here Not Well Distributed

one way you know you're dying  
is that turning away feels fine  
feels like a relief does not  
feel like abdication  
I feel it now  
every few days  
for a few seconds

## Relative Perspectives

she is up in her apartment  
writing text messages  
quickly with her thumbs  
she feels like nothing  
down her she looks like  
the beginning of creation

## Potsdam Early Evening

here women wear their skirts tight  
in layers sometimes with a dose  
of hose / surely they have modeled  
the look they trail as they walk away  
because they walk away without thought  
or self-indulgence / instead to let  
nature nurture the thoughts  
men might have if only



## Brandenburg

quite special  
she walks away  
her sights are set on the lonely bottom  
my heart is dreary tonight  
as my glass unfolds  
and the tight skirts  
never notice  
the longing

## No It Was Luck Good and Bad

wandering  
seeking his hotel  
in another's land  
with another's language  
miles away  
holding a map  
looking into the darkness  
through the most improbable  
we stumbled on him  
not knowing he was lost  
not knowing anything  
and we coaxed him into the car  
and drove him to his bed

## Concerning Skirts

a little too  
is better than a little  
less

## Shimmering

today it was  
the white / black  
goth girl

## Abysmality

did I tell you  
there is nothing left of me  
and you are  
therefore  
too late

## Purloined

I am filled with it  
the urgency of long ago loss  
the days of it are all over  
I am filled

## Eisenhüttenstadt

beautiful woman with red  
hair intensive red  
she has the old model Russian city  
by them  
and when she disappears in its innermost  
Plattenbau apartment complex  
the fate of worlds collapse to just  
this officious red one

## Plain Old Simple

where I live the ways of living  
are simple  
because the lines of sight range to the far distant  
and machines can be made only simple  
the songs say it just once  
but underline with 4<sup>th</sup>s and 9<sup>th</sup>s  
the difficulty of which I speak  
never made it to the plains



## Gone For Good

here in Potsdam  
I've discharged obligations  
and stand ready  
never to return no matter  
how strong the pull

I told him directly to let me go  
if I need to / not to tempt me back

## For These Reasons

here in Potsdam  
it's like this  
layers and tight leggings  
lit but invisible garret windows  
pomp under all circumstances  
many who walk away  
without reason  
but away anyway

## In Town A Night

so one night I drove down  
the darkest street in the darkest town  
looking to find the perfect  
distraction and instead  
I found a clever place to sit and watch  
women wonder when  
it would be their turn

## Three Ends

the beauty of technical  
words and scientific ones  
is their rhythm as if  
they were made by  
nymphs not nerds

## She Was Perfect Once

I once loved a woman  
so perfect and so hard  
that to this day  
that she returned nothing  
still hurts enough  
to cry

## Regretfully Potsdam

fog on the lake lurks like  
the longing I feel for loves  
long past

## In Creeping

something funny happens  
when two sticks rubbed together  
can't control the fire they start  
and the wonders of the disorganized  
are really just a wander away

## Passivity Craving

I need silence  
lots of it  
enough to last  
the rest of everything



## Life As It's Lived

someone craving  
the company of unclothed  
someone there  
happily to say no

## Next To Never

I am ready  
for my public life  
to fade out  
and for a private life  
to begin  
in which what I love  
is all there is

please

## Tired and a Half

imagine being fresh then being tired  
then imagine being tired then being tired  
see?

## Where Are You Headed?

a Friday you know  
the amtrak train in Lamy  
late as ever but waiting  
for all to board  
and counting them and naming them  
and off to Flagstaff and  
finally LA

## Waltzes

family of great happiness  
shattered every way it can  
be / father dead of cancer  
grandmother dead of cancer  
daughter loved beyond human passion  
attacked by cancer and driven  
from her horses for over a year  
and I just an observer  
can only cry my heart to sleep  
every time

## Eliminated

the room is cold  
and faintly stinking  
of pipe smoke  
years back  
and now it's the honey  
dripped down through the carpet  
into the boards below  
and below down through ceiling  
and carpet and floor boards  
deep down into the foundation  
and rock below and  
into the heart of beating darkness

## Simple Meal

out just off the Santa Fe Trail  
he lives with three dogs and two women  
one like a mother but a wife  
the other a daughter but like  
with two single wides glued together with a room  
and a cottage  
the stage stop seemed real  
the lone tree not a photo op  
I learned much

## Unkingdom

I found the little passing bird  
that could have been you  
and you weren't



## Rightly No

the halls aren't decked  
withholding is substantial  
I am afraid of the dark walls  
that are too close like too friends  
imagine the displacement

## High Over Me

the great poets are out of words  
making more takes time  
time is bought with great poetry  
now the great poets must get by  
with ordinary words preferring short to long  
the new supply is not on its way

## Circling Before Going Down

the rest of the trip  
is the rest  
of a trip

## Bye

sure I'm tired  
she had her last chance  
to please and nothing  
hard to believe but I need to stop  
all's left's my imagination

## Sometimes Cold and Warmth

from the bath  
she walked out toward the window  
overlooking apartments bathed  
in cold north air and shaded  
by clouds heading deeper into the north  
I didn't watch her  
couldn't  
she wasn't mine yet  
her warmth was  
soon it was dark  
and remained dark  
for days

## Warm Black

she painted me  
with a brush dipped  
in lust  
we spent days in the funny  
cabin tipping on the shore  
of a frozen lake  
outside everything was white and getting whiter  
inside all was black

## Front and Center

a lot of shoreline  
is wasted by the innocent  
slapping and splashing children  
populate the water with  
for me slipping slowly  
head only above water  
away and toward the rock tuft  
near the middle is the best bet  
near dusk and twilight ahead  
is the way to go away  
from shore and into the great depths  
this is the way to say goodbye

## David Waltz

let's take away the regret  
let's peel a laugh off  
let's pee as high as we can  
let's watch the great man lumber slowly  
away toward a light only he sees  
and has always seen



## To Me

on a river somewhere  
a woman sits in the grass  
watches the black-seeming ripples and eddies  
swagger downstream  
sometimes I think she wishes  
I were sitting by her  
on a picnic table nearby maybe  
that the sun would slide away  
and we'd fall together  
that her head in the nest of my shoulder  
would block out the bad world  
that she would open

## Some Story Like This One

one time a great deep wind  
came up entering the Western end  
of a shallow valley  
when it did a young man near its Eastern end  
was rising from a long sleep  
the wind wound its way down the shallow valley  
so easy to leave almost everyone did  
but like some the old man found his way back  
as the great deep wind passed by he fell  
down asleep and there the tale ends  
but not the wind

## Living Among Crazies

some ideas should be left behind  
I know ideas deserve their chances  
but all of them??  
all of them???

## Gnatty

when I look at the path a gnat takes  
I worry it has seen too much  
of the same thing by circling randomly  
but maybe I should celebrate his many  
views on just a few things

## River Shop

no need to feel about it  
the consummate current is riding still down valley  
I'm afraid of swirling confusions  
and over saturated colors

## Later At Night

the sad songs go on too long  
time to end one

## Only If

on a street somewhere  
walking with a scarf on her head  
and a waterproof coat with rain  
pooled between the cobbles on a foreign street  
a darkhaired woman walks to her flat  
where she will doff it all / climb into her featherbed  
and dream of one day having a man like me

## Loco In The Batho

the christmas catalogs arrived in October  
even as old as 15 I would look through all the toys  
each time in the bathroom  
I loved many of them  
I developed a totally absurd explanation for derailleurs  
I coveted simple battery powered machines  
like tanks  
half a century later  
nothing's changed



## Carina I

on a high plateau in NM a woman w/ brightly colored  
red / orange hair stared  
without expression  
at the historic / dilapidated buildings in the square  
her German mind could only  
react with hazy horror

## Just Facts

good news but hard work needed  
as the acceptance letter with revisions  
never arrived until the deadline for final submission  
and I thought I'd have time to write this weekend

## Crying Season

darkness early  
snow early too  
wet streets / streetlights scattered  
yellow walled buildings and cobbles  
a woman bringing a gift  
sees the wrong woman in a window  
leaves the gift in the garbage  
rides away  
darkness  
snow  
wet

## On The Line

how do I cope  
listening to an hour of awards  
I get them no more  
I slip ever backward  
another overload and I turn it off  
as nobody as I can be

## I Hate The Man

they are gearing up  
to insult me once again

## Blueberry Hill

the little place that made me  
maybe once was an island I could be on now  
just a small farm but if I had it all  
I could survive / and maybe I wouldn't need  
all the stories that keep me alive now

## Real Drama

in the best scene  
nothing happens  
people stand or sit or kneel or lie  
look at each other  
smile a mystery  
with luck  
the sound track is techno

## Danger: God Ahead

the bug refused being found  
it was not a wrong line or misaligned argument  
but the interaction of two processes  
not thoroughly protected by transactions  
I guessed  
single stepping and breakpoints provided no purchase  
all this in a world of my making  
and every possible power  
but instantaneous knowledge of everything simultaneously



## Soon For Me

people will be surprised  
that someone who seemed so successful  
can disappear so fast  
be revealed as a nobody  
all talent questioned then denied

## Finishing

I lack what I like  
nothing no way to get it back  
like rocks rolling down cliffs  
to a hardscrabble pile below

## No One Worth Home

I am fragile  
words prop up my weak bones  
the bed feels too comfortable some nights  
I might not wake on my own  
if I don't learn new ones  
the old words will wear out and only vowels will be left  
that's the hallmark of madness

## Useful Failures

I am tangled  
in scientific dilemmas  
maybe something can be learned  
that approximates science

## Red(less)

she is away from the window now  
out in the rain where the wind makes it known  
the bridge doesn't feel but it carries her in her  
weakness and seeking  
all that's left here  
(and there too)  
is the redness of her hair  
and the darkness of the underment

## Pop Goes the Journey

sitting on the brick skirt around the fireplace  
bookshelves filled with uninteresting books but some good ones like encyclopedias  
if I look out the window I see the hickory and oak  
the road a stonewall and one of our fields  
this is facing west  
I picture myself famous and wanted  
now that house is not mine and changed  
no one I know owns all that land  
I have been on stages around the world  
written books  
some people seem impressed  
how I got from one place to the other  
I don't know  
I recall some steps but not all  
not many  
it has all tired me

## Alabaster Is What It Is

curled up  
windows open  
heavy rain outside  
I am 15  
I dream of the future  
nothing prepares me for forever  
I am 62  
that day seems like a day of tears

## I Need You More Than Want You

the song they'll play  
as whatever is left of me is lowered  
wherever it will go  
let it reflect my head bowed  
deeply buried  
let it reflect the sun red in its retreat  
let it reflect the nothing I've always been



## Get It?

the rest of the writing  
will wait until the words  
are ready and standing  
just outside the door  
then with their dirty feet  
they will stain the page

## Sigh and Sigh Again

I found the trampled path  
unworthy  
it led me down to a wet bend  
then up to a large blueberry patch  
then through a swamp  
to a massive boulder left  
from a catastrophe  
all this was mine  
now the memory only

## Glass Around Me

the band scrapes and clicks on  
strings like bells sing  
some parts repeat in a decaying echo  
fade out

## Unbroken Cane

I walked across a bridge  
I left a cane at one end  
at the other I found a little light

## Sail Away

I have a smooth dislike  
what will happen next  
I am gotten to the point of working  
without passion  
only for money  
nothing else  
nothing more

## Bye For Now

after the snow's mostly melted  
only white piles with black flecks and tiny branches  
will punctuate the forest floor  
and shady places  
of all the people who could have lived  
you did  
now you don't  
just flecks are left

## What I Learned From Pictures

when I die  
film everything  
using a warm filter

## RV Bridge and Me

next time I see it  
the bridge will be closed  
getting from one side to the other a half-hour affair  
will it ever be the same  
or just another piece of the past  
long ago closed to access



## My Sad Thought Tonight

maybe there is  
no warm place on the riverbank for me  
anymore and instead the black water  
will draw me into its cold dark

## Open The Door

there is a warm day ahead  
somewhere some time  
blues skies all that  
maybe somewhere where  
blue means something  
else / more of it e.g.  
rain too I  
suppose

## Love Story

today the grass I saw on a California hillside  
had already turned a yellow brown beginning  
its career as a warmer of evening air  
and triggerer of urgent couplings

## Away Enough For You?

one day  
in a city many fantasize  
I will sit on a couch in a room  
high above wet streets  
with a woman lying  
with her head in my lap  
and I'll be  
scratching her bare  
arm and while  
I look out the rainspotted window  
she'll look out the rainspotted window  
and what I think will  
not be what she thinks

## **Not Me, Boss**

today someone suggested  
I try to join a high power  
team and I just laughed and laughed

## The Rest For Us

after a warm night under feather blankets  
on a feather bed with windows wet  
smelling of cold  
down this street and that alley  
I stepped midafternoon the next day  
and thinking that the holding and hand brushings  
meant something I entertained that they didn't  
meanwhile she was three streets over thinking  
I was routinely purchasing and her pocketed hands  
she touched the places I touched  
and shook her head no

## **Warm Time**

give me a blanket  
a new one to pass  
time in

## Prayer Against

simple things  
like pigs  
the smell of fresh cut corn  
a road that doesn't lead too far away  
but curves like women through the soft woods  
missing these is what it's about  
hope there's no me to miss them



## Look Away

sometimes the facts of the world  
are hard for me to fathom  
as I slow and fog over  
or maybe it's a kind of hardening  
like what concrete does  
over the top of a coffin  
when people want no one to ever  
look again  
at them

## Differences

they challenge that I can write  
make me prove it with code  
this though is knowing how to write

## Chances To End To Start

the chance to end my career as I started it  
working on the very same problem  
perhaps in obscurity  
perhaps with overwhelming tools  
with such a detour in between  
maybe a good thing

## Filled In

she followed me through twisting alleys  
on sidewalks lining cobblestones  
in an early evening heavy rain  
to the boulevard and then across  
to the railing above the brown stained river  
that passes through this old city  
where things are a dripped on brown  
and sometimes stone red brick  
and once standing there looking down  
I saw her looking down and then at me  
her elbows on the rail / her hands under her chin  
and even in the light from nearby streetlamps  
I could see her green eyes reddened dry lips  
and the red on her lightly blemished cheeks  
she looked for a full minute my literary sense told me  
I looked at her for a full minute too  
after that  
blank

## Her Warmth

I kissed her goodbye  
instead she kissed me hello  
when I walked past her to leave  
she held her hand out and took mine  
I knew it was a dream  
but I returned to it night after night  
because the love  
finally  
was real

## **Who Needs Forever?**

when old people read their poetry  
even when well trained and expertly published  
they all sound like dorks

## Wish

I wish I could once more  
sit in the crook of the tree  
I used as a car  
complete with a compliant branch  
I used as a shift  
in front of me a hand pump  
requiring priming  
a wooden sluice running down  
to an old iron tub  
where our cows would drink  
the water was cold and clear  
and hard as an axe in a hard winter

## Bad Song

always something  
there to remind you  
of entropy



## Rivet Whore

Are you scared because of bunnies?  
What I read here!  
Germans collected their taxes because  
some have threatened to call the cavalry.  
Before the Americans is she on her knee  
providing bank customers the knife? Typical!  
You have already learned this morning for the rest of the dirt—do?

And what do you do when the shit hits,  
evaporated before the door? Look away,  
turn around, run away: like the three monkeys: rivet whore, neaten the gents,  
the neatened zen! Heard of or seen nothing for nothing:  
no single medium was interested in it. Three monkeys—just the sort:  
see and say is just work? And I can assure you, I know my colleague's ticking.  
Always nice grumpy? When?  
Read about it here soon.

## Jiggling Wheels

will I be able to rest and enjoy  
or will pain and hunger rule  
I watch the man with a broken cart  
carry all that he is and ever will be  
and he looks too much like me

## George Takei Put It To Me

I know a man  
about 50 years old  
had a wife and kid  
now they are "gone"  
and his girl is 20  
not his daughter  
his girl  
oh myyyy as Sulu would say

## Days Still Left

whatever I dreams I had  
none of them matched this  
so small / so away  
I am again regaining  
all that and less

## The Honking Horn

I ask myself  
what it was like for him to cut deep  
into the palm of his hand  
with a chainsaw  
an accident in the woods  
cutting down trees for the new house  
which now is being remodeled after nearly  
being torn down  
and with him gone  
what is rebirth

## All My Troubles Seem So Far Away

or the time  
he ground his left index finger  
down to the first knuckle  
with the planer  
when he was building the house next  
to the barn and I went while he was at the hospital  
to clean up the blood and found none  
was he skilled  
or like me

## Feeling The Bad Day

been thinking  
about that farm  
how I wish it were mine now  
so I could go out for a walk  
across my own fields  
in my own woods  
in spring the water in Cobbler's Brook  
would be flowing full  
I wonder though how much of those woods  
my mother knew  
and what they meant to her  
she sold them  
after all

## And It Was Loud

and of course there are optimistic ways  
to view the past but none of them provide  
mucho satisfaction or  
else the future stutter steps out of the frayed  
past is the way to look at it / consider  
this the man with the greasepaint and trained cats  
portrayed the cats as indifferent even  
as they licked their legs and hopped from platform  
to chest to platform while  
the depraved man who imitated cats about to fight  
distracted them more like treats than threats  
and the show went  
stuttering  
on



## Paris Thing

I found her in the bookstore  
I thought she might be a cat  
instead a book lept into my hand  
half read  
I found the rhyming quite rhythmic

## What?

the pretty young things sing  
and play with traditional warmth the fado  
and their self-taught style is a hoot  
and all are engineers of some sort  
and not a one with no future  
even if it has to be Mozambique

## Like Me

here the light's rarely  
special but my sleep cycle  
is intact modulo deprivation  
the fish is fine and meat tender  
and veggies are often soft  
women stubby  
everything is old

## Optimism

is it possible  
my run of happy poem writing  
is ending

## Optimism 2

will I get home  
or will this be the time  
all falls apart

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all falls apart

## **In The Wires**

I want to be  
the song so sad  
that fades slow  
but before you know it  
it's forgotten except  
its sweetness

## **What I Learned From Failure**

the opposite of clarity  
is all encompassing  
whiteness and acceptance



## All I Needs

a warm place  
something to dream  
a sky to watch  
a river perhaps for air and tears  
grass underneath a little cool  
a bird singing a pretty song

## Under Long

some wander  
like tides sawing  
upstream I watch the banks  
for curiosity and double crosses  
I welcome the calls to move on  
now that my illusion me  
is proven  
call me when it's time to sit  
lie  
repair to the soft needles of an old pine woods

## Strikes

the pretty scene  
of blue water blue  
sky green bridge  
maybe is mostly  
unseen this year  
due to sloth due  
to sleepiness and  
the vague stirrings  
of endlings beg-  
inning

## Someone Sick At Heart

someone sick at heart  
is knocking  
like a storm wind  
on the day after  
I wonder do I open the door  
do I leave it slammed shut  
perhaps I move slow  
let time solve as it  
always does

## Metaphysics

a fish lifts from the water  
soars in the air for a time  
disappears back in the water  
our lives are like this  
except what's  
in the water

## Places

I noticed this  
place / the here  
that defines boredom  
and potential  
this / place has weeds and birds  
and the likes of it are upon  
the swift departure readying

## Paradoxicalness

the question  
how to outwit  
my own  
stupidity

## First Then Second

even when they are beyond lovely  
they can sit in bars and cry quiet as light rain outside  
this means that before  
they had times of joy  
because tears can't exist first



## Paradick

my job is not my career  
I sometimes would like  
to quit one to do the other

## Draining Her Joy

a woman at the bar  
tears and gin  
hair draping / tangled / frizzed ends  
I watched come in dry  
now everything of her  
is wet

## Fear

he walked into the room  
and sat down afraid  
he hurt  
somewhere a clock sped up

## Great Pains

just a little every day  
but worse  
hard to remember  
sometimes blunders  
fear just worse  
every day  
and fewer of them

## Bad Films

footage no longer shown  
of the planes hitting the towers  
as if we should forget  
or make it abstract through memory  
a simulation shows that people in the planes  
might have lived to see the inside of the buildings  
before burning to nothing

## Dietician

bored with the ridiculous  
popping up like pop tarts  
we've left them behind because all agree  
it's just carrots

## One Two Three

it rained once  
when I hoped for sun  
windy when I hoped  
for calm and light  
are the passions  
heart beat for

## Fiery Innards

the bridge of my life  
cannot endure a rebuild  
just re-rivet the worst  
and oxidize the surface  
to ward off harsh rain  
and the over-solicitous sun ball



## Big Words or Lots of Them

I fear those last minutes  
release will not be sweet  
I hanker to do great things  
but how / but when  
by using words I hope  
to create my me

## Paradise In Blue

music as sweet as clumps  
of blueberry bushes  
dozens of them  
four feet tall and eight feet around  
paths from one to the next  
I just pick and pick  
eating for hours  
mosquitos be damned

## Savage Speech

two people speaking  
same language  
neither gets it  
it sounds ok  
they get tired  
fall asleep  
the world rejoices

## Night Listen

tubes making a pretty sound  
no ultra control  
just sweet  
I remember the backroom where I'd sit  
each night and listen to tunes  
over and over  
maybe reading a passage  
over and over  
the tubes were hot  
orange hot

## Just One Nail

our barn was as old as the country  
I found out 30 years after it was torn down  
built in the early 1700s  
it had wood nails and all of it was white silk smooth from age and air  
its inner rooms and passages held tool relics  
I thought is was just old  
but it was old  
perhaps today spiffed up it would be a gem  
imagine such a place to work and write  
if only if only if only

## And Cold And Wet

smell of eggs and bacon  
in a cold confined room  
in a hut on the side of a mountain  
being cooked over a wood fire  
with a bad chimney  
my father's friend told him  
your son is lazy

## In Paris Once

the woman walked beside me  
down a street neither of us knew  
in silence until we found a café  
where we sipped hard drinks  
looking past each other but  
with the sneaky parts of our eyes  
alert to changes / later  
we crawled noiselessly into bed  
then the only sounds were nicks from the heater  
drops outside the window and time  
lingering past

**yes of**

course everything  
changes / wills  
change / will  
you



## Vision Very

tonight the bridge  
is awake under bright lights  
and over a black current  
and all in silence

## More Than Want You

finding the end of the bridge  
set in fog  
above a warm river covered  
by cold air shuttling down from mountains so far away they might as well be nowhere  
I believe I'm  
finding my own end  
looking down I strike a pose of fear  
through the gaps I know black water is flowing fast enough to pull the steep from the hills  
the green won't stand  
the strain

## Who Huh?

so who finds the pretty girl  
and tells her her  
idea of passionate sex  
is just a ding dong

## Into The

lots of time  
passing from the day till now  
the days in between were  
important to others  
I simply watched

## Stop and Stare

how did I learn  
in a cafeteria  
music piped in or a little band  
Meredith doing the pony  
with Kris and Sally in the middle of the room  
the tables folded up and stacked around the room  
I perfected the art  
of watching

## My Father

I made a screwdriver once  
yellow plastic of some sort  
I used a lathe to shape it  
a square length of steel  
I forged it into a slot blade  
I tempered it with tricky heating and cooling  
I was afraid I had not  
enough skill to machine slots into the handle  
to provide good grip  
even so my father used it  
he was a kind man

## Pentucket During the Day

my high school was small  
corridors not too like a maze  
small classrooms  
but crowded hallways  
between classes  
it was the only time to talk  
aside from lunch  
small social  
small school  
small learning

## The Guest

and who asks about me

no I'm not doing fine



## Times Silly

the world has a lot of space  
make room for me one last time  
I remember when I thought I was starting  
out young

## Anyway

lives past are lives  
lost / their times were jewels  
they were love  
their many days were their days  
when they saw a mist it hid their things  
from them  
they made all that  
I made all this  
you / who are you

## Top To Bottom

in my field  
the groundhogs are taking to the heat  
like summer baked clams  
by the ocean at dusk  
after a day of sun baking  
and red skinning  
quick looks up skirts  
and down tank tops  
everything just as neat  
as the groundhogs waddling  
from flower bush to bush

## Hoyt's Hill

I've found the gloves I wore  
when we tobogganed Hoyt's hill  
under the barb wire fence into the mapled swamp  
frozen over and slick  
holes torn  
cold down to near zero  
no one hurt / we ducked by instinct  
later I felt the scratches on my head  
from little tips slicing  
but not before a woman wrapped herself  
into a pretzel with me as holes  
and we slept like dogs into the late afternoon  
of another day

## Torment

who would think  
torture would be fun  
hard to say

## An Instrumental

always I saw  
my future to the west  
in my dream  
I was away from everyone  
doing what was strangely unlike

I pictured then  
then = teen age  
Kansas  
Wichita or Holcomb  
a woman  
long-haired  
standing with / near cottonwoods  
a guitar / metallic amp with lots of reverb  
playing in the wind  
with the wind  
nothing but a wind  
blowing past me  
to the farm lost to a dried out memory

## By A Wet Road

water flowing down a ditch  
from up the road  
into a pond  
while winter parted ways  
my 2x4 boat  
a nail at the front and a string  
I half pulled it to the pond  
my idea then  
of fun play

## Only Stop

what hopes did I have  
just moved to Illinois  
confidence?  
expectations?  
being on my own the first time?  
not alone  
but nearly so  
I never learned to live  
really  
just how to survive  
like with bad bowels  
just planning how to make it to the next stop  
I envisioned only one  
next stop



## Farm Fresh

failure?  
how far from the farm  
I've gotten  
compare progress  
all Bs and Cs  
now a wikipedia page  
some awards  
one eye to see with  
left side big damage  
but where I've gotten

## 1+iI

the window  
outside it's near dusk  
up here in the flat  
I'm thinking of putting on lights  
snow like noise in the dim air  
big noise in singular spots  
a frozen drizzle between  
now surprise  
outside I see the simplified lights  
on the Eiffel Tower and faded lacework ironworks  
my pillow is ready for two  
only I  
must decide  
soon  
before the wine's breath expires

## Sullenity

beneath pine branches  
sitting on a flat rock  
a small fire I started artificially  
all above snow leaks down from a sky gone sullen  
imagine my life I say to myself  
but I forgot my answer  
and now I'm me  
no connection to that boy

## All The While

I was thinking of writing something sweet  
but the audience will want science  
or engineering if they are feeling silly  
but a man's life has passed by  
and I think really it was a sweet life

## Merrimack Overflow

big runoff  
clogging the river  
browning it with the poor soil up and away from it  
people standing on the river's banks  
are afraid  
only in times like this do metaphors  
wreak their magic

## In A Hole

teach me how to read  
how your words are related to me  
spell out your self spellings  
mockingbirdish I will follow you  
my father followed my mother like a sparse winter  
learned her language excluding all others  
he underlined a passage about Rachel  
he followed her into the deep cold

## And Then Gone in the Tiniest Move

wet cold day and I walked down the road  
past all the houses on our former farm  
all the way to the pond and even beyond  
another day I got into my car and drove  
that way and then all the way to the Pacific  
mark my path and what a corkscrew  
a transition  
my last step will be the smallest I ever take  
from this to nothing

## The Last Thing You Read

the dream returned  
of being nobody  
living nowhere  
here is how it falls out for science:  
to all you scientists who worship technicalities  
you will worship them until the day of your death  
then what I write will be all you think about



## A Certain Kind of Sadness

I used to make people  
sway and bob  
lift their knees  
and move across the floor  
many didn't care how I looked  
just how I sounded  
sweet and glowing orange  
and sometimes distorted  
like tropical love

## Here Some More

I can imagine lives I might have had  
Carla dead ten years  
Janis dead fifteen years  
Meredith insane  
the lucky man I am still is

## By The Time

now the endless days of sunshine  
burden / I am unable to live in it and love  
I need something to kick me  
out of this depth

## Ambig

what will I find at the bridge?  
how to get from one side to the other  
I'm certain there will be tears  
tears of sadness or maybe  
tears in the fabric of memory

## A Trip to Skip's

showers / tiring flight and drive  
lightness of spirit  
heavy of heart  
what wonders there will be  
writing in anticipation  
not memory

## Like Women, Sometimes

the bridge's foundations  
are being substituted  
rivets replaced  
paint blasted off and new paint painted  
on  
the swing bridge span is spun out  
and up on blocks  
someday it will be an old bridge  
looking new but out of fashion

## Memory All After

today I will never forget  
bringing Nabla back to life  
and organizing mud wrestling  
below my dorm  
'in uppers during reality

## Tidal

today a tall speck  
on the river became  
a bikinied woman paddling  
a surf board  
standing up  
downstream  
against the current



## Too Many

I am dead tired and lonely  
tired of explaining  
tired of driving  
tired of

## A Certain Kind of Sadness

that bridge look to survive  
the cleaning and reinforcing forced on  
it by time and cars like mine  
hope I don't die when it's not for my ashes to pour  
off from  
pretend it never happened

## Number 1

two things I learned today  
the taxi driver who  
delivered booze to my grandmother  
said she came to the door nude

## Number 2

two

Buddy says that Sam Scherbon  
would just yell to him  
hey we have to move these bales  
and make him do it  
candling eggs  
cleaning them  
collecting them from the hens  
went on for years he said

## On TV

years ago  
kisses were closed  
today kisses are chowdowns  
before we could imagine  
what we missed  
now we know

## Fight No More

the slide down toward winter  
the reminder  
should we need it  
attitudes colder  
fear from earlier darkness  
later darkness  
darkness  
I look for the warm hand  
to rest on my head  
while the last thoughts there  
fall or pass  
away

## Puzzlish

the river is indifferent  
the repairs are inky  
the waters are never enough  
people ride on them  
while I hard step toward it  
but sprint away  
how fear can be strong

## Why Not That Far Away

the blue changed  
noon to dusk  
changed everything  
weeping



## Wherever There Are Stones

on the stones everywhere  
I see it written  
carved / cut  
hope for meaning suspectedly  
together forever  
when all it means is adjacency of what used to be  
granite me too

## Framework

just this bubble is clear  
the rest uncertainty  
the blur that makes fiction

## Facing Bad Choices

if there is a way  
it is a bad way  
I forgot who was important and let him go far away  
one day soon I will go far away just as he did  
but all these far aways are far away from all others

## Streaming Description

the words coming downstream  
were frozen once now thawed  
they've picked up the soil and some sand  
from former rocks and debris  
leaves mixed in / they all seem well worn  
mixed together / find me sitting by the bank  
not too close but eager for it to mean  
what rivers everywhere are hoped to mean

## RIP

you live day to day  
there are patterns  
but the ones you notice are boring  
I've been thinking about Dave Waltz for weeks now  
my first mentor  
the important patterns  
are there to see

## Soon The Two Are Gone

outside tonight  
the street's snow filled  
standing at the window  
hold back  
the curtain and behind  
me the woman who is with me dozes  
I watch her breath lightly / her hair lifted by what moves her  
turning back  
now the street has two deep tracks  
never touching  
the light wind blowing and fresh snow falling  
begin to fill them

## It Was

the site provides mechanisms  
to assist comfort when deathly circumstances require comfort  
assistance gathered from friends and relatives

Lotsa Helping Hands

news email can be sent and to help

the subject is set like this

[Lotsa] <subject>

today it was sad news

[Lotsa] Sad News

## Dull I Know

I believe I've reached my limit  
I know no way forward  
I must get away from some things  
or I will be another early exit



## Foo

oh everything goes wrong  
I hate it  
it stops me from writing well  
what can't things work

## Secrets of Art and Science

there are lots of ways to make things beautiful  
most are sentimental / but that's a secret  
how close can you step  
that's how beautiful you'll make it

## Nobody...Nobody!

I wish there was a beautiful way  
to be part of the nobodies

## An Important Bed

I want the lies  
to include morphine

## **Rocks Village Bridge**

Span 1: riveted Pennsylvania through truss, built 1895

Span 2: riveted, 2 intersection Warren pony truss, built 1883

Span 3: Rim-bearing, swing, through truss, built in 1883

Span 4: riveted Pratt pony truss, built in 1914

Span 5: riveted Pennsylvania through truss, built in 1914

Span 6: riveted Pratt pony truss, built in 1914

## Adaptation

finding my way around a new system  
trying this trying another  
complexity adapts

## Long Aside

in Champaign we started to learn  
but being so young we flopped  
the size of our ambitions was next to nothing  
and that's where we got

## Finding In

some of the days seem too short  
the leaves are really just about gone  
cooler too  
but the rivers still flow  
so far  
and downy hair is all the rage



## Tired More

fatigue is on me  
tired of living perhaps  
I need a long sleep

## Home Of Sorts

a long trip

a drive

a good meal followed by a lousy bed

a drive and then who knows

in the end all will be upended

## A Myth for Us

I have stroked the hip of the last tomorrow  
and it turned to me  
and frowned

## For Now or Ever?

the verdict is in  
career is over

## Day After

when the photos are too blue  
better watch our mood

## Small Job

he was a serious man  
much more than me  
my job as always  
is to record all

## Today At The Symposium

I recorded it all  
spoke a little  
and some people recognized me  
by I stun few and amuse

## Downstream

the river at dusk  
was flowing sharply upstream  
filling widely the river bed  
insinuating salt on soft



## Drive Tonight

behind me  
I'm heading East  
the sky is orange  
alien / foreign  
I continue East until  
the dangerous West  
is past

## It Stares

beauty in front of us  
it stares / it stares without relent  
it stares waiting with angry  
patience for us to no longer see  
the wrinkled surface of whatever is there  
but to see it  
beauty instead

## Work & Just Work

putting together sentences  
to push or pull  
not easy and now a program  
to do the same?

## Writing 201

secret of writing to entrance  
write for a purpose  
unrelated to the readers

## Left

the most unsettling  
poem ever written  
simply has  
something out

## Here But Not There

leaves are turning  
cool weather  
more clouds but when there are none  
a clear / bitter blue sky  
I was taught to look for lessons  
what I learned was to not look for lessons  
back home the irises are bracing  
and red-tinted cedar bark is doing all it can to keep them warm  
everyone is surprised by how flimsy these excuses are

## Hermeneutics, He Said

the world's an old and tired place  
too many have decided to stay stupid  
I admit to my share of it  
I want the words to make good sentences  
but the funny papers have put an end to that  
now only the dictionary understands

## Photographic Memories

when I took the picture  
the camera / shy / looked away  
in its memory an image formed  
into its memory something never seen was remembered  
tonight I have edited it  
and the camera blinked



## Over I Suppose

I want it over somehow  
I am in and my head it underwater  
it's a young person's game  
and grit and experience won't do enough

## Word Display Case

something has grabbed my energy  
and I'm under a deep patch  
maybe tomorrow I can get enough  
to grab words right  
pen them down and spread them

## Went Away

too many nights are spent wishing  
for songs and sounds  
I have a mad desire to hear you  
the songs are so severe and so sad

## Woods Soliloquy

dark rising  
light rain falling  
she is fixed by the window  
waiting for various ends  
she means to be warm to you  
but you are stuck in the woods  
cutting old downfall  
hoping it will dry  
before it's too late

## We Laid Down That Night

once I ran through a field filled with made stones  
with a woman I thought I could love  
who now 40 years later has gone

a work of imagination  
is able to fill that gap  
with a pair of lives stitched together

but were one of those mine  
I'd be alone but filled with something cold and past  
something like those stones on which are piled even more

## Finishing Fall

some like the snow  
as it falls large as palms  
fast covering the ground  
and hugging branches  
but me I like  
the fog that drifts through the trees  
across the road when the temperature rises  
while the snow still falls

inside her warmth  
has been poured into a hot cup

## What Is It?

you can see it  
when the other runners pass you by  
you sometimes want to fight on  
but it's too much for you now  
when you were young it seemed possible  
but not likely  
now it's just what it is  
what it is

## Anytime

every peak is at the dead  
I listen to the sax and its silly sounds  
play sad to me  
I'm going to go away soon  
because slow but sure  
fewer parts remain  
tonight like many nights for years  
I am sitting in the dark and music



## Fortune in Two Directions

attribute it to cold air  
or being buried  
imagine what they look like now  
if they look like anything at all  
then think back to the hidden past  
then think forward and that's what we'll be

## Tears They Said

work work work  
I am finding it hard to excel now  
except for just a few arenas  
I feel so alone

## New England Scene

a birch bunch of three trunks  
a heavy snow under a white lead sky  
birch bark white with black flecks and stripes  
a boy not far away under a low hanging pine  
tending a small fire he built in the woods  
behind his family's house  
pretending he is that great pioneer  
who discovers something small  
and makes it big

## Looking

some photos I'm looking at  
look like made from junk  
so unrealism  
my reaction is nonnull  
more trivial / alert  
it's in my pants  
and yours  
the faded and vivid  
scratched  
I fathom as much

## Apartment

there is a woman  
somewhere  
whom I was to have loved  
I am here in a dark room writing this  
and she is in her flat somewhere  
her hair spilt onto one side of her head  
glinting under a weak fluorescent  
unable to face the cold bed

## Eastern Germany in Late Winter

on a trip to far way  
I saw dark clouds and watched snow rain down  
when it was cold  
in the car I watched naked trees fly by  
I wanted something simple to happen  
instead  
we talked

## Foggy Falls

it's the time of year when trees give up  
become beautiful before falling toward  
a kind of death  
what if beauty didn't come first?

## Unbalanced

I am terrified  
of the slope ahead  
today I stood in the middle of a crowded elevator  
filled with young women (and me)  
and barely was able to stand up straight  
for 8 floors down



# RXN

hot beyond comprehension  
in photos her real life self  
ordinary as hell

## In Desert

few of them express so well  
her sun is oppressive  
perfection scares  
she is hungry

## Slumbering Toward Bethlehem

yes she walks that way  
I have the doubts of old age  
she is a catalog of my mistakes  
she is the torpor opposite I recall

## Curiosity on Hold

lots of things I remember  
fill up sheets from an orange notebook  
I am writing this to forget because  
to know is the opposite of to remember

## Well Tired

I am the hog of nothing special  
I root for myself not  
to win but to  
quit quick and quiet

## Rustic French Toast

your father stood at the counter  
where he broke eggs into a soup dish  
and swirled them and  
added canned milk  
dipped in the bread and cooked  
the pieces in a buttered pan  
his work was rough and eggs whites cooked cling to the bread  
and that's your treat  
so much so  
that today 50 years later you make it that way  
deliberately / not through mistake  
through plan and separation≤

## Done 4

I looked into the unsmiling  
face of my shortcomings  
and I am ready to declare myself  
down the drain

## Support Puns

I want something alive and full  
I want to spoil your bad dreams  
it would happen on a warm day  
it would happen when the larks are about  
you would probably smile just some  
you are like that / you are those things



## Born Today

born today and for years after  
a little girl looking goofy  
she made her way from small city  
to farm to...nothing much  
in there she had me  
from me / thinking me feeble / she kept  
a hell of a secret / wait while I count the years  
65 / I had to check it / just imagine keeping  
the biggest secret in the world  
from the ones you loved  
most for 65 years

## Bye

I was swarmed with good friends  
whom I need to ignore  
because those who rule me  
won't allow it

## In Her Apartment Near Water

she walks from room to room  
in her harborside apartment  
she looks out windows and down to wet streets  
in the way of a woman harboring regret  
she wonders which other path might have led her somewhere else / some other where  
to a place of closer shelter or longer promise / a calm desire  
room to room she remakes them all but the streets stay wet  
she doesn't think if she thinks at all  
of me

## On a Night Before

I'm guessing she started tonight  
years ago to expel me  
(ending with forceps tomorrow)  
in a Haverhill long gone  
when my father asked her how  
she felt she said different  
not some spectacular word  
just different  
when I think back to then  
in imagination and through photos  
I dream of simple and monochrome  
I reminisce about her dreams for me  
how small maybe or how inflated  
everyone is waving

## The Night

weather wet the paper said  
cold and a bit windy  
no indian summer nearby  
many said the day was dull  
but down the hall pruneface was born too  
we were swapped / my mother was not fooled  
she had had  
a boy and pruneface wasn't  
was that a good deal?

## So Sweet

it takes harsh weather  
to make room for a smooth guitar  
played with light fingers  
on a small amp filled with orange glow tubes  
tonight the wind outside is blowing drizzle  
a bit to the left and music is coming from the right  
on a new set of thick strings  
picked every way they can be

## Farewell

gone too far and filled with hurt  
she is probably lost

## Of Some Sort

not any better  
I am spinning  
it seems  
down a drain



## Subterranean

there is a kind is despair  
that eats like acid and stains like rust  
it feels like a road gone down that cannot be found again  
or a great meal made of the last ingredients  
never forget this  
please

# Hip

stark truth is never warm  
the rest is cliché  
even those are cliché  
we celebrate  
without people  
cliché don't exist

## Politics Is A Small Horse

hell passed by today  
on its way to a southern clime  
hot hot hotter  
waiting for preachers and snakes  
everything wriggles as it passes by  
everything but ice cream and snacks

## In The Night I Wish

near where I grew up is a town near the sea  
white clapboard and brick homes / black or green shutters  
right now it's snowing there  
people in those homes cluster around warmth  
human / combustion  
many small things make this moment the next  
windows covered in blots of dew

## East of a Dry Spot

the desert is no place for slow men  
weak men / those who think much  
green things are sharp things  
every beast knows its angle  
you have no angle  
you have nothing  
you are you

## Sick Sad

they made a river for me  
where everything I've ever  
cried about can gather  
then move on out  
to sea  
see?

## Solid Retirement Plan

a little shack on a patch of desert  
an old barn with holes like unheard bomb blasts  
a metal wind pump / blades filled with bullet holes  
a tank covered in graffiti or perhaps a secret note  
a social security check picked up at a post office  
an old computer running this software  
a connection to publish it on

## Recall It

then farm was more organized then  
a small orchard  
a little stream carrying waste away  
trimmed fields  
pine woods filled with mushrooms and Christmas wreath makings  
now it's divided among families  
who loving the wild have let it all run wild  
cut down the orchard  
pushed down all our farm buildings  
it's all just in here now  
a sad end to the sensation of sensation



## Sick Love Sick

in my thesaurus  
there is just one word  
that synonyms every other  
that word is your name

## Stories Not Enough

I remember how for granted I took every part of the farm  
I remember walking for hours from one part of it to another  
I remember all the seasons and how the barn responded to them  
I recall the animals and sometimes how they responded to me  
I can remember the smell of the hay early in autumn and how it changed all winter  
then there were the yellow jackets on the rotting pears when we left them on the trees too long  
those memories never rose to the surface of my attention until the farm was long gone  
and my parents were long gone and everything I loved was long gone  
soon and all the words were gone no matter how many times I write them

## Funny

funny how some people still  
hold me up as famous  
as a model  
who clamor to meet and visit  
funny

## Muresco My Love

is fine  
is white  
is fire proof  
will not rub  
works easily  
has great body  
is very durable  
kills all suction  
is quickly prepared  
saves one third labor  
covers ordinary stains  
is low cost yet is the best  
can be worked by one man  
is entirely free from arsenic  
should be tried to be appreciated  
will not show "laps" or "clouds"  
requires no "sizing" or "wash off"  
is highly regarded by the best decorators  
has never yet been known to peel or flake off  
will ultimately supplant whiting and lime mixtures  
will do all that is claimed for it by the manufacturers

## Stairways

can it be true  
the loss / the worst  
simple days where the only obligation is to be silly  
in new ways  
always  
some days now could be like that  
but the great guitar players don't approve

## Sweet Snow

no one can imagine  
walking into your own woods  
during a heavy snowfall  
walking deep into them  
listening as flakes slip past left over leaves  
hearing the pine boughs above let slip the storm wind  
I know a granite rock deep in the woods  
not under pine but close by  
that's where I sit and would sit  
till the end if all were mine

## Past Time

Peter Walls's store was two miles away  
over the border in NH  
we'd walk there for the odd thing  
we had our own milk our own eggs  
soups maybe or a light bulb  
often some candy  
Peter was scottish but I didn't know that until now  
now that I can find out anything in the world  
using the same tool I use for writing these poems  
ride my bike there with Jimmy  
play on the tracks right next to the place  
my band playing at the former rink across the road  
evaporated milk probably and soap  
cereal / how about a replay with the director's comments?

## Bowl of Dust

great streams of dust  
blow down streets  
across road and over houses  
except where it bears in  
and fine grit coats the sofa and chairs  
fits a layer atop our plates  
why we live here the rich know well  
they never would



## Finally A Love Poem

my love is a carburetor  
she breathes for me  
she feeds me fuel  
without her I am just a block  
filled with holes some call tubes  
but I can them torrents

## Getting Better

turn the light on she said  
I turned the light on  
turn down the blankets  
I turned down the blankets  
turn around and leave  
I turned around

## Mush Blocks

our movies of tobogganing  
pictured the snow as blue  
I recall the cold  
and how wet we were after an afternoon at Hoyt's hill  
my father and me  
he rode in front and I in back  
when we crashed he got the worst of it  
now he's just the past

## A Bad Desire

I've always had it wrong. Never compare yourself to the best—not to Guy Steele, not to Rod Brooks, not to the rich I knew who turned their backs. Do that and you are the loser / there is no competition. Instead, look how far you've come from the beginning. Kurkjian wrote "this is my genius friend Dick Gabriel." And I paid no attention to him. My classmates from highschool were stunned by what I had done. And I paid no attention. Instead I fell off a cliff into despair. Now let me imagine the last scene again and imagine it differently. The sun has dropped just below the pines and oaks to the west, the sky is clear mostly / just highlight clouds above the treetops. I am walking down the road to my home and that road is lined by the kids from my early school classes and my parents and grandparents (the ones I knew), and they are telling me in whispers but in smiles "you did good," "you showed them," "we're proud of what you did," "you went everywhere, you competed with the best—you never won, but you were in the race up till the end." "We love you and now it's time to rest, don't worry any more; just listen now to this sweet closing music, sit here on this soft couch, hold this pillow to your chest and let your tears fall onto it; watch the stars come out little by little over the fields you loved, tell us all again the stories as you remember them unfolding, rest until the last star has come up then rest forever in your final finest imagined spot. You did it, you did it, you did it."

## Their Heads Craned Up

I find myself walking home  
past the Scherbon's place down the road from my family's farm  
as I walk down the road the air fills a bit with smoke  
the sky grows a little glazed  
houses I remember built on subdivided plots are gone and the fields are back  
past Sam Scherbon's house I see the barn still standing  
the coops are back up  
the foundation hole is back where it was and standing in my front yard  
under the big big oak and gnarled shag-bark hickory are all my school age friends  
they don't remember the failures I had along the way  
the rejections by schools / by companies  
they remember me holding vast promise / vaster than their's  
they remember me going to college / going to MIT  
going to Illinois / going to Stanford / starting my company  
going back to school for another degree / writing not many but remembered papers  
essays / books  
traveling to countries / giving talks to small but happy audiences  
what I remember is how much higher someone can go / how much higher my later friends did  
how many failures I had  
what they remember is how high I got from where I started  
you did what none of us could  
you made a difference / now rest  
rest for all time

## On Fire

find me the place where there is warmth  
between earth and air  
let me feel a hand light on my head  
let me hear my songs  
let me listen to my words  
let me be alone before I am alone

## A Rock and Fear

I have a fear that has ridden with me my  
whole life / it never showed any hint of waning  
or leaving or turning into peace or pieces  
it felt like the twilight dull sky blending into the tops of trees  
across our winter heavy field / the one with the rock  
in the middle that could never be removed

## Light Up

a big rain will wash it away  
like a big river  
a flood



## And A Story

he brought a piano to the house on the farm  
he watched his new wife moving bushel baskets  
from the barn to the kitchen  
this was when he was young  
and I was not even conceived  
now they are long dead  
and I am old  
soon only pictures

## Writing As Usual

as usual  
irrelevant concerns of the moment  
interfere with this

## I've Said It All

she is all women  
because she's been made that way  
pieces sampled from everywhere  
tipped eyes / creamed skin color  
sexy in every way possible  
space  
time  
work  
achievement

## Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu Revision

Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is an ancient/old Japanese martial art that integrates essential aspects of nine traditional styles. Although each of these styles represents an independent and self-contained system with its special characteristics, there are common basics and overarching/comprehensive principles. Their (the styles') training/practice involves (the training of) techniques such as locks, throws, strikes, and kicks, in which power and speed play a subordinate (?) role, while balance and flow (flowing/fluid movements) are more important.

-=-=-=-=-=-

Google translate:

((

Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is an ancient Japanese martial art that integrates the essential aspects of the nine traditional styles. Although each of these styles represents an independent and self-contained system, and thus has special features, there are common principles and overarching principles. Your training includes lifts and shot-even punch and kick techniques in which power and speed play a subordinate role. Instead of standing balance and fluid movements in the foreground.

)))

**Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is a Japanese martial art that integrates the essential aspects of nine traditional martial art styles. Each style represents an independent and self-contained system, and Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is the convergence of their common and overarching principles. Your training includes strikes, kicks, blocks, grappling, and throwing, but evasion, body flexibility, conditioning, balance, and fluid body movement are more important.**

lifts and shot-even punch and kick techniques in which power and speed play a subordinate role. Instead of standing balance and fluid movements in the foreground.

concord-ca-bujinkan-ninjutsu Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu is a traditional Japanese martial art that teaches you effective ways of self-protection using timing, distancing, and angling. Multiple attacks, weaponry, striking, grappling, choking, leaping, rolling, and throws are all disciplines incorporated into the training of Bujinkan Budo Taijutsu. The training is non-competitive, allowing you to focus on developing the mind and body through a whole-body movement martial art, not speed and/or muscle training.

## Nothing Electricity

electricity going on and off  
why  
storm passed by  
got to go

## How I figured It

eucalyptus lined the road  
which itself was sunk into the side of a little hill  
so the tops of the trees were impossible  
the first time I saw it I was riding to the lab on the hill  
September which is the warmest month in California  
the smell of the air a combined tarweed and eucalyptus  
the hill was dried out and yellow  
this was the place I dreamed of while sitting on the lap of the fireplace  
looking West out the window across the road past the stonewall  
past the field and finally to the black tops of the pines and maples  
out there with this picture of the coast just over the sundown horizon

## Fortunate Cliff

I found a place where the weather doesn't change  
much but fluctuates through the regions I like  
and from that vantage point I am able to relive  
exactly and only those episodes of my life  
that make me wonder who the hell I am

## Riviera Sunset

pretty music playing  
on a rainy night  
windows looking out and down at a highway  
at rush hour / cars almost parked  
moving in lines like a snake  
around the base of the hill I'm on  
a great flood of technology is turning mere information  
into art into music into the basis for living



## Found Out

boys punching girls  
in the face in the stomach  
ripping their clothes  
stealing their snacks  
when I heard this last part I cried  
because trivial and the word snack sounds silly  
but then one girl started a suicide note

## Listen To The Radio

not very appealing anymore  
once they found him a delight  
a book on a high shelf  
still on the high shelf  
but the light's off  
the light's dim  
dust and all that

## In A Church Near Poland

what does God think  
when I walk into a church  
or pause by the ruins of one  
in Europe you see  
inside a miracle maybe  
or just high walls held up and apart by steel  
or rusting iron you see  
He wonders what I think  
folly and all that  
you see

## Somewhere North, You Think?

10 below

35 mph winds

whatever you do

don't let your dog go outside

## Fear

what I see  
is all I have  
without it  
why anything?

## Trash Talk Day

moving along and feeling obtuse  
like a fine dance card  
my number's not on it  
my judgment of talent's poor  
work is like wine  
soon it's vinegar

**12/12/12**

too many twelves today

I ate my way through 12/12/12 12:12:12

I make no comparisons

I am the null case

## Blue and Snow and Tree

if you approached our house  
this time of year  
in Merrimac  
there might be snow just a little  
on the ground  
our tree would be out of sight  
all you'd see in our windows  
would be a plastic set of candles  
rising to a middle peak  
all the lights blue  
I told them it was the color I liked  
depression instead it really was



## Under Tree

how little money they had  
not many years could they buy me gifts  
pretending to be Santa  
the night before I would lie awake  
it seemed  
through but apparently not  
up early I'd look down near dawn  
and there it all was  
then I'd wait until one of them was up  
then so was I  
shine like gold

## It Works Anyway

brought here what matters most  
is the force of attention on despair  
and persistent truth  
find the way to breathe and listen to leaves and breath  
I want to slide down the alleys that lead  
back around  
but who has time to suss them out  
and produce faked magic

## High Over Me

the other side of the field is hidden  
in a rising mist made by strange winter weather  
in the woods  
animals await fate  
live / die / suffer  
all without self-pity  
all without pity  
inside I put another dried out log in the stove  
escaping smoke makes it romantic  
I write instead

## Merrimack, The River

I never knew whether the water  
was warm or cold  
I could never and never  
will step close to it  
flowing upriver or down doesn't  
matter / I don't approach  
somewhere reason can't approach  
the symbols of fear are impregnable  
undefeatable / untiring  
next summer I will try again

## Chunking Progress

work continues  
above the swirling water below  
confused as ever  
but above the green greens further  
renewal is upon us

## Deconsaturation

so the guitar does its thing  
the guitar player's thing  
the point is diversion  
above all tentative

## Lose Your Faith

we can celebrate tonight  
just a drink / merlot if you insist  
then I must don my wool cap and hard mittens  
head for a road going far into the mountains  
then up one  
from there I'll sing myself to sleep  
read about it

## DDR Is Simple

in DDR a woman lowers her stockings  
sitting on a rectangle bed of '60's maple  
her bra is fashioned oddly too and her underpants  
because you can't / just couldn't call them panties then and there  
but underneath it all her curved patch of black hair  
held the same hold on the man lying beside her  
as on any man any where



## A Novel Without A Book

in a room on the second floor  
my woman is walking around nude  
the black intersection of her legs and torso  
reveals nothing / invites nothing  
I am ready a seedy novel written in 1957  
the plot involves driving around France  
but returning every few days to Paris  
where a man with a hairy woman  
inspect each other for lust  
when they get close to another country  
they consider changing  
but I like it too much when  
she cooks me eggs and scones  
dressed like nothing at all

## Up There Alone

39 years ago I married  
at age 24  
and it lasted  
just 7 years  
love is something I'm bad at  
like almost everything else  
a good friend married the day before  
we had dated the same woman  
and he had introduced me  
she was the one  
he is still married and ecstatic with his life  
and I am not  
I am not

## Pa Rum Pum Pum Pum

I would lie in bed  
waiting to sleep  
so Santa could come  
I believed this innocently  
but on reflection  
stupidly yet  
I would fall back into it if I could  
I feel myself falling back into it

## Weeps

snow blaring  
wind coming down  
in these woods the trunks are grey  
everything else near white  
it's what I imagined for this sort of ending

## Nothing Ever Built

I tried many times  
to build something significant  
in the woods  
but no skill was the problem  
and I could never build anything  
anywhere after those attempts

## Remember This Or Write It Now

ok so my memory sucks  
I reconstitute with  
liquid writing  
a fiction making facts

## Splatt

when the truth is told  
one day beyond our understanding of when  
even if all of us are still around  
nothing said or shown will be recognized  
because truth has never once been revealed to us  
every fact is a blur of facts a blur of possible thoughts  
and we each get one or a few and a thought  
is not a fact and even then it would be taken  
from the blur

## Chauvet

32,000 years ago a man  
trained in charcoal painting  
steps into the museum cave  
and resumes work on the wall of lions  
later his students will come and observe  
and he will instruct them on feeling the brush trace  
the neck and back of the elk so the line  
is firm and bold / he is not a hunter



## Oh La La

she lifts from the sheets  
pulls on jeans and a smock  
ties her hair up but most is still down  
she grabs her keys and we down stairs and out the dark door to the blvd  
and around the corner to a pâtisserie where we want to eat  
after all that other stuff like her sex  
I woke once and the black tangle was inches away  
she overlooked the bed and everything it

## On The Last Day

Dick Gabriel has learned the ways of nothing  
accepts that he is gone  
Dick Gabriel is not afraid to face the hidden life now his  
find the thrill of anonymity a good deal  
Dick Gabriel reckons those who figured him gone far more worthy of belief  
than himself who believes he fell short  
Dick Gabriel / he used to be Dick Gabriel  
now he longs for the barn and woods  
Dick Gabriel I long to be you again

A Life Spent  
on the  
Trampoline of Amnesia

*A Collection of Poems from 2013*

Richard P. Gabriel

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## First Thoughts

music swims by  
my heart is not what it was when the smells of summer were cut hay  
perhaps snowfall would be best required for a last year  
still music with crystal top end  
the place I picture to this music though  
is far into the interior  
flat and little changing  
sky everywhere but under my feet  
what I've always wanted is to be separate and mourned  
missed / unsought

## In The Arms

it might look like a fancy residential home in Nor Cal  
but sitting here writing it feels like a flat in the eastern  
part of Berlin / looking outside I don't see a live oak  
lit from below but a wide man in a hat with a woman  
half his size beside him walking through yellow light  
away from a covered alley / in the park empty benches  
clench their cleats and sit covered in orange snow  
all this so I can feel her warm skin / touch her stiff hair  
to do something at night that the guys in school would  
admire / like kiss a woman whose clothes cannot be imagined

## On Snow Tracks

this wall I'm walking beside  
is a raised railway that stretches  
from night Potsdam to Berlin  
if I let it / night but the snow  
Celan gets it / a bit but he fears raised tracks  
the smoke you know that he imagines  
everywhere with snow  
I look for a woman to follow  
not close / just to see her  
a woman who was never a girl

## How About

they are rebuilding my bridge  
the one I have nightmares about  
those nightmares are as broken as the bridge  
can those rebuilders please work  
on my nightmares too and turn  
them into dreams

## Just

people expect things of me  
I can't deliver any more  
not for anyone  
not for lack of desire  
can't



## Stanley and Steve

someone I know is eroding in front of me  
he is becoming slowly  
more and more unhinged  
he speaks of the end as a decision  
of a decent poet we both knew  
he speaks of a minor talent and ephemeral importance  
am I obligated to save him

## Passion Gets What It Deserves

remember / remember it please  
it's not how far you could have gone  
it's how far you went / the counting  
starts where you did  
nowhere / the past of your past  
was the most evil beginning  
you should have become nothing  
but you did a little more  
not much more / but a little  
perhaps one day someone will walk past your headstone  
and pause before moving on  
he did something they'll think  
maybe say

## On Trip

yeah so travel tomorrow  
not that far just Minneapolis  
talk to give  
pizza to eat  
not too cold they say  
two legs each way  
near where I spoke 13 years ago  
where I was when my mother died 10 years ago  
it doesn't stand out  
but it feels familiar

## Not Poetry

cold but a kind of clear  
not seen in lesser climates  
meeting and talking to weirdos and nuts  
now / stuffed / I need sleep  
and so be it

## Last Night Of Cold

the rain is turning to freezing rain outside  
inside a woman smiles before taking her  
food into her mouth  
though inside she seems cold  
I stop / stare and lean on my elbows  
she chews and I think smiles  
I am invisible  
to her / and me

## Travel Fun

freak snowstorm  
like a spring day just 50 miles away  
deicing / freezing rain  
inside this frozen womb  
but here I am birthed to the outside of it  
it gave me a headache

## Tribute or Not

people die and their friends call for tributes  
when the requested tribute is to do what you have always done  
and you started it before the person was aware of the practice  
and you started because already had been  
and the poor guy is known for doing that very thing  
it doesn't feel like the tribute is going in the right direction

## The Difference

when this poem is finished  
it will have a design and I will have designed it  
but what problem am I solving aside from writing my daily poem  
none at all / so the point that without a problem there can be no design  
is a statement in search of a question for which it can be the answer  
that is / wrong



## Frost's Forks

the terrain's different now  
the old ways aren't working much  
I notice fewer people by my side  
I reflected on love decisions I thought about  
that would have left me alone by now  
and ones that would have left me with crazies  
so this is better / I think  
but not good still

## Dream Wish

all the buildings are red  
brick and they are on scattering streets and roads  
and they brace against the cold Atlantic sea each Winter  
and a river that can't make up its mind yet  
again or four times a day by scraping by  
I want to walk down her streets on a rainy night  
look through windows as comfort builds inside there  
wait for the woman to look down / then I'll know  
she wishes something else and the clouds will crack  
above / time will contract / will contact the hem of her story

## Meet Once

yesterday I read the saddest love story  
no one's imagined any more  
it came with a song and now  
I can't stop  
playing it over and over and  
it weighs on what life could mean  
always regret and longing  
looking back and hoping  
wishing I suppose

## Are You Serious or Fired?

progress is jolly  
to properly host the top 250 investors for one day  
the big company dismantles its  
tremendous library

I forgot to mention  
this is in one of its research labs

## **Cool as Evening Music**

the music settles over twilight  
and what was mere melancholy  
becomes just sad

## No Meaning Just Noise

hard driven snow  
hits the face like little razors  
without cuts  
but without warmth soon  
the face will show

## Such A Long Road Ago

the picture of Bill Simpson and Michelle Simonds  
walking down Bridge Street Fall '66 / it was sweet  
how they seemed embarking on their journey  
now it's my turn to walk the road tremendous to its end  
let those who might know / might care cheer  
or admire / my small accomplishments are large  
on that little road

## Story To Be Told

I love the cold weather / how  
it disturbs the head and reminds  
that the rest of everything will little note  
what happens in the crevices of the disturbance



## By The Theater

they sleep by a federal building each night  
cardboard platforms duct taped to the wall  
thick orange sleeping bags and heads completely covered  
to gain some dark / everything piled between them  
and the walls / anyone who tells you they deserve  
this deserves every bad thing that can happen  
to them

## The Romance Of Homelessness

a cold night can change the life  
of a homeless woman whose sleeping bag  
isn't up to it / or if the tarp she carries  
as a barrier to the wet ground has holes  
or goes missing / a warm meal would help  
but where is it when the helpers are huddled  
in their own warm beds / many find romance  
on cold nights and cherish the logs on the fire  
and orange light / the light over that woman  
there shivering insider her old and wet down bag  
is orange too

## How Far Off I Sat And Wondered

I liked it better when the world  
was discrete / isolated into neighborhoods in the  
mathematical sense / then places in Kansas  
were far away not like now on top of every place  
I could imagine disappearing and no one finding me  
can't happen now and so there is no romance  
romance means isolation / invisibility / desolation

## Shriram Says It All

some say writing's just syntax  
no bugs that is nothing wrong  
but nothing wrong don't mean something right

## Where's My Car Now?

some take it the wrong way  
the blast of ice crystals  
the road that looks shiny but is really slick  
I remember stopping on the road in my car  
getting out and not being able to stand  
then my car slid away  
in the adjacent field the last blades of hay are covered in crystal  
and the thin branches on birches  
trunks of thin trees or small ones  
every green pine needle encased in ice  
my car went down the incline I never noticed  
then slipped down into the ditch by the road I remember farm waste washing  
away in  
everything else encased in ice  
sound like pins falling on piles of pins  
did my ancestors anticipate this

## New Year Resolutions

get naked / climb onto Tony Land's roof  
spin Tony Land around and nuzzle his shoulder  
run into Tony Land's house / knock down a TV  
spill the contents of a vacuum on the floor  
dodge any bullets fired by LaDonna Land  
masturbate in the living room  
rub clothes on my face in Tony Land's laundry room  
defecate on the floor in two places  
drink the contents of the vacuum

## That Ice

who doubts  
the sincerity of ice  
layered on red newgrowth branches  
and the sound of cold on cold

## More Ice On A Memory

after the ice storm stopped  
I went walking in the woods  
really / down a little road that turned  
right where a little stream widened to a bog  
my boot crunched through the iced layer  
above the trees were part glass  
the sun would soon make it all water  
but for now the streaming cold wind  
didn't let up and the place under the pines  
with the boulder and needled pit around the big pine trunk  
needed a small fire / something I could not make  
not then / not now



## Fun Some More

yes so the rug has been pulled and  
I've been volunteered for a tough job  
but with the belief I volunteered  
fun fun fun till her daddy takes the T-bird away

## The Odd Place Like Home

something is happening that will spell my downfall  
I can feel it but the evidence points the other way  
I have a fear and perhaps time will save me  
I feel like I am at the edge of a gray city in devastation  
I can either continue to its dead and putrid center  
or head for the green belt surrounding it  
as fall arrives and soon the green will be brown gray then white  
or stand my ground and plan eternity here

## Boy Howdy

some people view sadness with tears  
pretend it's something that you laugh  
away / the news is always protracted  
followed by a sentimental blow  
of the nose into hankies stolen from mid-Texas  
shoveled into butcher paper alongside  
BBQ and fries  
celebrate like '80s'

## Drag Me Down

how sad people've said  
that your house is nearly gone  
hanging from holes torn in its fabric  
the fiberglass cloth hangs still  
as white as the day he brought it home  
in great piles in the back of our pickup  
good thermal characteristics I've  
read but misplaced as house insulation  
even though the pink kind seems still popular  
sitting here I can't think  
of a single time my father said I had done something well  
he was as much of a hacker as me  
quality and finery / not our things  
how sad people've told me

## Bluet

never believe your own mythology  
never put faith and dreams on others  
never gauge yourself by the triumphs of failures of your designated proxies  
if you've chosen a color let that color be that color  
I hope one day to find myself on the bank of a familiar river  
with only me to think about  
and no one be a substitute for me  
a stand-in  
a stunt man  
a doppelgänger  
I am enough of that already

## Helpable

there is always a first time  
either to win / more likely  
or to lose

## Dead Lab

degraded and left aside  
how many times can one deal  
the corridors are long and dark  
I suppose because the sun outside  
is typically high and mighty  
inside the air though cool doesn't welcome  
but hinges of stink / and the green exterior  
pretends to be alive / all inside die

## Turns Out

the weight of living  
is gaining on all  
so tired is how we all feel  
the touch is past



## Love Falls

how life hates me  
how I fall  
how what I love falls  
apart / and how the future races away  
around the corner

## Car

twenty years I had that car  
I loved it and it took me everywhere  
now it's gone like any dead  
silly but I weep for its loss

## I Wonder My Past

it is just a thing  
but a loved thing  
kiss it goodbye then leave

## Captain of My Heart

great changes come from small acts  
piling up like snow on the deck of a bridge  
crossing from despair to hope from despair

## This Is What

when the hint of allure tripped us up  
when eyelids rising made us wet  
when the thought of a cold night filled us with eager  
when the car breaking down meant more then more  
when what was perfect was soon swept up  
into hands then arms then selves  
that beauty now fits only between these margins  
and terse words that flow like small numbers in a long calculation  
light up that past  
I wish all that to come back but only a wall grows tall  
before me and I can't stop walking toward it

## Overlording It

one white bark birch covered in new snow  
written about in every poem  
its top bends and ice coating its branches  
make this the last thing on a hot world

## The Sky Was Once Blue

sad to see myself so far in the woods  
close to the last back field  
where just below the surface  
its a beachy sand  
any body buried there soon becomes vacant  
vanishing into the air or into the depths  
sad to see me walk this way  
past deep and wide ant castles  
nearby an old farm dump barely survives the rust  
old cars dumped here  
sad to see myself so far

## Past Be Forgot From Me

walking the farm  
I found many old dumpsites  
fragments of automobiles randomly placed  
soup cans under leaves and needles  
sometimes a bolt and brace hugging greyed wood crumbling  
and there old roads hooking around through woods  
linking fields nearly grown over  
these are all things that could be mine but aren't and can't be  
like desire beyond restraint



## Secondary Thoughts

living is hard  
things break  
need fixed  
I am so tired of it  
was I raised wrong  
feels like my mother's complaints were all true

## Is Appropriate to Say

there was a big story behind it all  
I never knew that story  
never had a tingle that might inspire its knowledge  
after dozens of years she felt the sting of it so little  
only her madness was left over  
her gift to me along with some hate  
all of us eventually were alone  
and events all should share to make us human  
are behind walls and inside while we wait outside  
sitting in the car / told to sit and wait  
with no books / no comics / no place to pee  
while they went inside and saw her mother laid out  
his mother laid out / his stepfather laid out  
I in the hot car with only unrememberable thoughts  
thank you

## You Belong

I'd love to have it back  
a chunk of land with fields  
woods and streams  
hardwoods pines  
a needle covered open space beneath tall pines  
to sleep and remember  
and maybe my parents  
for a few weeks  
to ask them the mysteries left behind  
can't children learn to ask  
instead of write fiction

## Am I Blue

I find it hard to feel  
love for what I do it's  
just a job I don't much  
like and oh if I could stop  
I would right now without a thought  
I have no affection for any of it

## Nothing At All

warm weather coming soon  
I hope  
with it a family of luxury  
a featherweight lift of spirits  
a yellow turning green  
something like a (  
with no vision yet of )

## Losing Loser

pretty simple  
I am happy in my shroud  
but I wish I could be a player again  
can't because businesses have gone crazy  
and schools don't fashion

## In The Deep

surpassed  
they turn a corner ahead  
trees / brush  
they are gone behind them  
now it's time to unhone my eye  
get random  
make more

## Stay Here

I can't write a program that knows me  
it always says it's someone else  
not sure who  
I am not distinct  
maybe I should try harder  
but soon I am really no  
one



## Summer Days

when they lowered him into the ground  
it was cool and cloudy  
drizzly  
after the long heat and wet of that horrible Summer  
she waited and watched  
watched the first shovels of dirt rain down  
she talked with the workers whose job this way  
then later  
she walked up the hill and sat in coincidence  
on the very spot under which her ashes now lie  
a coincidence she made in front of me  
and I never knew why all this meant what it meant  
to her until I made it up

## Transmission Error

well I hate everything  
about the way some parts  
of the world work

## As One Said

took only a day  
with lots of perseverance  
to find a way to get the stuff I wanted  
route around the damage

## Why Think

heavy garbage truck  
first on the snowy street  
near dawn but as dark as the sky permits  
and streetlights  
I noticed a woman across the way looking down  
her hair made me sad  
she turned and I forgot to look at her nudity  
so sad were her hair / the truck tracks left in the snow  
the leaning in sky  
I think the clouds were wispy

## Theme Imaginarium

stopped in a bar  
southwestern town and it was dusted adobe outside  
inside I saw hats  
I ordered whisky but forgot the modifiers' names  
a dark hair woman watched me try to read the posters  
I thought of taking her back to her trailer and running my fingernails  
down her back / all the way down  
she thought of getting in my car then  
flying to Paris where the real bars are she  
imagined I was something like that

## Heart of Lone

we had a lot of land  
scattered along a small road  
to the west of town  
we were alone out there  
at night the house made sounds  
during the day smells took over  
the lots of things a boy must learn to live a serious life  
my mother never taught me those things  
example / how to brush me teeth  
how to take a bath  
we had a lot of one sort of thing  
only

## Sull

I can tell you this now  
you know a helium balloon lifts and lifts  
how high / how big the balloon / how full of gas  
once I was out in our field  
the balloon had fallen days earlier  
in pieces it shook in the wind  
under the sun it faded  
each day I returned to it  
watched it fall into the ground  
become a new kind of nothing

## How About That

in the end respect was out of bounds  
she thought me incapable  
disabled / disruptive  
with poor value  
she did my homework from start to finish  
believed I had dropped out of grad school  
she yelled / called names / cursed me  
my mother / what sort of woman was she  
was it that I wasn't my father  
her father  
I never was enough  
not now  
maybe she was right  
I say the same things she did



## Too Shy to Complain

outside the window  
catastrophe of colors / shapes  
lavendar in the plum trees closest by  
heavy oak trunk / branches then  
yellow / yellow green / new leaves after  
grey fog over the bay  
final / thin porcelain blue / delicate as a tiny bird's  
in Winter / a spin art

## Free World

drop a small rose in the slow river  
dozens of miles upriver  
and though it hesitates  
though it edges back upriver with the incoming tide  
eventually it becomes the sea  
like everything else

## Got To Hand It To Him

who makes it depends  
the draw / the drawing  
the painting in the corner  
that I showed my friend through the window  
telling him my mother didn't permit  
kids in the house / he thought  
it was real but it was paint by numbers  
and he was a real painter  
though only 15 / I didn't realize he was  
gay but in the locker room he held his  
large cock while he walked locker aisle to  
locker aisle / no one called him that  
other boys did it too / I didn't have any  
words for it

## Walk, Walk, Walk, Walk

all the youth are dying  
I remember when I was young the age dying now seemed ancient  
I am there  
I bet my friends I wouldn't last past 50  
I should have won the bet  
losing it hurts

## KCBS

I noticed a wave coming  
kind of a rolling sort of thing  
as it drew closer I noticed  
the sea wall in front of it  
and the row of two story homes across a road from the sea wall  
I imagined the wave hitting the wall  
then everything turning white  
the fear in the hearts of the people in those homes  
but something happened and I wasn't there any more  
I was listening to Madden in the Morning

## What a Loser

one more step toward nonsensehood  
no longer Dick Gabriel  
5D8797 instead

## As For Me

in my dream  
the bridge was almost finished  
but at the Haverhill end  
people and cars had to take an elevator  
to get down to the road  
two places along the span  
gravel ramps spiraled down to the river  
I took one and on the way back up I  
caught a fish  
a woman sitting next to me wore no pants  
and her hand covered her lips  
I didn't think it was much like the old bridge  
in my dream  
I spent a lot of time on the bridge  
from Summer into Winter  
when the ice floes passed by the piers  
and the spiral gravel ramps seemed  
the wrong thing

## All My Wondrous Woes

we expect days to lengthen  
ground to heat  
birds to arrive  
these are commonplace  
I don't do big any more  
I am a small cog  
and my pleasures are small too  
people laugh at my choices  
but I want small ones  
I don't want to make a big show  
I want to have little comforts  
I want to sit out back and read  
and write



## I Think Of The Things I've Done

sitting in the crook of the forked tree  
near the hand pump we used for the cows' water tub  
I imagined maybe writing great stories  
novel maybe  
I pumped some cold water into a tin cup and drank  
the farm then was 60 acres  
tonight I sit in a room on less than half  
an acre / the middle / in between  
a peak / some peaks / the ends  
though low and private / we arrived alone  
and leave

## Not You Not Anyone

it's important to place yourself exactly  
find your place  
know it  
never feel pity

## For All Time

Let's think about supposing  
supposing that life is a gift  
thinking that prayer is communication to other  
unless other is us  
the tail that hangs down not curls up  
suppose that

## A Long Long Time

imagine anyone at all  
from deep past  
they had a life as lively as this  
they had all that and nothing too  
wonderful things and an empty bag to put them in

## By The Time

all the good songs  
float just one inch  
above deep melancholy  
the sadness in them  
makes you listen over and over  
just as the hot girl walking away  
in last year's skirt  
makes you watch over and over

## Tragedy of No Clues

I found a photo of Merrimac Square  
taken the month my grandfather died  
really / was killed  
by my grandmother / some cars parked there  
looked like one could be his  
it looked hot / that's right  
little clues  
this what small families leave  
all I was left

## Step In It For The First Time

the smallest part of the river  
is the whole river

## Near Rome, I Think

with all that beautiful light  
hard to imagine killing and fighting  
death ritualized and real  
two colors stand in my head  
whitened blue / sky filling the dome  
rusted yellow rising on walls toward the sun  
I was warm as we walked up the gravel road to the top of the hill  
over the city / olive trees painted below  
red roofs / marble and sandstone  
many things happened right here  
many and terrible



## Crappy Day

I hate computers  
and websites

## What Kind Of Slope

wide spaces between conifers  
red bark and striking green on the branches  
on the side of a steep hill it seems  
or perhaps the lower part of a mountain  
now pick one of these  
a campground filled with medium aged cars and tenting equipment  
a pasture of no men no women / a long expanse  
leading to a frightened sea

## Abigail Redone

I sat across from her at a round table  
her face was a gray a bit and laced  
and wrinkled / a woman well past  
but her voice was sweet and lowered sometimes  
to draw me in / she was not technical but worked with same  
her smile faked  
minutes passed the lace smoothed a bit bit by bit  
wrinkles filled in  
by an hour her face bloomed / her skin fell to glass  
this what the process in an old man's head makes of her

## Under Master

I am blind to mistakes  
like the time the frenchwoman followed  
me to the café / sat at the next table  
and asked

## Let It Find Me

I need to rest  
find a perfect and sit under  
hear music play up in my ears / my head  
then a breeze heading downriver  
cut grass and river smells  
later a Skip's burger  
a frappe from Bate's  
but rest  
most important and urgent  
rest

## Tough Storytelling

one day I'll fall  
and never get up  
my legs will become twigs  
that day I'll cry and begin  
a memory journey  
going over it all  
then facing it

## Could Have Had It All

my wife knows I'm failing  
she acknowledges it in her low voice  
she is fully a creature of nature  
knows the end is just an end  
no moving ahead  
or on  
she knows when the final failure falls  
nothing

## My Trololo

I've sat behind the keyboard  
many years typing code / email  
looking out windows  
music in the background  
food / drinks  
this has been my whole life  
writing one way or 'tother



## Time After Time

the horizon is nothing new  
it cuts the dome in two  
if you cross behind the hidden back  
you find the sphere

## Mulshoe Natch

find me the cheap place  
people have nothing so nothing  
really can be asked of them  
I'll retire there like a little king  
because I have \$59 more than the next richest person  
podunk / backwaters / grass growing up around the town sign

## Crickets

no footing / no base  
I am like the fallen pine after winds  
take all they can  
I wish to completely disappear  
never again compete  
or thought to  
I just want to have something to remember  
while I am waiting

## Such A Fool You

blunted / hit from the side by stray  
dogs tails / I wish for a mom and dad to watch over me  
while I sit in dark rooms listening to songs over and over  
be gone / I say and sometimes

## Desperation

it all sucks  
it really does  
nothing goes right  
or little

## Take The Long Way

when the music plays I find the itch  
in my head drops out / the big sound is closer  
reminds me of the time I rode my bike  
all around the world I had  
nothing about me interests you  
I remember starting out with a tall man  
and the fun we had / he died and failed on

## Muffled

the little knocking I hear is you  
at the door / the window  
wet outside tonight but the wind's wound down  
I can see you through that window / I  
am two rooms away and geometry is peculiar tonight  
as always you're looking down and shaking  
out your umbrella / we'll  
warm up many ways  
the night put on the shelf

## Away From Us Both

two lights / one here / one there back  
the woman is walking in front of both  
she is a darker place in the rain  
in puddles drops raise small crowns  
of her shape all I can say  
is she walks toward me  
I burn a light for her  
a constant light



## What Cabbage

the way I speak of myself  
it's like hate  
I tingle all over  
young people can't figure out my wrath  
they don't know it's all aimed at me  
like a poor afternoon soap

## Free Marker

after the disaster subsided  
rescuers came and rescued  
only those who paid  
only those who pay deserve  
the simplest measure  
a great divider of living from the dead

## Likes The Cold

those shag bark hickories and oaks by the side of our road  
passing through our farm / now imagine the narrow road  
grey skies in late November a chill thinking of yielding a bit of bitter snow  
I read about a clean place warm all year / knew enough where it was  
to face the way to it / from there to here I made it  
a long trip that cost me everything

## Where Was It All?

in all those poems I wrote about the farm  
me wandering the woods / the fields  
the road passing through it  
the barn / the stations of the pines  
I never mentioned  
because it seemed obvious to me  
that I always went unnoticed  
perhaps poorly perceived  
definitely without eyes and observation  
because I was never part of a story  
except one I would make  
and that many decades later  
in this vacuum

## Being How

I find it hard to guess the feelings of others  
the way great novelists do / can't fill my writing  
with descriptions of their inner lives  
this feels like telling / isn't that wrong?

## The Barn One

a door led from the through lane  
to the cow stalls / on one side  
and the chicken roosts on the other  
for the small number of chickens we had then  
the through lane is how we brought hay into the barn  
never having to back up  
ramps leading up / down  
doors hung from above on the stall side  
so we could throw in the hay  
the cows' noses right there  
and the grips that held them in place  
with the small windows covered in snow  
and the lights out / how dark  
for those animals

## The Barn Two

the door at the front hangs from a rail  
rollers reduces hampering  
open it then turn right  
(left are cows and chickens)  
turn right / I can hardly remember what's there  
a hallway with the sliding door on the right  
a sort of set of grain bins on the left  
saddles? leather things? wooden rakes? shovels?  
at the end a door on the left  
and a toilet inside  
it empties into the muck below  
mixes with cow outflow  
a window somewhere because there is light  
a door maybe to avoid the sliding door  
all the wood is smooth and old  
it is mostly gray  
above is a ceiling and above that space for hay loose or baled  
it's just a place but I made it  
just now

## The Barn Three

the door at the back was at the end of a ramp  
one side of the ramp was held up by a stone wall  
the other side was natural  
that side of the barn was whitewashed I think  
the sliding door too  
it hung like the front from a metal rail and rode on wheels  
I spent little time back there  
walked past it a lot  
from back there you could see most of the interesting parts of the farm  
fifty years ago was the last time I was there  
before that everything in hell came to visit



## The Barn Four

I've seen pictures of the barn from the 1940s  
it had more outbuildings  
the roof looked different  
it was much newer than when I recall it  
but old as any building can be  
grayed from the sun / nails rusting out  
I think you could read a book about life histories  
that read like this

## Far Over The Sea

in a past so far away  
it seems like stories only  
a man lived who never was sure why  
but who had gifts never seen  
he buried himself in pleasures  
till he was ready for himself  
then he sacrificed

## Be All Right

in the back field just inside the rim of woods  
the old model A sat in parts and rust with weeds  
and trees growing up through it surrounded by cans  
and bottles  
that's how I feel

## Somewhere Near Where I Hate

the pain is hard to stop  
I am afraid of it  
I can find positions where it's gone  
but can't hold them  
it's just a back tweak I think  
I hope

## I Saw

they gave up  
bulldozed our old house  
and put up the most boring one  
they could think of in its place  
isn't capitalism grand

## In Here In There

lots of reasons to believe  
there is nothing to believe in

## Precision of the Past

they measured the level  
of the bed after dismantling  
and found an eighth inch  
off over eight hundred feet

## On Such A Winter's Day

outside / chimes  
above dark clouds punched through with white  
a strong wind folds the river's surface  
I am warm then in deep chill  
if there are birds  
no one can sense them  
this means...



## By A River

some of the trees are showing signs  
I fell asleep under some  
it grew cold  
when I woke up the sun was out and I stepped out to snap the river  
but by then it was cloudy so I drove home

## **Merrimac Deconstruction**

I found small pieces of oak floor  
and blue-painted concrete  
this was all left of my past  
now it's gone too

## April 20, 2000–2004, 2013

find me the pieces  
give me a way to figure it  
I saw some moss on the side of a tree  
I saw people below circling a stone  
&  
celebrating the birthday of a child long dead  
balloons  
a real cake left and animals to eat it  
find me the pieces  
to cry over  
I've given my hint

## WWC

some are invited because they can write  
others because they can pay  
I could pay

## never heard of it

every morning  
long queues in the school from Shibuya Station  
sidewalks are in your sight so continued  
the campus moved from 3,000 people suddenly in April  
faculty compulsory many equivalent to only 1 or 2 am  
in person-Cho Shibuya also increases if  
since campus amounted to only two schools  
rattling it

## My Mystery Mine

funny how it dissipates  
the stone walls which you'd think  
just stay up / but on the old farm it's  
as if they've hauled away most of the stones  
but I feel like no / the shag barks too  
about the same size as forty years back  
why does the permanent change  
and the changeable remain

## You Fool You

I am about to be broke  
money / women / spirit  
like a swirling drain  
life sucks  
you might think I'm looking at this too close up  
instead / I'm outside / back turned

# Uniformity

a waste of a day  
waiting for exultation



## Wow Just Wow

we looked at the photos I took  
I worked on the a lot in Lightroom  
after looking at them  
I could see they sucked

## Four Winds

hi / my life is in some mirror  
I mean it's back there  
I fell asleep for a while  
I wish there were fewer things to do  
back there you know

## Red Words

a heavy day  
words on the page  
no ideas lured  
words won't hold still  
ideas flutter away  
every moment  
we're closer to death  
ideas rejoice  
words rot

## Buttress of Love

the sun off the bay  
mist rising  
parasailors drifting  
my attention is away from the traffic  
and on the dream  
what a day holy toledo

## In St Louis

her friends are like moths  
flying fast under a bright hot spot  
we ate Ted Drewes frozen custard

## After Drive

the curiosity exposes  
the breath of a final  
reckoning  
plead with all your might / heart

## Overload

bad day  
poor planning  
trouble ahead

## Frozen Idea

woman in the window  
dancing a flirt and filling the shades  
below I wager my sanity  
later a cold river flows by



## What Really Is Writing?

they sat opposite  
pushed their passions toward desire  
I wanted to be part of it  
I was ready for a last wish  
they soon blended  
I was flung away and out

## Snubbing

man and wife Chinese restaurant  
owners and cooks  
two kids  
no drive nighttime  
animal come out  
not one piece  
whole family  
sudden and then all bad  
food reminding me of Chinese  
but not too much  
6 7 hour drive to Whitehorse  
I thought it was a little longer  
Martha says 12  
I am learning

## Whitehorse In A Land Larger Than Life

too much toast  
for this amount of bread  
large portions  
off ingredients  
I hunger for unbounded rest  
oops  
don't say that

## Now Hear This: Bounce! Bounce!

it's a dodgy road  
dips / frost heaves  
potholes / poorly  
filled potholes  
raw asphalt  
gravel  
it reminds me  
I want better to be  
the mountains tremendous in the distance  
pristine white with bulging snow  
it reminds me

## On Every Piece

in Alaska it's every man for himself  
every woman for her man  
there's a lot of noise to be had  
the nights are quiet  
quiet like the white time before and after life  
late / it's still light

## Jack Sprat

she is a vision  
a sight that sores eyes  
the mouse like color of Meredith  
(I must someday tell you of her)  
she switches cheeks / turns to glare  
at me and my  
unfocused eyes  
at that moment I thought  
solid length of enna mari dont

## Long Days

raining in Alaska  
last day for me  
I don't expect to return  
it's like that all over the world

## Anchorage Airport

sad goodbye at a small airport  
in the rain  
and will I ever return  
facing real life is what I do now  
everything now is hard on me  
I need to shed my skin  
become no one  
ever more so each day  
until



## You Know—Pine Trees etc

lots of ways to be frightened  
I remember the long lost path behind the house  
lost now in someone else's yard  
trees I loved cut down for being wrongly placed  
my house burned in a fireman's training exercise  
(my mother would die if she hadn't already)  
I took a wrong turn and fancied myself  
now back on earth I weep for myself  
—the lost years you know—  
if crying worked I'd do it for myself

## Fire But No Mountain

others have the confidence  
me I just pine for it  
I had it once  
gone now as many have pounded  
my house is burned away and I'm left  
with zilch  
everywhere

## Palatial

look at yourself  
in the mirror and laugh  
it's worse than you think  
if you think you can think  
the farm is gone  
so are you

## Some Things Will Never Change

little details creeping up  
adding up / trying to  
I can go back in my head  
the other way not  
I can tell you how it feels  
being no one  
being some one  
being no one  
being any one  
when the little details add up  
the +s and -s cancel  
zip as in 0

## When Back

when I go I drive  
from place to place to place  
and again  
always the same  
if people watched they'd cry  
so poor a life  
then I stop for burgers  
and a quarter kiddy  
the back to place to place to place

## Merrimac High School 1933

looking at a photo  
of young eager kids  
in front of their high school  
one boy is wearing tall argyle socks  
and fairy shoes  
short pants  
and he's the shortest sitting the farthest in front  
all of them are dead now  
I hope their lives were worth living  
(for them)

## Tell Don't Show

they said she had a wardrobe  
malfunction and dozens of cameras caught  
but why tell us  
if you won't show us

## Do Tell

and when they did show it it  
was just a dark shadow  
ooo  
cover those children's eyes



## Snow Part

I've been attracted to endings  
two people walking away  
a river draining  
all the time  
calm hilled lawns studded with mancarved stones  
being far away with no way to be found  
a just barely light before truly dark  
I wonder about doors  
memory that is all words  
the ashes poets take as snow  
the hatred of the most cherished  
I look to myself  
I wish I didn't have to

## Take The Long Way Home

do you have a mystery  
a story that solves it you made up  
you still have the story  
you don't have the mystery  
if you have to work hard to get there  
you went a bad way

## Beating The Positive Out Of Myself

this morning I visited my old tribe  
they called to me  
on stage they said my name in reverent ways  
some were beautiful  
it was hard  
I wanted to be invisible  
because I once was anything but  
tonight I cry for myself and my fall  
I just want it to be over

## Dovely

two doves on the handrail  
one nestled behind the other  
on a high deck  
high winds unhinging their feathers  
just sitting there  
all night  
until the calm come and spooks them

## In This Twilight

I watch death march  
through the lives of birds and fish  
I find as Lawrence says not a single  
example of self pity when one falls dead to the ground  
or floats lifeless to the bottom of the pond

## Starey Eyed

it's been long predicted  
that the most intimate things  
will crumple into wrinkles  
or refuse to comply to dream  
it's titillating though  
despite the puns  
there are places one cannot  
stop watching

## Over 101

two crows chasing  
a pigeon to death  
plucking its feathers in the air  
it's smaller and can turn faster  
but the crows have numbers and speed  
the pigeon looks tired

## Wrong Page Saved

she left me puzzles of the past  
but like the crossword without the answers on another page  
knowing the puzzles I know her better  
not knowing the answers I know myself less



## Dead / Tired

my touch  
lost  
subtlety not working  
stupid statements abound  
can it be stopped

## Ma

went down to the bridge today  
'n' sat on the bench you  
know over by the reverse saltbox  
when I saw her on the approach  
looking off to her left & down to the water  
and I watched her there for lots of time  
lots of time  
when she turned finally back toward the reverse saltbox  
I could see her face  
so smooth  
open & sad & I thought  
what happened to you during the long then that followed  
I can only ask  
you can only not hear

## Times Have Come

in the pizza shop waiting  
I saw her walking to the corner  
to wait for the walk light  
blood red sleeveless top  
and a skirt in flowered or cherry blossom themed print  
pink and light brown is what I mean  
with cream white background  
I waited until she walked  
and while she waited she scratched her thigh through the skirt  
and when she walked things got tight all over

## Light of a Windmill

my dream  
to fade from light  
while still breathing in happiness  
write my way into a deep sleep  
make something beautiful once again  
find justification to feel big  
just once

## Foregone Assumption

many times the people speak  
but only snippets of remembered speaking  
emerge and it really sounds like something is happening  
but really nothing is

## Shh

some are embarrassed  
when they approach me to do something  
then realize I'm not who they thought I was  
and all they can do is back away slowly  
while I sort-of don't watch  
and then they are gone as if  
nothing happened at all  
no / nothing

## **Damned Ego**

I learned today another lesson  
how little I know  
how poor my understanding  
how far from my imagined peak I'd fallen  
I really was only a curiosity

## Two Lines of Loop

please stop being someone  
no one is waiting for you



## Language Is Not Pretty

when arguments are examined  
the little truth / the little lies / the fictions / the beauties  
reveal themselves ingredients to mulligan stew  
and all its connotations

## The Truth

if you've read all these poems  
the last year you'll know  
that when it comes to self-worth  
I've forgotten what it means  
where I work has made it clear that all the achievement  
I thought I had is worth nothing to them  
and because they are a pinnacle in my field  
worth nothing at all

it's taken me a year to come to accept this  
I am afraid to lose my job because in 2013  
I might never get another one  
and all the unwise decisions and situations I've been in  
like being married three times  
will come home and I'll be on the street  
I am frightened

## Left Alone To Devices

I picture streets  
I like to  
rundown streets built centuries ago and worn showing it  
then a woman  
in a coat too warm  
but the rain  
particular is how I mean  
some lights are yellow  
one or two blue like tvs behind light curtains  
the woman / her coat is unraveling  
there are no elbows  
left aside from threads sprouting  
her face  
when you see it  
is blemished and fails a healthy color test  
in your hidden but powerful mind  
you turn away from her  
this is what I pictured today  
how I long it  
I imagine this in a part of Europe  
time would have preferred to ignore

## leave

File I roads  
I love  
squalid streets built centuries and shows Carried  
then a woman  
in a warm layer  
purpose of the rain  
In particular, I think,  
some lights are yellow  
one or two blue as televisions behind curtains  
the wife / coat unravel  
no bends  
In addition to the discussions left to germinate  
his Face  
When you see  
is stained and not healthy color test  
hidden in your mind a powerful object  
They turn away from their  
this is what I photographed today  
I love long  
I guess apart from Europe  
Time I'd rather ignore

## Either End

hard to stop  
being someone unless there is no choice  
there is only one point of no choice  
two really

## Left

it's not just the memories that fall down  
it isn't only the inaccuracy of the holders  
it's in the real world too  
the rotting away  
my father made lots of things  
a couple of houses and me are all that're remaining

## **Let Me Take You Down**

years ago I played lead  
then it was rhythm for a while  
now I listen

## **Puffy**

see the woman  
behind her smile  
is a big face  
the sky lit up  
so did the boys in the gang



## I Think The Robins Are Waiting For Me

here is the point to going home again  
our lives are loops  
we make changes  
changes make us  
we explore and make things  
far and away  
those changes though  
are undone / come undone  
undo us till we weep for the person we couldn't imagine  
when it's over we need return  
we need all cheer us back  
to touch our wounds  
to watch outside the door as the windows become nothing  
the sad guitars strum

## As I Work at the Computer

I work hard to equalize my feelings  
but I get in the way  
because I can remember hope  
what it felt like  
I remember the long walks  
the dreaming comfort under pines  
the fires burning leaves in the Fall  
the bubbling little streams as snow melted in the Spring  
grass in Summer  
smell of cold falling down windows in Winter  
that's the problem  
too much memory

## Never Stops

I believe I write well  
so much practice  
so much education  
so much critical help  
though I do it a lot  
I am as  
in so many other things  
ordinary / I stand out  
only against a backdrop of inactivity and indolence  
sometimes I can't work  
because I laugh so hard  
at my effort

## Tagbody

sometimes code comes clear  
algorithmic ways forward are revealed  
I code slowly now but rarely with missteps  
I started out like this  
see what I mean by loops

## In Law

making stuff work  
when there is no one who can understand instructions  
is the impossibility of life

## Nothing But

words are one thing  
a string another  
when we wonder meaning  
words  
strung together  
or out even  
are our  
response  
a kind of repose I suppose  
like this / these

## Summer Today At Last

days are long again  
the metaphor is thin again  
please make it stop  
I crave the moist warmth of home  
recall home has faded to nothing  
picture it  
I'd like to just sit there and dissolve  
did my mother feel this way  
she was weary of death when she died  
I've never been able to picture it

## So I Quit

when challenged I quit  
first sign of trouble I turn away  
any hint I'm to blame I blame myself  
I hate being that person



## Not Tonight, Honey

I need to hunker down and stop talking  
collect real thoughts before making some up  
stay close to home  
to the vest  
to the heart of the heart of it  
maybe tomorrow something pretty  
will happen in my head

## Heading Backward

I have a problem  
with being wrong  
I am regressing that way  
control

## Moonish

a long night starts now  
a dark one  
humid and warm  
grower more by the hour  
I am dread full

## You Can't Fool Mother Nature

we learned to throw  
it was a lucky break the blind watchmaker  
gave us  
with that we could hunt from far away  
far away is good for people  
who aside from big brains  
(and that throwing arm)  
got nothing on nobody

## All The Leaves

it's about the time California  
starts to smell like itself  
like sticky weeds  
and aromatic leaves  
like hot black roads  
a chilling breeze from the ocean at that time  
I fall under its spell  
I fall

## All Else

I work hard on many things  
effort has had its effects  
I am teasing myself toward the rest  
the one we crave in our hiding spirit  
I work with words and ideas  
but as I work on I find  
that ideas are nothing and words all  
I don't value  
I mean existence  
the rest of existence  
the rest

## How Far Does It Go?

being abstract means lacking  
information needed for a particular task  
or to complete it  
to understand it thoroughly  
to be able to find it somewhere  
outside the mind  
to all the words but some  
incomplete  
unfinished  
only begun  
simply nothing

## **Gotcha**

meet the two greatest writers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
their name is Richard P. Gabriel



## Berlinitude

she's in the rain  
forgot her coat and her dress top is lowcut  
raindrops raisin size plummet into her cleavage  
the men across the boundary of a bar window  
watch and wonder how cold how warm  
how far away this is from each of them  
sipping beer / game blasting

## In Thai

her hair was a lavender-like purple  
but she was an exotic asian to begin with  
she fished for eyes  
hooks in their corners  
turning against will toward her hair  
its too big to fill promise

## More Than We Have

the greatest writer alive  
looks at the world like a bat  
using senses we can't sense  
and with them making sense

## Language Notes

all thought just words and snippets  
n-grams links denoting comments  
but all in words / the messiest tangle  
you can think of or can say  
I guess

## In Whose Woods

there were roads on our farm  
through the woods  
forking here and there  
for what purpose who knows  
they were clear when I was a teenager  
I spent hours on those small roads  
they were mine  
I pictured my life and nothing like that happened  
nothing like what happened could be imagined  
alone in every way and raised to be dumb  
I bluffed my way to near the top  
before the laughing started

## After All Nothing

I would like to find a way  
to sit on the deck all day reading  
to sit at my computer all night writing  
without wasting away into nothing so fast

## Word Farm

I hope I visit the Atlantic smell of my home this week  
my mother had the perfect place for me  
but sold it in pieces / the farm  
had she not I would now be an uninteresting retiring worker  
from a small company whose work I hated  
I would not be writing like this  
not on a computer but if I did write  
on paper with a typewriter  
people would wonder about the recluse  
it would have been a choice I could not have made  
invent a way / writer / invent a way

## Heading Away

the air I hope  
will make me breath easier  
I have a cough that's worse where I live  
but better at home  
I am heading home  
as usual I am filled with disquiet  
changes make me



## Land of Kershaw

if you follow the tracks  
they're stacked and messed in clumps  
but the faint long single tracks  
reveal breaks and fortresses  
the heavy overlays are practice and refinement  
boredom / flashbacks don't work  
then there's the pro-mist

## We'll Make More

muggy / thunder mumbling away to the north  
or west and  
light sprinkles came down while I ate  
a new england lunch on a lifetime  
picnic bench  
then driving back to the farm  
everything's changed enough that memories can't be mined there  
but I don't mind  
just need to crank up the factory  
and mint more  
as the commercial always says

## Merrimac Wet

downpour / torrents

no lightning / no claps

I got soaked stepping outside the car for 30 seconds

mist and fog on windows and lenses

things have changed too much to get a reading from them

the places though have their sense

not sure which nowhere is best

## Time Instead of Time

I can see it disappearing  
falling down / rotting  
I find imagination stronge now  
than the strength of place  
as place decays  
and imagination / what  
strengthens

## Near the Beach Not On It

today we met  
lunch in Hampton  
Martin apologized for losing  
a few teeth since we last met  
I sat next to him with my bad eye toward  
we talked about nothing  
I was sad all day after that  
am sad still  
Dave / we don't have forever

## Snap

we figure out the forces  
we determine who lives / who dies  
then we give money to the wealthy  
/ wish them good fortune and a peaceful evening  
promise to go quietly  
away forever

## Who's The Fool Now?

I sweated all day  
I pretended a cool river ran by near  
I wasn't fooled by it

## It's A Real Question

I hoped a cool breeze would blow up  
on me / but the blue was all that spread  
from sky to river  
I spent time asleep  
did I wake up?



## Possible That Is

I counted what seemed new  
or the same  
and came  
up short so I wondered whether some degree of change  
is too much and the thing is then different  
even with parts / with pieces the same  
still enough change to change it all up  
I think yes yes it is

## Farm Lost

where I once  
could wander a space of integrity  
now it's all chopped up and nothing recognizable  
I think it's time  
to retreat to memory and fancy

## When You Don't Reserve

we are sleeping cheap  
Lee Vining's least  
at least it's a bed  
too small for two  
people's bags

## Susanville

bad case of sleepiness  
had to nap twice today on the hot road  
we are ready to sleep and get back  
home or something like it  
104 degrees our car told us

## Driving Home

moon just up / light floods the valley below  
light from the sun but the other way  
it might be lighting a woman I could love  
I was driving by  
on a highway  
and the valley was down to the left  
the side I don't see so well on  
but I might have seen a woman there  
in reflected light  
light the righteous denies

## Crap I Am

worthlessness is all I have  
I claim it with gusto  
I count the minutes

## High / Rise

I was thinking about a woman today  
she was walking / in my thoughts  
down a lit sidewalk in Boston  
a sidewalk lit yellow by streetlights at night  
you know / the way they look in TV shows  
like Rizzoli & Isles / and I'm up  
on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor of a highrise hotel  
I really can't see her  
I really can't think about her  
I can see only her shadow passing under the streetlights  
as its angle changes  
all I saw was changes  
that's what I was thinking about that woman today

## Rejection Amore

I had a good idea for a poem tonight  
but things are heavy  
I decided to switch from  
world's most famous third rate computer scientist to  
not a bad computer scientist from Pentucket



## Prayer 63

my wish  
to work on thinking alone and away from everyone  
for years  
to live where no one knows or cares who I am and  
to be  
unseen / unknown  
just read

## Ungood

knawed from the inside  
I want to find a way out  
I self-destruct  
again  
my talents are strong but unwanted  
always on the way back down

## Etherized On A Table

this city seems designed by insects  
nothing is square  
houses are piles on piles  
no one it seems  
can live here  
really  
they say Dick Gabriel does  
I say not  
possible  
or where is he I think  
what did he do I  
once knew I think  
well  
let's explore and maybe  
something's good  
to eat here  
would make it worth while  
to be here

## SomeNoBody

here at the writers' conference  
I want to be excited and ready to go  
I want to feel writing in my veins  
instead I stare w/ gloom at the floor  
dread the interactions  
sit alone when poss...  
eat apart  
get a room *sans* mates  
no one likes to be alone  
with me they are

## Finally A Smile

star of the readings  
they said  
leave something for us  
tonight was prose  
before fiction  
before poetry  
the rhythms the sounds the images  
the story  
you have it all

## Cold And Snow In The Hague

she is standing on a footbridge  
winter over a river in the harsh  
language part of Europe  
night time and a few flakes  
I have tried to call her  
I am far away  
but she has looked at the phone and seen it's me  
she's thrown the phone into the river  
harsh language

## Partners For Life

we find our other from among those alive  
this works because god has planned our mates  
because we choose as best we can  
or because there is less variety than we believe  
some of us need a few goes to get it

## Avalanche

from this high window  
if I were to look out behind me  
to another high window that is part  
of an apartment block  
I'd see a woman with red hair in a green dress  
looking my way  
with blocks between us  
and the windows all around blue with office light  
somewhere to the West the sun would be nearly down  
I fear many thoughts



## Pray For Me

I fell / I fell  
Jesus I fell  
hard for her  
but soon she's gone  
and forever will take care of it

## Losing Is Easy

I waved  
she smiled a wisp and turned  
the morning we all left  
she had to hurry to make her cab  
I had nothing else to do  
so I watched&watched her simple walking  
and on the other side of her  
I imagined her wispsmile dropping like dried leaves  
into a sad refrain  
I hoped her hope was draining at the thought  
but she never stopped / never turned back  
her smile stayed as it always had  
sprinklers started up  
workers began work  
I am left with this little keyboard and its small set of letters  
a sad song plays / my head its lossless file  
loss / yes that's what it is / loss

## Imagine How Dead I Am

after all that  
I dreamt my boss was crying in his office  
because how bad I was at my job  
was going to rub off on his career  
I told him if that seemed likely I'd quit  
when he asked why I would do that for him I said  
because I suck

## Loathing And All That

I want you to know how lonely it is  
to know you've hit the bottom  
but the bottom has a basement  
and maybe things even lower  
this situation stinks like a cheap skunk

## Failure

many places to watch a city at night  
ways to imagine the colors of lights as people relax  
watch tv / check email / work on hard cases / clean up after the affluent  
cars with lights telling which way  
great shows present the helicopter view  
the downlooking view  
the strafing view  
the canyon view  
computers invent new ones  
filter and photoshop amplify mood  
I read that all stories and music are about mood  
everything's about mood  
mine is like the city during a power  
failure

## Dread

feels wrong  
feels like a storm coming everywhere  
I feel the fear below and above  
there is a trap somewhere for me

## Feeble Willed

I am driven to sickness from ill at ease and fear  
I back off my statements until they are apologies  
I sometimes look back down the corridor  
I count the people who do not say hi  
today I was sick  
my mother was right

## Two Page Story

it felt like yesterday  
that Joanne Dianne Ruth and Donna  
were walking past our old pond in winter  
were talking about our genitals  
we all being around 10  
years old and sassy  
half a century later it's a vivid image  
like one page after the first had turned



## Who Likes Endings? Not Me

a pretty scene  
far away and forgotten but for pix & trips  
bored I trek  
the sensor on my new cam  
likes blue more  
I won't say what than  
I guess blue's hard  
too much shows off  
I'd lay down the last time  
that pretty scene  
sure would

## Stop I Say

a lovely woman lives in northern Europe  
she cannot say a word to me  
she drinks / eats superbly  
dresses in long scarves and nonlinear skirts  
her thoughts are formed in ways surreal to me  
my impression is a jumble  
cold is all I recall  
I never met her  
I've read we'd be perfect  
but I think I wrote that  
her name doesn't match her red hair  
I think it's artificial  
I spent hours fiddling with that color  
and the spelling of her name  
I was not coordinated enough to do both so each drifted  
I watched her walk away down a dark street in northern Europe  
one cold night when the snow was a thing  
that was the closest I came to punctuation that year

## See You On The Page

I've decided to live the rest of my life on pages  
the places I want to remember are all gone now  
in my head I guess  
to make them real I need to write them  
seems like a thing a writer could do  
should do  
besides  
I don't live in the world well any more

## A Pancake Thing

on the other bank  
a warm late summer night  
apartments across lit  
I can see no one  
the feeling's mutual

## Hopi

I was standing on the mesa  
on a street just at its edge  
behind me a kiva  
the ladder coming up out of it  
below I could see  
just barely  
men digging a deep long thin hole  
and beside them  
maybe fifteen feet away  
a thin long burlapped shape  
tied roughly with thick rope  
man shape  
I heard someone say it  
a burial and I watched  
as the men took turns  
digging / sitting / smoking / eating  
the day wore away  
as everything must

## At the Poem Store and Grill

I paused  
in front of a display  
of varied rocks  
sizes / colors  
label told important info  
I ignore things like that  
I was attracted to a grey lump  
someone muttered  
so was your mother

## Me Like

pick a place—an urban place  
pick a street  
pick a building  
pick an apartment  
put me in it there at night and tell no one but me about it  
maybe find a woman who has also  
given completely and utterly  
up

## Silly Thoughts On The Floor

words aren't sharp  
declarative sentences are boring  
bore into your head  
creating holes  
your mind drip  
out



## Pentucket Success Story Or Feeble Minded Boy Makes OK

of all the kids in high school I did pretty well  
my mother believed I was feeble minded or unable to focus  
so she did my homework for me until college  
when the PhD didn't happen in the three years I predicted  
she concluded I lied about it  
she saw I didn't get into the best schools until Stanford  
so that must be a lie too  
but I did ok  
not great  
ok

## Loath To Loathe

today I learned how big an insult  
it was to ask me to hack the system they demanded I hack  
this is how I would encourage people to quit  
is it possible to starve these days?

## My Yearly Walk

I used to walk to their gravesite  
at my family's cemetery  
I didn't know whether my parents were alive  
I understood so little of them  
that I thought I would learn whether one  
or both  
had died this way  
I didn't realize  
what death meant  
to them

## I Suspect

these days I find  
it hard to find  
something I've done right  
something's really happening to me  
or being done to me  
by me

## Silent Auction

I spent big money  
to be stepped on hard  
my self-image that is  
my ego  
confidence  
for about the same  
I could have hired  
a sweet dominatrix

## Foo On Me

my days are all disappointments  
I need to change or disappear more skillfully  
every day I curse myself  
for some dumbness  
yesterday I learned I can't write  
worth a hill

# Templates

I work hard but don't publicize my progress  
this is the problem

## Fortune

sometimes the wind knows best  
it comes from afar  
it drifts away  
when you consider it  
nothing is there  
that you can see  
only feel  
feel like a breeze  
worry like a breeze



## Some Time For A Bridge

when the bridge is new  
as it hasn't been for a century  
will I be finished  
or renewed myself

## Last Months

it feels later like I do nothing  
but I am always working  
I need better notes  
or memory

## Maybe I Can Quit Soon

I find it hard to believe  
the mess I am in  
when it comes to work  
and how poorly I fit in there  
it is not my place  
I hate it there

## What YH Said

Google co-founder Sergey Brin and his wife are dwelling separated amid allegations that he has “become romantically involved” with a Google employee, according to an AllThingsD write-up sure to commit shockwaves throughout Silicon Valley.

While this is mostly a lamentable grammatical-category billet, the news introduces mussy business ramifications for Brin and the Mountain View search heavyweight. The redoubtable tech issue’s fib is grounded on nameless authors and could not directly be sworned to by The Chronicle.

The corporal domain in and out of Silicon Valley defends adulterous kinships, but entanglements with underlings are frowned upon because they can raise legal indebtednesses for the patronages or affect the work aura.

## In Real Life

I was walking one side of the river  
she the other  
we lived for years together  
as I wrote of it later  
she forgot I was forgotten  
I mean she hardly noticed  
I built my life on her hair  
and odd little step  
we crossed the bridge but  
she was intent on the flow  
and I her  
in my story she was funny  
and liked sex

## More Than

misery among the turning leaves  
turning  
leaving  
everyone who doubted me  
was right  
totally

## Rocks Bridge

in one month the bridge opens  
it will never be the same  
it will be young when I want it to be old  
I want it to know how I feel  
it won't  
it can't

## Snow What??

Whose forests these are—I ring, I cut.  
His firm is in the village though;  
He will not see me pause here  
To influence his forest  
And drive up with shock.

My little horse must call it curious  
To be free without a farmhouse near  
Between the forest and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a fight  
To ask if there is some flaw.  
The only other sound is the cross  
Of gentle touch and fluffy fight.

The forest are lovely, blue and secret.  
But I have hopes to suffer  
And michigans to go before I sleep,  
And michigans to go before I sleep.



## It Makes Me Think

I am standing at a window  
of an urban glass building  
high above a big city's streets and lights the play at night  
in my head a soundtrack plays for what I see  
and don't often feel  
one day everything will be over  
next to not speaking but looking out  
is the woman with red hair who never speaks  
I have loved her in fiction but instead I think of the poem  
this computer wrote imitating Frost.

Whose wood these are I telephone; I love.  
His mark is in liquidation though;  
He will not see me chip here  
To clear his woods not so clear up filled with snow.

My soft clam must mean it not so even  
To chip without a farmhouse near  
Between the wood and icy lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a fight  
To lead if there is some break.  
The only other not very quiet piece is the knot  
Of light wind and soft chipping.

The wood are lovely, not too light and heavy.  
But I have promises to not sin so much  
And miles to go before I not really wake,  
And to go before I not so wake.

## Woe Whoa

how to explain to someone not that technical  
why a complex program takes time to run  
maybe brights have something

## Small Everything

I had a small victory today  
but my boss's boss needs to be the center of attention  
and rather than look at details  
she pushed the conversation to fluff

## Who To' You?

I am writing a program  
that will one day replace me  
the writing part that is  
you think I'm kidding

## Moon Doggie

as they say in the comics  
I'm fed up  
with looking good  
I want to be good again  
but it's hard to remember

## Tasty Tales

it's the kind of story no one can understand  
not for too little thinking  
or too little to think with  
but for the gaps that admit too many paths  
and how hard it is to ignore  
the most interesting  
for how unlikely they are  
but how tasty

## Yh Risen

fun over / back to hell  
try to figure out a system I care little for  
written a modern way but I don't care about it  
someday soon I'll sit by the river  
watch my life a drop of water  
sky a color I can't see but my camera can  
I think I can make my program really work

## Here I Go!

I am here and hacking  
work is all I do  
I need to stop and rest  
but when  
this can be compared to not riding  
in a Spa



# 11

it was a bad day  
even the poets stopped writing  
deferring to authorities and doctors  
we will forget those people  
and all who died unless the poets  
regain their lights

## Constraints

the water looks so blue  
techniques in the photo shop  
pictures through polarizers  
reality looks real  
looks realize  
programming with numbers is fun  
because nothing can be expected

## Coop

our little coop had asphalt sides  
roofing stuff but on the sides  
on the roof too  
a chickenwired in part for night and safety  
but a door to the open yard  
it's in my mind now  
though and I'm afraid of it all going

## Honor Is Like This All Over The World

and so I watched as Robert and Jimmy listened  
to Heart sing their hard ballad and I thought  
of their tight pants and anger  
Heart so refined  
then the refined little band  
then the refined backup singers  
then the refined little orchestra  
then the youth chorus  
and old guys teared up  
their wives looked like matrons  
they looked like old British gentlemen  
whose anger ran like juice down their legs

## Disengaging

I need to disengage from seeing  
me as them  
it makes me heartsick  
wanting things to go well is fine  
but hating myself when they don't is not  
grow up

## Fall In NE

leaves starting to blow down roads  
clouds settling in lower  
warmth persisting less  
the sun lowering toward winter  
twilight more noticeable  
...longer...  
feeling of home deeper in the chest  
stones standing out  
the time when ends clear up

## But That's What It's For

stuff's all broken again  
hard to take it all  
I hate to complain through poetry

## Flow Crazy

far away a river works  
to the sea  
hesitates / it waits  
little by little  
it drains  
watch



## Obvious Long

people find their ways here  
they sing but quietly to their inside ears  
they stop to eat where the food is not healthy  
but joyful / they stop to say prayers  
for those who died and whom they miss but don't know  
their eyes see blue differently  
and a green too  
I wanted to walk across with them  
but my feet are not near the ground  
my hands cannot type  
my eyes are shackled  
I will find my way there

## Others

my memories say  
that there is someone  
who passed quite near  
who would have done  
near as well as any

# Splat

my heart  
sinks with every  
bug I find

## Most Important Problem

I make progress  
text looks good  
lots of tweaking can make it better  
I'm talking about a program to do the writing

## Reminds Me Of

fixing fixing fixing  
keep those bug lists listing  
keep those bugses rolling  
buglist  
don't try to understand 'em  
just find crack and hack them  
etc

## Overly

not a moment of relaxing  
soon I will need to pass away  
I needs things to be finished

## Almost Like Greek

the woodwind instruments are lovely, tenebrious, and grumose  
he only other headphone is the hybridize  
of unconstipated soupcon and downy bit

## Green Metal Bridge

I wrote this yesterday  
when head back and all hurt  
I've been to Skip's  
or something bad happened  
past and future  
what's the diff



## RVB Sneak Peek

the bridge is clean and modern  
in places and aged elsewhere  
I wonder how my love for it will evolve  
the new parts  
the old parts  
which

## Last Quiet Night There

on the bridge tonight with the ladies out there  
I am noticed for the first time in a while  
the lights are too yellow  
and correcting the light in photoshop takes and extreme  
it would be nice to just be pleasant  
like Elwood P

## Historic I'd Say

walking the bridge  
talking with all  
you're Richard from California  
history / prognosis  
then we cut the ribbon twice times two (two scissors  
two cuts two people two times)  
then the headman who wanted to go home  
said let's open it up for the first time  
and we did  
I did with them

## Details Small and Silly

funny how something so simple  
becomes important  
a favorite sweatshirt lost to RVB green paint  
saddened I wept a bit  
then ordered replacements  
this is important  
just the little details

## Revisited

the road has calmed down  
the water which once flowed high is now down  
low where it always should be  
I crossed the bridge three times and felt the little shakes underneath  
I want to go home  
my only question  
where is it

## Stiff Thinking

leaving's not easy  
this time / too many things that might not return  
then bridge seemed ready to accept its loads  
the river kept sawing away  
the water water was clear and uneventful  
it was warm in a way autumns  
aren't here  
I was sad to see them and her go

## Pruneyard

as we learn we prune and repair  
it's simple but hard  
quality comes from this step  
and all the earlier ones  
like a circle that picks itself up by its end  
(where's that?)  
and flies

## Up Too Late

up too late again  
too much to watch and do  
tired and scared as usual  
slowing understanding my project



## The Mystery of Big

the code is a mystery  
I understand it by studying it like nature  
I act the scientist  
there are no bugs in my code  
there is nothing but bugs in my code

## Simple Dream

I miss the freedom to dream  
all there is is  
work work work  
I want to live  
before I have  
to die

## Bridging

the bridge of course  
never stops working  
work for it is just hunkering there  
doing nothing but doing  
it strong  
all the time  
nothing like moving forward  
or resisting being pushed back

## Tonight Some More

such a hard mess  
need to pack  
need to hack

## Lazy Bum—Maybe

a simple parser would work well  
like a bunch of patterns sitting there  
I don't feel lazy but what I accomplish  
is limited or hemmed in  
I parcel my effort poorly

## To Shine

some thought it was fine  
another was puzzled and critical  
used to creative science?  
maybe not

## Too Bad

there is a long trip today  
if this is the next to last thing you read by me  
I didn't make

## So Sad

today in a country  
rain and cold maybe  
or a delight  
or fear  
the old world  
will beautiful women greet me here



## Did I Mention No Cares?

women in tight skirts  
black leggings  
cotton heavy coats  
a bitter day  
for cold and remembering  
been here before  
something warm in north

## Zoo Gardens

today the animals  
back in agony but ok now  
reading a novel slowly  
the air made the light light

## Potsdam @ Night

cold and rain  
walking down wet streets in the dark  
shop windows closed to traffic  
not eyes  
I lay awake in awe

## A Surprise In Potsdam

they all died in 1946 or 1947  
they were all Soviet military  
buried under ivy in Potsdam  
it was written on a large Soviet obelisk  
that their sacrifice accomplished something  
I wondered what / and at the very end  
perhaps they did too

## On Museum Island

the museums were too big  
contained exhibits too old  
cities that lived too long  
I was tired and everything ached  
talk about too

## A Day When Berlin Does Not Defeat Me

talk ok all that  
some hated it who cares  
I made my points strong and got a solid  
A from Dave west  
I wish my life were every day  
as nice as today  
aside from the fatigue that drops me into bed  
like flax before a scythe

## The Question

yellow and orange day  
warm in the cold part of Germany  
walking down streets they are  
how can you tell they are pretty  
from behind

## Going Home

way back / I hope we do  
then quick repack and off again  
one day rest / sleep / early depart  
this is the end for a while



## Blue Ribbons

running red lights through Berlin  
on the way to a proper date  
anticipation has no equal tonight  
how many shades of dark I passed  
cannot be counted  
a new physics is needed for them  
I met her  
the woman whose hair is blue ribbons

## Lady We All Know

sitting in an old room  
pretty girl bobs her head  
so many sway & swing with joy  
I'm listening to a recording  
of emotion in the air  
vibrating like a tin balloon  
she extends her range  
smiles and tears up  
I fade into the last wing of reverberation

## PLoP Opportunity

a lively woman  
older but driven  
she is not a honey  
she informs  
she enriches with passion  
I enjoy her

## Desperation

never who I am  
I remain the last vestige of myself  
pray I drop the pretense  
pray I listen to the voice back  
there urging fade  
drop into the shadows why  
don't you and let me  
live among the living

## From a Long Time Ago

so she stripped  
and we roamed the lightly  
peopled hillside  
and then we stopped to rest  
her hand went there  
stayed and bucked

## My Life

I of course was  
once one  
of the important ones  
with important  
things to say now  
I'm used to be  
I wish for a cell  
to live out on

## The First Shall Last

she is the homeliest  
girl ever from Romania  
tonight she stopped my heart  
walking past  
then stopped to turn  
kicked it back  
for good measure

## Dream Work

my only life is in dreams  
and then not every night  
real love and real living  
not that the awake things are wrong or bad  
just the sleep ones work better  
because I am there  
young and alive  
and here  
old and dying



## Unlookers

lots of them walk down the street  
they used to look

## When It Happens We Cry For Ourselves

today our remaining iguana died  
Lu / friend and companion of Cid  
who died five years ago  
he had no self pity  
he died quietly on his heating pad  
covered in a warm shirt with a warming  
bag of rice beside him  
it was a day he would have enjoyed outside  
late October but bright sun / warm  
Jo sat with him for five hours  
while he dozed and then died  
she talked to him  
caressed him  
cried over him and his passing  
he was 23 years old  
we cried as we took him to the vet's  
to be cremated and returned to us  
to sit in a box by Cid  
just an iguana  
but sweet as any one  
in our lives

## This Is The Moment

some say it was a drizzly day  
cold / low clouds  
some say it was a long labor  
I don't recall it  
some say it was bad luck that I popped out  
I can't contest it  
decades later we come to this  
witness to many deaths  
more to come

## Ecstasy

this is a night of pain  
like many others  
but with a pleasure made from it  
mystery makes us

## Place to Go

time of year for leaves on the ground  
darkening as the trees lighten  
when you pick princess pine for wreaths  
it's the time of year I imagined would be my end  
my favorite time because elaborate twilight  
even then I knew sadness was beauty  
hence a joy

## Through Sex

really quite unpleasant  
to spend a day away from the bridge  
when the seasons are changing  
and soon the white will fall before it  
covering the world in silence and laziness  
where heavy quilts are life

## No Difference

lots of reasons to cry  
to fend off the past  
memories pound on the doors  
my heart is beating softly  
everything about me as flesh is over  
my mind purrs but with sad notes  
thrown in / this all was never imagined  
instead then when I laughed  
I saw only a curtain here  
I cried then  
I cry now

# The Truth

people suffering makes  
pandas sad



**Er**

dislocated shoulder  
kind of  
from operating the trackball too much  
what a hacker  
er

## Lu

the house is quiet  
one of us is gone  
the smallest  
but still missed

## Same No

the bridge now doesn't wiggle  
solid and kinda new  
in places where the old was creeping  
doesn't feel the same  
doesn't feel like a past  
feels like the next 100 years  
down in the water the old pier still rots  
something about that

## Across the Sky

imagine me gone  
you might drive the roads I repeated  
the bridges / the still places where no one walks  
sometimes the leaves will make mistakes  
sometimes the colors will under your control  
no one will speak to you  
you might wonder where I went  
I've been there before  
it's the place of ever stone  
no one meets no one there  
it's grassy and a river ruts through it  
there I'm helpless

## Jump

right now this all seems important  
these words  
our loves  
our lives even  
one day all this will be gone  
and we'll have the jump

## Just Over and Over

it all smells better  
the air is fluid  
the grass permeates  
I love the trees and woods  
people are strange but I don't  
talk to them much  
I like to drive around and around  
I just look  
the river comes and goes  
they made the bridge stronger  
but I liked it broken  
I want to be there

## Helpless Was My Inspiration

when I write my last poem  
it will begin like this  
there is a town up north  
where rivers can't make up their minds  
where bridges are green  
where nobody became somebody became nobody again  
and all the words are simple  
all the melodies  
all the loves that never happened  
dreams too yes dreams  
too

## Why Now

I really hate everything  
so hard to live  
I want to sleep and forget



## Which?

old woman  
grandma  
wrinkles and sags  
bowed legs / slow walking  
hard of hearing  
slurred speech  
nude by her mirror

young woman  
nubile  
smooth and tight  
long and straight legs / decent bounce  
hears whispers  
speaks in charms  
nude by her mirror

## Spaghetti

too many things need clarity in the code  
too interested in new functionality to fix all those problems  
things will get worse before better

## Hard Code

code fixed but it needs more testing  
today I made a breakthrough in specifying meaning  
by using a sort of gravity metaphor  
what a waste of time to code so much

## Who Knew?

too many washed away  
or up  
ordinary scenes hold meaning for common  
a thought is just a trigger  
then memory fills the ditches

## In My Arms

this time of year  
back home  
this time of day  
I'd be lying down on the couch  
watching a poor tv with my fingers pressed together  
forming a heat lens  
the dark would hold the entire road passing through our farm  
I didn't know any stories  
I think I was blind  
the little sun behind oaks and pines to the West  
seemed important / instead it went down  
once in a while I'd walk down the road to the end of the farm  
or run it / I dreamed my life away  
it would be heaven now for me  
but my hating mother gave it all away  
in my mind

## Sheesh

what passes for beauty today  
is simply love  
how else to explain all the ugliness  
in submitted photos

## We Were

where was I?  
at a pep rally for the Sachems  
we were sent home early on buses  
my mother let me draw a picture of the supposed killer  
and shoot at it with my bb gun  
in the living  
that's how upset

## I Fear

a cold wind blows down the road  
ice forms on branches  
what's left of leaves are skipping through woods  
and down roads  
and toward streams and a river  
the path we all take



## When JFK

we remembered the day  
50 years ago / when all was innocent  
not so innocent now  
all knows to kill  
all sees to hate  
if there be end times  
they be soon

## In a Cold Country Wings Beat Slow

the pretty things are sad things  
changes are close and by being close  
they make us cry and look to women for comfort  
the repeats beat us up and we recant our happiness  
I can't help falling for you and your sway  
your voice is soft near my head and I hear the song  
the words fall / the melody falls / we all fall

## Blue Lights on Brown Water

the night makes all  
beautiful and still  
makes light seem spiked  
languid water as I look slowly  
forms a mirror for blue lights  
when I'm gone many nights  
like this will pass by those who care  
to watch / my thoughts  
what are they really

## Finding The River

I sit here  
I write and it feels like nothing  
I am afraid of a dark  
framing the edges of my windows  
I am surrounded  
above big birds fly by  
the jumble I feel is under my skin  
and it's real

## Anything to Write

in the other room the writers  
have finished and they are busy erasing  
all and only the bad parts while we in this room  
wait to see whether there will be  
anything to read

## Truly Mad

my head's a sad song playing over and over  
in the vision behind the song a woman  
is accepting a bottle of Chanel N° 5  
and I am smiling back at her

## With Boston Nana and Mike

Thanksgiving days in South Boston  
the oil stove hot all day and a dry turkey placed on the table  
crammed into the sitting / bedroom  
brazil nuts on the table in a bowl  
b&w tv on but nothing to watch  
how broken the families in that room were  
all of them were mine  
I walked from room to room hoping to find something to do  
sometimes I'd sleep on one bed or another one  
minutes passed as slow as they could  
the conversations were all broken  
English and other languages and the topics were flat  
questions come to mind now  
not then

## Who Says I Was The Worst?

the nights playing  
thinking I was great when I wasn't  
even good but I was the best  
in the band / they said I  
carried the band  
how funny till you realize  
relativity



## All Same

every night we'd argue a bit while eating  
then maybe make up with make out  
a walk / to a stream or small field  
then she'd head to the arena or rodeo grounds  
or county fair grounds or a big auditorium  
to sing with her loud band that straddled  
country and 80's rock / I'd read or scribble a little  
then she'd come bed and cry a hour into her sleep  
as our bus crept backroads from one Kansas town  
to the same place

## Strict Question

picture the best woman  
tell me her meaning  
not to you  
not to him  
her meaning

## How Do I Look?

planning for death  
only a possibility  
but large enough odds  
we need our plan now  
reminds me of Emily

## And I?

she's just back  
from tending her children's graves  
first warm day of the spring  
late spring and the warmth sudden  
raking away fallen twigs and leaves  
with her shortnailed fingers  
washing dirt splatter from heavy rains and snowfall  
on the stones I shaped  
cleaning each letter groove I carved  
touching each shape  
each year it takes all day  
she will wash her body and hair  
and prepare to live one more year

## Positive

when I look out the window at night  
while writing and reflecting  
memories are the small silences  
at the margins  
in the corners  
or is it reflection

## I Love You So

last night they were dredging the river  
hauling away the soaked earth and debris to a small valley  
the dredgings were piled in the river  
the roads impacted with mud  
I decided to walk the bridge  
and the current was so strong  
the bridge twisted on a pivot  
and then the bed turned over and I was in the water  
under the water  
bad things happened then  
and only a nightmare you might say

## **Truth and Pray**

heavy rain and hard thinking  
my gut revolts  
I need rest to get past this fog  
I need to stay inside myself

## Late & Tired

giving up on being right  
complete  
just hacking by now



## Sometime

this year I took down my image  
dismantled it piece by piece  
I don't see myself as anyone ever  
important / don't see contributions  
just a dilettante  
my mother knew it  
held herself back from saying it  
sometimes

## On A Day

spent today reflecting on failure  
a common thread for me  
I've come to grips with it  
it has won  
tomorrow I'll spend the day alone some more

## Where'd She Go?

she's downstairs  
waiting for me to come bring  
her up to my room  
you know what will happen then  
so instead  
I think it over  
and over  
soon the ferris wheel and tv tower  
lure my eyes then my dreams  
then it's morning

## Didn't

the front desk  
said she cried  
after a while  
she wouldn't call up  
she knew I knew  
regret / who wants it?  
we would have been warm  
but all the rest were tears

## After A Tail

I saw her from the window  
high hotel window  
but her walk stood her out  
she walked to the harbor  
I'll bet  
where she stopped for a drink  
a hot one  
the northern air  
you know

## By It

find my river and make a place by it  
I'll sit there with you as long as you live  
as long as I live  
maybe longer

## I Never Progressed

I of course  
work all day mistakes  
and all and  
fix them one by one  
at night and soon  
I hope  
that'll all be done with  
done for  
done done

## Like North

a cold late afternoon  
winter  
the sun is very low  
light floats above a little dip  
with a creek flowing down through it  
this reminds me of the passing of my life



## As Someone Once Said

imagine  
we had our own small roads on the farm  
not many  
not long  
but enough to walk down  
to pretend to explore  
I have wasted my life

## Pine Winds

the thing about tall pines  
the wind blowing high through  
them signals a need for warmth  
no other sound does  
makes you want to drop into a bed  
of needles floating like pillow beneath them  
they provide everything  
the smell of pinesap like a pancake from home  
it's a whistling not a rattle or a shake  
a smooth sound  
like life passing by  
while we forget to notice

## Another One Of

all this thought  
and no words  
hacking until late again

## At The Restaurant

she was nothing special  
aside from lush mouse blonde hair  
and a red + black flowered dress fit  
as snug as I would snuggle her each night  
that hung still in the air as she walked  
and the roomed gyrated around her

## Magic Mute

the darkest woman of the argument  
says the world is all impure and dumb  
her argument is in the interruption though  
the only other harm is the noise  
of mad soul and hairy dread  
but I have souls to hit

## Milton's Maybe

as queens they rule  
above all / yet  
when the clock ticks past  
they suffer as all

## Kurkjian or Me

forty years ago  
marriage on the horizon  
in fact the next day  
it all seemed real  
now I know it wasn't  
but no one escapes the story  
they're in

## A Bird In Flight

40 years ago I married once  
I remember the night we spent  
the song my father played on the organ  
the friends gathered who all thought it was great  
it took me almost 30 years to learn  
the mistake I made  
to think I was special  
a dumb farm kid



## Witted

alone

I learned to love what was around me

not people

the land and the stories I found there

I remember some boulders in our woods

streams

I remember them flowing quick toward away

I cry for that place each night

more so than for love

the place

it's always about the place

## As Time Goes By

hole up and pass beyond view  
just work on my small things  
people look away welcomed  
no one visits  
only the smallest talk  
a last whisper

## She Be

sparkling darling  
she happy when none else  
spilling along the bay  
distracted people watch  
distractedly  
it's her skirt they say loudly  
to themselves  
resume living

## Me Milton and Walt

somewhere echoes  
of significant times  
linger and bubble to the surfaces  
of men's minds

somewhere cheeks  
of real darks  
purge and creep to the bounds  
of mens' fights

somewhere spots  
of chaste strains  
elate and clear to the openings  
in mens' minds

## Russian Saying

we find ourselves  
one day  
tucked away by the trash  
we crawl away into forgotten

## Fat Chances

tonight the warm air is somewhere else  
the skies darken as usual but with a glare  
my mind wanders and I need to move more  
I want her to volunteer because asking  
quickly turns to coercion

## All Along The Line

bridges built when I was young  
are being torn down now for lack of stability  
an article I read when I was 15 has been scanned online  
and is all yellowed and brown  
bad paper maybe  
I was much earlier than all those  
now what?

## Singer Of Its Song

this year I took a sledgehammer to myself  
to my self image  
so that all the bad things people say and do  
wouldn't seem so foreign and therefore  
would seem tame  
it worked  
I worked  
hard all year but left much undone  
in inelegant ways  
it all makes me sad  
makes we want to lie down by the bridge  
become a singer of its song



# The Romance of Homelessness

Richard P. Gabriel

December 31, 2014

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January 1, 2014

## As A Year Approaches

long ago I imagined  
not being able to imagine  
being this old  
I never saw beyond the century mark  
not 100 years for me  
but the then next turn of 100 years  
I imagined  
being gone by 50  
which is right at the boundary above  
now I'm here  
my self is pounded to a blunt heap  
what now

January 2, 2014

## Balanced

I asked myself how to be happy  
the answer came back in orange  
I tried to change the white balance  
blue it came back blue  
I asked myself how to be sad  
black and white

January 3, 2014

## As The Russian Says

what I must remember  
the farm was small but all  
I needed  
the horizons were hidden  
the woods crept close to the house  
the barn and buildings  
I read briefly during the day  
evenings some tv watched through failing eyes  
then the record player or simple tape  
the same songs over and over  
a tube radio then light sleep all night  
the size my world expanded to was tight  
dark at the edges  
the sky never was high  
my fate was to go nowhere  
I went further and now afraid  
I want to crawl back

January 4, 2014

## Let Me Tell You

I tell my story  
to people who don't laugh  
they might cry later  
or snicker under the covers  
we are most alone when naked together  
because we are only what we are

January 5, 2014

## In A Cold

cold and furious  
the filaments can't heat enough  
fire is taking the day off  
there is a run on whiteness  
the river knows no bounds  
ice cracks itself to pieces  
I remember how hot the house was  
that day from wood fires in stoked stoves  
and buckets of water boiling and fuming  
like all demonstrations of love



January 6, 2014

## Quick 1

hard day  
hard to think  
don't want to speak  
let me sleep

January 7, 2014

## Funny

sore and tired  
tomorrow a hard day  
our friends from NSF  
but with a better grade

January 8, 2014

## Lemma

the lengths we go to  
to figure out what makes us tick  
and all it means is how much light  
we use before dark

January 9, 2014

## Unguent

I want words  
when I lose them I'm lost  
help me find the little marks  
that spell incredulous  
I am hungry for a new hunger  
one with no kills

January 10, 2014

## Transformation

find something pretty  
to say and I'll  
say it ugly

January 11, 2014

## Watson

a gravy train  
with my name  
printed on it  
passed by  
and I got on

January 12, 2014

## As Bill Y Always Says

I am alone and afraid  
of the work and things breaking down  
small matters but they add  
one by one  
the center does not hold

January 13, 2014

## Retrograde

when young I stared at photos  
of electric guitars  
so metallic  
so untouchable  
only the special could play them without injury  
so cold  
I can see it now again  
the feeling comes back



January 14, 2014

## Puzzled Models

puzzled by what I don't know  
confused and scared  
nothing concrete to respond to  
need to learn alone

January 15, 2014

## Bright Blue

I told her she would see blues brighter  
if she wrote one verse  
she did  
she did

January 16, 2014

## A Listen

I make small things  
little poems  
small essays  
nothing to show off about  
I like to dream  
just lay back and let it  
over me  
I always was  
like this  
and will be  
no doubt  
I want to play with no limits  
and harbor my passions

January 17, 2014

## Dobie

the old shows  
watched them in the 50s  
can't remember them  
didn't like them  
I think  
or I was simple

January 18, 2014

## Hard At

work on a new dictionary  
little different but usable  
with a few day's work  
it will make things better

January 19, 2014

## Helpless Terror

last night I had the most  
horrid dream of my life  
they told me that I would executed  
in two weeks by agents of the government  
since I was a good person I was trusted  
to appear at the appointed time  
I was terrified  
I visited all my friends and family in the dream  
visited all the places important to me  
and I told everyone my fate and when  
I tried to teach people what I was working on so they could carry on  
I told my friends about my wishes for my remains  
the dream lasted all night  
I woke up several times and tried to stay awake to throw off the dream  
but when I fell asleep it resumed  
the clock winding down  
my terror rising  
at the end I went into the appointed room  
an cocktails of tranquilizers and poisons awaited  
I asked to go the bathroom one last time  
when I returned the government executioners were outside in the parking  
lot of where I worked trying to steal shipments  
I took a gun and killed them both  
there was to be no execution  
only a plot  
god the fear of it still hurts

January 20, 2014

## Forgiveness

if I don't stop soon  
I will have no time left to live as I wish  
unlike my parents  
I'm conservative with my future  
I will die unhappy about that

January 21, 2014

## With The Woodstove Going

some of the reasons are buried  
I find the fear fills out  
I remember her eagerness and excitement  
the thought of me she  
said / I like her heat  
all gone now  
everything but how hard I have to shake  
my head to forget



January 22, 2014

## Deep In Snow

think about a heavy snowfall  
and the roads that lead slowly  
to closed places  
then the silence

January 23, 2014

## Too Many Teardrops

always a curve  
odd bugs to fix  
puzzles really  
wondering how it will go  
sigh sigh sigh

January 24, 2014

## Spot On

a road plowed high on the sides  
with heavy snow after a long  
storm / the road not fully cleared  
and snow still on the pine branches above  
and sticking to the sides of young maples  
leads down to the bridge where I found  
my fame and enjoyed the colors

January 25, 2014

## Cold and Short

I want a hot woodstove  
on the coldest night of the year  
in a cabin piled high around by snow  
that fell for days to make this time  
and someone willing to strip  
to share it with

January 26, 2014

## When I Feel Blue

I walked into the woods  
while it was snowing  
so hard the snow made  
buzzing sounds in the pine boughs  
I stopped under such a tree  
and lit a fire  
proving I was a frontier's man

January 27, 2014

## Snow on the Bridge

slow and ill  
coughing and congestion  
tired  
working slow  
not much to say  
no good words tonight  
maybe some other night  
not tonight

January 28, 2014

## Off The Bridge

some grand ways of thinking  
are really excuses to sob  
like when the cormorant dives  
and comes up with two fish  
in its gullet

January 29, 2014

## Not For Me

I find the constraints too hard  
the love just gone  
I want to relax and live softly  
from now on  
I have nothing more really  
to give back  
my high tide mark  
is way up there and not  
approachable



January 30, 2014

## One I Want

praise and caution  
all at once  
I want to be right / do right  
get right to  
work

January 31, 2014

## I Can't Tell You Why

still on the line  
the singers say  
the most beauty is sad  
what makes the distorted guitar  
the sweetest  
it's not the distortion alone  
by the reverb  
the echo

February 1, 2014

## Today Is One

everyone heads for the same spot  
some get there quick  
others linger  
leapfrogging is common  
each day marks an anniversary  
of achievements many mourn

---

February 2, 2014

## Feel The Pain

I've crossed the plains my last time  
already I miss the yellow autumn carpet  
a warming filter to the low sun  
I've imagined myself lost  
from everyone here on a small farm or abandoned-looking  
bungalow with those seeking me passing by  
just after I've passed by the open window  
what luck  
the heat and hay itch my skin

February 3, 2014

## Nothing Changes

like now when I was young  
I'd sit late into the night in a dark room  
listening obsessively to just one song  
while paging through pictures  
of lives not likely

February 4, 2014

to celebrate PLoP's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary

~~we are planning a nostalgia-filled  
and sentimental look back  
at each precious year  
complete with sunset haywagon rides  
and slow, tear-wrenching background  
music~~

February 5, 2014

## What Ineptitude Is

the advice of poor writers  
is to do things that have made the poor writers  
feel powerful  
often it's boring

February 6, 2014

## Elephant Rock

we climbed well  
for poor climbers  
we were brave but not too  
we were cautious and therefore safe  
we taught people at the ragged pinnacles  
today we sit in sofa chairs  
able only to shuffle



February 7, 2014

## Sometimes A Small Mind

the slick refuse to admire  
critics take the short way home  
we can fight evil without reveling in it

February 8, 2014

## Goes Away

the tired one  
is last to know  
last to come  
the trees above know all this  
for what's under them

February 9, 2014

## Snow Scene

right now  
it's cold at the cemetery  
snow is deep  
clouds low  
I wonder about sitting in a car  
all night  
whispering questions  
checking the windows  
for signs

February 10, 2014

## Wonderful Life

we live for a time  
we say the rest of my life  
just words  
one day the hospice people show up  
that is if  
you have a family with money

February 11, 2014

## Mad

my favorite sweater  
she threw it out

February 12, 2014

## On a Bank

days go by  
nothing stands out  
all my dreams are of code  
the way that first night ever in Europe  
all my dreams were of German voices stating babble  
I need to stop this someday soon  
and live a little longer

---

February 13, 2014

## Heavy Snow In Haverhill

she took a photo  
of snow in a small city  
near where I lived once  
she stood in the middle of the street  
a train bridge was down that street  
stuff was hard to see  
the blizzard you know  
she was out in the blizzard  
she would rain such down  
on all who loved her  
one day

February 14, 2014

## Dozing Awareness

pictures of cute girls  
erased by zealous betrayers  
the sky has funny colors today  
tonight I plan to snooze by the river  
plan to listen to what fish are left  
jump for flies as the sun rises  
I plan to run out of life to live  
parked here



February 15, 2014

## On The Farm

stone walls  
faint trails  
signal a past vibrant life  
gone long before me

February 16, 2014

## Sheesh

she maddens me  
working for her is insane  
can I wait out one more year  
I should find something or change something  
help

February 17, 2014

## Reviser Strike More

so what is icky about this situation?  
dogs! one thing  
is it makes it baffling for kids  
to walk to school without being hassled  
by ten to fifteen dogs

February 18, 2014

## From 1937

when the snow comes  
it's time for civilization to shine  
the roofs  
the fires  
the warm places  
dry  
people hunker  
and huddle  
cuddle under  
blankets  
all fine

February 19, 2014

## Forgive Forget Fortunate

I'm glad they're gone  
I want to ask them many things  
but they cannot judge and criticize  
I force that lesson into my head  
when my daughter visits  
she is who she is  
her life is not mine

---

February 20, 2014

## But It's About Dogs

so what is passionless about this sexual love?  
adult male bodies!  
one thing is it makes it utter for adult female bodies  
to listen to discussion without being encouraged  
by ten to fifteen love children

so what is shitty about this damned?  
pissers!  
one thing is it makes it shitty for shits to  
suck to terrorist attack without being violated  
by ten to fifteen killers

February 21, 2014

## Passing Fancy

(our) animals plan our saving  
they dimly understand  
but they understand  
they tell us little  
and everything  
we made them  
or they made us  
when they go  
their goodbyes  
are silent

February 22, 2014

## Even The Dumbest

so what is perverse about this pontificate  
one thing is it makes it long lasting for tail  
bones to roll over to raisin nut cookies  
without being turned back  
by ten to fifteen crab eating dogs



---

February 23, 2014

## Simpleton

as I watch  
the world I knew as a child  
is killed  
I still want to hear the sad music play every night  
I still want the darkness just beyond where I sit and read  
as I listen  
the music I loved as a child  
grows sadder  
when I was nobody  
I could sit in my cold dark room  
read and listen  
none expected me to  
anything

February 24, 2014

## Partially True

how many days can I sit here  
work  
having no fun  
same music over  
understanding creative  
thinking of new  
over

February 25, 2014

## Finding A Way

many days like this one  
make the past more glorious  
and the future more glorious

February 26, 2014

## Problem of the Day

how to figure how rhymey  
a text is  
randomly?  
thorough sampling?  
all algorithms seem wrong

February 27, 2014

## Wonderment

we make the world as we want it  
unless it decides on  
something entirely  
else

---

February 28, 2014

## Enigma

they knew what I was  
how far I would get  
they kept me away from challenges  
they must have wept when I left  
failures were no surprise  
the lived on the farm for decades  
believed perhaps  
I would too  
but so lazy  
when asked she told friends  
I was a plumber  
my years of success  
all hollowed out

March 1, 2014

## Past Time

I have properly given up  
I have no ambitions  
I view my past as just a story  
I wish I had never made it even a little  
I want to have been just an ordinary person  
my only fear  
I had no skills

March 2, 2014

## In Recall

the farm in snow  
maple branches encased in ice  
pine boughs silent under the weight of snow  
little pools of dry pine needles at the bases of pines  
a little clearing with a favorite stone  
all of it tinged blue in the retreating sunlight  
green pines  
my love dissipated



March 3, 2014

## Jolene

love song slowed down by  
25.925928%  
incisive to sweet  
with the help of a computer  
that doesn't care

March 4, 2014

## Up A River Tonight

fog drifting  
upriver  
flooding banks and homes  
soon towns and cities  
the battle's with the sun  
warmth against a wet cold  
everything green rejoices

March 5, 2014

## Work Problems

code not working well  
random debugging  
under pressure  
why me

March 6, 2014

## Setback

today I was learning something  
and my faith in my own work dropped  
to near zero  
now I need to recover  
or cover  
my tracks

March 7, 2014

## And The Sand

we drove to the market in Haverhill  
my mother had friends there  
I stood by her side and I  
remember being low  
and they talked for a long time  
probably minutes  
before we went home  
and the grass was there  
for me some more

March 8, 2014

## Alone Some More

I fight to keep from being forced out  
I don't know if I'm ahead or behind  
behind I think

March 9, 2014

## Sample Sized

the sunsets behind tree skeletons  
I believed my future was there  
future is what  
again

---

March 10, 2014

## In A South Long Here

grass green amid brown patches / sand  
behind it all thick and twisted pines  
soft light green needles  
air humid / air hot  
sun washed in light thin clouds  
the graveyard's on a low hillside  
the two have stopped to place a weed yellow flowering with stem  
on a headstone they almost  
passed by  
beloved father it says  
nov 12th 1837  
dec 10th 1874  
no one is related to him  
they passed w/o issue  
all's left  
sand and the wet warmth



March 11, 2014

## Last

someone by my bed  
reading me to sleep  
reading me  
reading  
sleep

March 12, 2014

## Blackbird Song

for the first time  
the zombie show has me  
concerned about the people  
not the plot arc  
why  
how  
questions writers crave

---

March 13, 2014

## Weather

we pray for bad  
weather so we  
can hunker down  
with all that means  
for the walls and warmth  
for the quilts and down  
for the fires in special cabinets  
for this we would risk all  
we would bear the chill  
of getting in in time for the start  
of the swirling snow  
then the still as it came  
straight down  
buried everything up  
to their tops  
we pray for bad

March 14, 2014

## US of Eh?

ruled by cranks  
we are about to pivot  
into stupidity

---

March 15, 2014

## March You Slave

I am marching toward a wall  
or cliff / something not getting  
over around under through  
I find the way filled more with brambles  
every day / I beg for mercy  
let me take a breather  
just once before  
/  
so tired  
so bent down  
so slow and low  
/  
my march is now a crawl

March 16, 2014

## To Ashes

dust to dust  
envelop shape  
started out not much  
rose to a pinnacle  
fame and some success  
a couple of small awards  
fell back to the trough  
no animals though  
I find it sense  
ashes and etc

---

March 17, 2014

## With A Pro

looking at the past  
reflected in broken glass  
contours are abstract  
details deliberately non-  
focussed

I squint and my eyes  
water / the colors  
are off by a non-  
computable function  
it will nev-  
er be clear-  
er

March 18, 2014

## Mystery Lunch

each day the challenges  
are more boring  
but more of them  
they come in burst  
separately  
sparring  
dancing  
I have no shame  
I want my life to have been something after all



March 19, 2014

## Leaving and Alone

we march as best we can  
through it  
swamps / brambles / shards / thickets  
then the river no one can pass  
the bridge has no bed  
I have no bed  
I can picture all that will go after  
as best I can  
anyway

March 20, 2014

## Extreme Pain Tonight

today everything  
hurts / what hope  
was left is departed  
what a nobody

March 21, 2014

## Home and Here

warm night  
fan pulling cool into my room  
Snooks barking away into the woods  
I can't imagine being in hell

March 22, 2014

## What Fear

progress is hard but makable  
my dreams are horrible  
some are real  
breaking down  
why can't I find a home

March 23, 2014

## Throwing Voice

I march ahead  
even though behind seems  
more attractive  
finding my voice  
find others

March 24, 2014

## Return

quiet tonight  
long night ahead  
I am ready to leave it all behind  
I remember who I was  
and who I was before that  
I am becoming one of them again

---

March 25, 2014

## Returned

took me aside  
described my successes  
mentioned my losses  
it sounded mysterious  
I teared up laughing  
I visited my parents' grave  
I pictured the faithful gathered  
and leaving  
cut grass—its smell  
the liquid sky  
I returned one day  
to a silent somber welcome

March 26, 2014

## Good Night to You Future

I keep thinking back  
to when I had my own world  
you / reading this / long from now  
will wonder what I found in it there  
if you visit the place it won't seem whole  
but pieces chopped from maybe something whole  
you won't see the fields linked into a map  
the woods with small roads dug deep in them  
you won't picture my mother lying by the deep  
rock in the main field crying  
for her father dead by her mother's feet  
everyone after that was no one to her  
not me  
not even  
I would wander the woods / the fields  
the streams we had and the little ponds  
and I couldn't picture what would follow on  
how I would leave  
leave and leave to a dream I fooled myself into believing  
now I stare at the maps  
listen to the droning music  
write things like this  
to people like you



---

March 27, 2014

## Snared

I found her once  
she passed by first then I caught her  
she had been the most beautiful  
she shunned all love for forty years  
at least  
she turned me down many times  
I was famous for years  
now like her I am not findable  
I live in a world sexed by narrow passions  
or did  
she find me once

March 28, 2014

## Paragraphs

fixating and blinking  
my fate is at least as old  
I stumble from word to word

---

March 29, 2014

## The Music of Last

so I listen to the old songs  
filled with melody and sap  
I was not ready for the sights in my eyes  
of yellowed grass and greyed barn boards  
the side delivery rusted and never moving  
the Sears radio we had for decades  
nothing rose above a whimper  
no one drove down our road  
I should have stayed  
made no ripples ever

---

March 30, 2014

## My Father Would Love This

a pretty song on the turntable  
the needle skims the sides and sings  
something orange turns the singing toward you  
the silk covering your legs rustles  
after you have refolded them  
outside past the cold air  
the cold water reflects orange  
riverside lights  
all this spells something  
to me it's simply a scene

March 31, 2014

## Pretty Works

each hurdle is hurdled  
each barrier broken  
the dreams I have sometimes  
wake me out of the dream of life  
strangling me

April 1, 2014

## Merrimack Dreaming

I take it the water is high  
running cold  
as usual for this time of year  
I'd like to be sitting there  
listening to it  
I imagine the water rolls  
doesn't slide  
and a burger later

April 2, 2014

## Amiss

figuring out  
what works  
puzzles and all  
too much doing  
not enough brewing

April 3, 2014

## Compiled

the fanboy comes out of his shell  
confesses & slinks back  
to wait for the hapless reply  
he knows ego compels



April 4, 2014

## Mostly Instrumentals

small and a slow grip  
I grew up / grew apart  
wasted years thinking happiness was right there  
I never understood anything  
someone this week said look where you are now  
I thought no where near where I ever was  
not big / but not small the same way

April 5, 2014

## Who Indeed

who wrote it  
a program helped change words  
to be like another's  
you can listen or not  
did you write it?

April 6, 2014

## Myth or Hoax?

sluiced sprucely on its cut  
is catapulted across its case dumpcart and berthed  
in an aisle while its screw sucks

April 7, 2014

## Last Times

the lure is set  
I'm pulled slowly toward the last boat  
once on it I'm a goner  
I hope to remember a lot then

April 8, 2014

## Will To Go On

I just want to give up  
hassling with this company  
makes me tear my hair  
gnash teeth  
maybe just hope for the end?

April 9, 2014

## No Advice

some are made to fly fast  
slow is my thing  
ponder and reflect  
special is a different time zone

April 10, 2014

## A Fake

the distance  
lights on water  
night time  
but a picture  
seen at night

April 11, 2014

## Nothing

tonight a bug grips me  
too much to do  
time to sleep



April 12, 2014

## Filtering

want to go back  
can't  
the old places  
the things I would try now  
I mean then

April 13, 2014

## Down That Grooved Road

even the sand pit  
jumping down from the top  
my father filling the pickup  
did we have the right  
it was a dark time  
so less ever important

April 14, 2014

## Refuse

too many people demanding time  
it's just me people  
I have no staff  
I have no helpers  
I work slow too

---

April 15, 2014

## Nothing

so there is a crack  
by relaxing I cough less  
I still cough though  
I remember the hotel in Aarhus  
last time with the warmth at night  
the nights were long  
wet tears on the windows  
I slept just at times  
the rest I tangled up  
everyone saw love  
I see nothing

April 16, 2014

## Go Back

little scenes  
I remember them  
I was unnoticed  
unnoticeable then  
my head by the stones  
in the late afternoon warmth  
or early twilight  
just one last time

April 17, 2014

## Longing for Sense

just wait for it to happen  
the likes are happening tonight  
I wish I had a way to dance  
everyone should pay cash corn for store cheese

April 18, 2014

## Report Today

today lots of confusion  
lots of work  
some progress on senses  
word senses  
not as tired  
paper to work on this weekend  
then the talk  
and a letter

April 19, 2014

## Crapola

you know  
everything sucks like nobody's business  
how many mistakes can I make  
no limit it seems



April 20, 2014

## A Day Alone

find my way east  
spend some days roaming  
I need to be lazy  
a warm place and a little damp  
problems to solve here

April 21, 2014

## Hard

I work on silly things  
but hard  
I work hard  
the task is hard

April 22, 2014

## Form of Content

which factors are important  
how to mimic them  
instead of a warm story to write  
or a relaxing revision

April 23, 2014

## My Day

imagine how to talk  
how hard it is  
spending all day at the computer  
typing figuring  
so so so

---

April 24, 2014

## By The Bridge Twice

sometimes the calm water  
comes to a halt by the banks  
under the bridge  
there a contrast to it all  
the reflections are dramatic  
the greens so strong they're yellow  
sometimes I feel I can listen harder  
hear her steps nearby  
she must have been here so many times  
touched the stones now hidden  
behind brush  
she looked out once over  
this same place  
breathed air the same as here now  
the impressions in her head  
where are they now

April 25, 2014

## Back Monkey

weight of getting it all wrong  
the vacation swings further away  
insights dawn slowly

April 26, 2014

## Fatal Occupation

move from topic to topic  
exploring more what the data structure means  
tune what works to working better  
all indoors  
I need to be outside to live  
when do I get to live

April 27, 2014

## Won't Answer

now it's time to pack  
get ready  
it takes time because I'm not decisive  
work to do  
talk to polish



April 28, 2014

## My Title

she holds the sadness of a generation  
where she lives is only cold and botchedness  
her face has lost its battle  
she once was spectacular  
I've decided to make her my title

April 29, 2014

## When Will It End

I sit here trying to fix things  
worrying about tomorrow  
fear of the trip  
my body just a heap  
pain and sadness

April 30, 2014

## Home Back

long way to go  
I am ready to wander everywhere  
drive in circles  
I can cross the bridge now  
so resting is easy  
I want to just nothing  
to drowse

May 1, 2014

## Promise and Nothing Else

dreamt of many things  
my small dreams when young seemed right  
I did crazy and sometimes it worked  
many people saw potential  
I realized none of it  
explains why they all left  
one at a time  
sometimes all at once

May 2, 2014

## To Find

find a way home  
stay there  
end there  
haunt there

May 3, 2014

## Hard Light

if there is a misleading analogy  
it's that rising is light  
when in fact it's hard

May 4, 2014

## On a Ride Back

tight leather skirt  
long dark ponytail  
she is stark and not there  
she passes out the Metro door  
just as it closes  
disappears among French bushes  
she is not pretty  
she is though mine

May 5, 2014

## Near The Marais

here beauty is a whim  
here it poses as grief  
I've watched them paying attention elsewhere  
tonight they are taking themselves apart  
where the only who can watch  
are the women themselves  
and those like them



May 6, 2014

## La Seine

by the river men gather  
to watch their fortunes  
drift farther away  
the sea is heartless  
boats passing by shine their spots on them  
they weep as the river makes  
its going away sounds  
a downpour scatters everything

---

May 7, 2014

## Perfect Ribs

in the Blues Bar B Q  
restaurant plain French women  
pass by to the toilettes  
the ribs are perfect but stun their insides  
their makeup and clothes shine  
make appear of desire  
they glance like trapped foxes  
at me while I gnaw a rib  
it is all so primitive  
in the brick-walled whitewashed enclosure

May 8, 2014

## In A Long Line At M'O

of all the women it could  
be the one with the green skirt  
whose rear was nice until she  
moved and then  
ay-yi-yi

---

May 9, 2014

## Louvre

they flowed from room to room  
looking at beautiful but so-so paintings  
they stared at brushstrokes  
sometimes at the naked  
in the end they sat and stared up  
I watched them walk away  
watched until the sun was down and lights out  
alone in the museum  
I refused to sleep  
but stared instead  
at brushstrokes  
sometimes at the naked

May 10, 2014

## Leaving The Moveable Feast

above the streets rain rains down  
on the streets cars smear puddles  
night or day it can be like this  
the constant is the groovy walks  
the hips hugged by suede  
a constant reminder of who you cannot be  
with  
out

May 11, 2014

## Late Night Latte

losing things  
finding them a problem  
I was a darling once  
now just a losing problem

---

May 12, 2014

## A Careful Bit of Thinking

places we've seen but don't recall  
the steps / the place where cars arrive  
part of the life of the mind  
places where what you have  
who you are I mean  
fall back into place  
the place where you started  
finally it rains and you can forget  
these thoughts and let them pass  
for folly / for falling

May 13, 2014

## KBT

I fell for her  
she was the first  
she made demands  
so interesting  
I couldn't fathom them  
had I I'd still have her



May 14, 2014

## Every Poem is This Poem

when love is a danger  
we do it anyway  
need to know why  
look to the sky at night  
see the stars so hot so far  
so drenched in acid cold  
that  
doesn't love us  
that's we seek the heat of others

May 15, 2014

## Tearful & Regret

I look at myself  
I am repulsed  
so sad that it will end like this

May 16, 2014

## Like Me

some simple reasons for returning  
again and over  
the cut grass smell  
the ocean warmth in the air  
clouds that mean something  
a river undecided for decades  
think of it  
they all are

May 17, 2014

## Facts and Boredom

today's statement is simple  
lobsters are basically giant sea-insects

May 18, 2014

## Hey Baby

I must move  
must revive my will  
to live like this is vexing  
I must change  
must make it quick  
or forever slow

May 19, 2014

## Who Are We Anyway

I read today  
her daughter searching her  
out from 2009  
now 45 years old  
my Meredith gone all to hell  
I wonder and wonder

May 20, 2014

## Lumped

if you compress it to 90  
minutes any life  
becomes a short decline

May 21, 2014

## Them Up

all the world's a waiting wagon  
pulled off down the road by a pair  
of belgians rose and gray  
sticked up houses rattle as they pass  
if you're patient and wait or watch  
the dark bread will drop out the back  
and dogs will snatch



May 22, 2014

## Timely Bugs

when the time for bugs comes  
the bugs keep coming  
I type back at them

May 23, 2014

## Reading Alone

find me a place to rest  
place flowers there every  
week / cry for the first year only  
then start reading

May 24, 2014

## Misplaced Optimism

after all that expense  
it still doesn't work well  
the setup  
I'll try some things tomorrow  
then spend more money when I return  
it will work

May 25, 2014

## Out and Away

fixed it  
maybe / loose power plug  
something so simple  
maybe / all day no problem  
no sign on the console  
tomorrow Boston

May 26, 2014

## Want

on a warm sprinkle night  
I ate and ate  
then moved to Hodgies  
some better than I remembered  
some worse  
I wanted to be wanted

May 27, 2014

## No Compromises

put it down to luck  
the great pizza from the little joint  
accent and NY attitude  
so predictable  
I cried the joy

May 28, 2014

## Upstate

woods here are over green  
vines brush branches over and underwhelm  
I mean the brush grabs low  
granite under moss  
moss on trees  
sun filtered to green everywhere  
except where it's yellow  
trust me on this bad truth

May 29, 2014

## In Newburyport

I watched her  
couldn't stop  
really / her shorts were loose but short  
uneven hang down  
she stood on one leg  
she was



May 30, 2014

## DisEast

today a long drive to Tamworth  
and a nap at Linwood  
tired but now all the things I need to do are done  
except work things  
I will rest tomorrow  
get photos of the sea

---

May 31, 2014

## Hampton (Not Beach)

the sea greeted me like a traitor  
I drove past the site of my first proposal  
I wondered why I recalled it that well  
the women who were fine WERE FINE  
who was the traitor you wonder  
the proposal was accepted  
then many years later rejected  
surfers know traitorous thoughts

June 1, 2014

## Rid Getting

too many things  
sometimes go wrong  
what is paid is sometimes not owed  
I am filled with a dread as I swirl down  
give me the rid of all my stuff

June 2, 2014

## River Bying

by the river today  
I felt the fear of leaving  
of being not of the world  
it was warm and I dozed  
the river made it's small noises  
like birds fishing and fin jumping  
I am getting ready to go home  
I thought once that this was home

June 3, 2014

## Driving Constant

why is I wander the roads  
driving everyplace over & over  
stare at the same things  
miss what is not constantly delivered  
it's an obsession to get back to innocence  
to be a child and not guilty  
I want to be an unacknowledged nothing  
from now own

June 4, 2014

## Anniversary

five years ago at a beautiful riverside  
we married through the pain in my back  
and extreme bad state  
with really just a few friends and etc  
all the usual things  
we laugh at them when they stand aside  
but we really care for them  
we call it sentimentality  
we call it honest feeling

June 5, 2014

## Bye Success

funny how each failure  
feels less  
I was thinking someone  
said of me in the band  
he is carrying them  
as if I was doing something right  
and important

June 6, 2014

## Waning

want something new  
need some relaxation  
I've shown what I'm not  
now to not care



June 7, 2014

## I Get Worse

the option of quitting is real  
my demeanor gets only worse  
my sentimentality needs an outlet  
I need to retreat more  
I need a warm place that doesn't question

June 8, 2014

## Pegging

small progress  
who would imagine it  
bright colors  
bright sun  
bright shade  
all for want of good writing

June 9, 2014

## Job? Right

today I interviewed a job seeker  
a researcher  
a young woman  
I had nothing  
I sounded like a fool  
I laughed all the way home

June 10, 2014

## Duck Down

like  
I need to duck  
down / hide  
from the crowd  
be no one  
noticed  
dislike it all  
but smile as happy

---

June 11, 2014

## Deserter

this song playing on an AR turntable  
through a Dynaco transistor amp  
into my father made speakers  
alone on Los Robles  
dark at night  
all women vanished and what did they know anyway  
there was no repeat  
I got off the couch after each play and moved the tone arm  
I never knew what their warmth meant  
the places I could go

June 12, 2014

## Joy Drops

have you noticed  
the best songs are sad  
sad songs sung in a constant beat  
the best songs line up to drop  
their tears into buckets  
labeled joy

June 13, 2014

## Eyes On You

almost fully given up  
energy can't drop more  
tired and reading how my death approaches  
rapidly now it seems  
when people tell me of my past  
I giggle  
inside  
but just stare

June 14, 2014

## And Stupid Too

look at my grades  
the comments teachers made  
I was made for menial labor  
I was born and raised lazy  
I made a splash somehow by spewing hard  
now the young don't know  
me don't care about me  
how retro  
those teachers  
so right



June 15, 2014

## Something Special

hard to reckon what will work  
to make me want  
I am tired and don't even think  
of myself as self  
more modular now  
less alive

June 16, 2014

## Flat Sea

the sea is just two colors  
a blue and green that bends toward yellow  
it moves  
always  
at the shoreline it's a pinkly white  
how many is that  
where does it end

---

June 17, 2014

## Sleep Arrest

the best way to sleep  
by a confused river  
near a wrong color bridge  
down the street from a woman who hates your pants  
in an era when you are nobody  
and no one can tell you different  
when your grades are bad  
and when you get up in the morning  
you move to your mother's bed  
the best way to sleep

June 18, 2014

## I Am Now

I caught me gaze  
out the window where  
she would soon return  
keep me safe from all  
and just wow how  
fragile I am

June 19, 2014

## It's Really Amazing

the beautiful pictures  
he remarked  
so many pictures of the same thing  
and each beautiful  
how can it happen  
I told him I see the place  
I told him the place is there to see

---

June 20, 2014

## In 1937

she lingered  
as the men  
shoveled the earth back over the casket  
with her permission / they needed home soon  
the cemetery wasn't hers or her family's  
the one that was was forbidden  
cool after stifling days  
everything around smelled bad  
she watched and noticed  
a hill spare of headstones  
if time were a ribbon she'd see herself there  
time and again  
later her dress soiled and stained  
a man drove up and drove her home  
the farm needed her though  
she didn't need it

---

June 21, 2014

## Ride Home 1937

in the car she smoked a cigarette  
but the man had all the windows down  
the air brushed back by the river and then Kenoza  
smelled of fertility  
if only the songs she knew were melancholy  
one would be playing in her head  
but none did  
none could  
she wore no makeup so it couldn't smear  
her elbow on the door and fingers by her mouth  
then ear  
she could close her eyes but she couldn't  
the man left behind said not to cry  
her won't tell her more

---

June 22, 2014

## For Years 1937

when she got home cows  
were waiting and near them the pile of manure  
after  
she wheeled a barrow with two bushel baskets  
of chicken feed past the artesian well  
her glance there was to where he lay  
for a long time  
maybe two days  
before she returned and drove  
him to his hospital stay  
she would work hard



June 23, 2014

## Mother Watched Her 1947

her mother  
Nana  
was ugly as they come and fat  
no one could understand it  
she spoke a different language some say  
and danced nude around the farm  
nights but sometimes twilights  
she worked hard I heard  
riding on the mower while my mother drove the jitney  
Hoyt baled the hay / they loaded it  
after the horses were gone they torched the horse barn  
made it look good / like the story was true  
the black horse with the bad name  
yeah he did it  
Nana laughed when she was drunk  
kicked up her heels

June 24, 2014

## Like The Past 1937

out in the woods she found  
the buried jars of liquor  
they made / she dug them up  
and drained them into the swamp  
threw the jars into the farm dump  
breaking them / she thought  
if events had fell in a different order  
the present would be more like the past

June 25, 2014

## William Cook

finding out something purely sad  
what we've been thrown into is a fake heaven  
why would we choose this  
watching the hapless trip  
and stay down

June 26, 2014

## Dreams Unwind 1937

in 1936 the flood  
in 1937 the heat / the death  
in 1938 the hurricane  
what a time to not be yet alive  
but to have a mother live through that  
what would she do to everyone who  
passed by her

June 27, 2014

## Tax People

those people are dopes  
they deserve horror  
and poor sleep

June 28, 2014

## Bad Saturday

unable to sleep  
fearful  
weeping  
horrible night

June 29, 2014

## Bad Sunday

after so much worry  
I forgot for two days  
to write my poems  
never noticed until half through the night  
not well

June 30, 2014

## Be All Right

how can I skip from faithfully writing  
every day to forgetting about it totally  
the colors blue  
me and you



July 1, 2014

## Luck Ahead

I find it hard  
to plan since plans  
are for people with hope  
I just want to sharpen into the background  
I want nothing to be everything

July 2, 2014

## Sleeping in the Field

I don't even get the rejections  
only no calls back  
they act like I've punked them  
don't want it to happen again  
but for me I  
take it hard  
then find a way to sleep

July 3, 2014

## Ink Well

first is figure out what words go in the cloud  
then how much weight they have  
and how to measure their contribution  
how to measure them in comparison  
then how to combine  
and finally the background contribution of context  
weeks of exploration

July 4, 2014

## Fiendish Fidelity

find a way to leave the field  
without making a mess of the fence  
find a way to deliver a message  
without saying words that offend  
like a tree just cut down  
only roots are a solace

July 5, 2014

## Heading

some problems make one wonder  
make me ill to see them  
patience and a hard rock will solve all  
I am waiting for a long trip  
to tire me out

July 6, 2014

## Write More

outside crickets are uneasy  
a worried chirping  
nonstop like a breaking bearing  
speaking of which  
I've lost mine  
I want just one thing  
I won't get it  
I need to write

July 7, 2014

## John and Paul

a lone genius was at work one night  
he got nothing done  
people applauded  
he was the best

July 8, 2014

## Unlinked

Billy Scherbon died  
my last connection  
his memories exhausted  
I'd lost nothing there  
but he was a link  
snapped and deleted  
when I spoke to his wife  
she cried  
I cried  
she for her love  
I for my link



---

July 9, 2014

## Last Pickup Line

I am thrilled but unruly  
the beauties we know are off duty tonight  
whomever I follow into the lobby and into the lift  
is too heavy for me to pick up  
then there's the agreement  
no one agrees  
I sleep spread out once again

July 10, 2014

## So Right

the nights I drove round and round the towns  
down all the roads  
looking for something  
waiting for someone

July 11, 2014

## Grins

looking into the woods past midnight  
what I see is looking back out  
standing there is a stare  
the whole world is made of a sad sound  
trapped and bent to songs

---

July 12, 2014

## I Remember the Worry

I imagine myself everywhere  
every time everyplace  
I am alone looking at the women walking past  
they keep their silence up  
nothing to pretend comes to mind  
eyes that pass quiet voices over me  
are the joy of deep grief  
I rejoice in it through mist building from the west  
coming to wrap me every way needed  
for the walk home

July 13, 2014

## Fireworks or Thunder

too soon too sad  
the vernacular of responsiveness is ripe  
my body is not able to do more unless I do more  
I am tired and ready for a cool stop

July 14, 2014

## Vacation Factory

today we traveled to the Baltic  
found bad light and a roughed up sea  
I hope for a good night some night  
tonight not

July 15, 2014

## Griebnitzsee

the voice is gone or fading  
I've exhausted my capacity to make things new  
today the sky filled with the shape of smooth Summer  
I sit on the banks of a lake once teeming with hate

July 16, 2014

## Hurt Locker

I failed to write sat night  
this the next day  
I have suffered another attack of bad  
I want to find an alone place  
stay there



July 17, 2014

## All of It

find me a place where I am no one  
just a simple nobody  
I am tired of  
it all

July 18, 2014

## Forever

I believe I've ended a friendship  
I never expected that  
the same flaw as ever  
I saw no signs before it hit  
now I travel away from Germany forever

July 19, 2014

## Less Me

I hope this means I'm home  
I hope I can forget this dead week  
I must be more careful  
which means less me

July 20, 2014

## After Berlin

I am aligned with the tired  
I miss where I've been  
because I will never go there again  
many things like this will begin to happen  
it's how it ends  
begins too

July 21, 2014

## Up

lots of reasons to be excited  
I am bone tired and desperate  
I have some writing assignments ahead  
time to deflect or is it reflect  
I am beat

July 22, 2014

## Whatever Happened

I need an outlet  
I am steaming slowly  
the colors around me are too vivid  
I need to tone them  
kill them maybe  
exile them  
I am like a small mistake

July 23, 2014

## Highly Paid

the end of the book  
a lame sentence there  
on the last page  
the writer had passed on responsibility  
for the ending to his friend  
he thought could write  
they all thought they could write  
a lame sentence

July 24, 2014

## I Won't Tell You

today I found myself tongue tied  
trying to explain a simple idea  
I need to write it  
more and more one of these channels  
works not well  
and my mother would say



July 25, 2014

## And What Else?

sometimes I believed  
I spoke through my guitar  
but we recorded everything  
turns out I muttered  
mumbled stopped and started  
in short  
I sucked

July 26, 2014

## Taking Hits

tonight I found the first  
map with Teremcy on it  
I know with certainty where it is  
my friend said for someone  
“pretty smart” I’ve taken a lot of hits  
he’s wrong

July 27, 2014

**Janis**

a sweet woman once took me to the graveyard  
where she kissed me / one of my first  
then time grabbed us / she married / she lived  
she had a daughter / she died young  
years ago / today I took some time  
to miss her

July 28, 2014

## Medicare

need to apply for old age tomorrow  
I have a couple of days  
but it seems like a simple online process  
might have to go to an office  
for the other part

July 29, 2014

## Who Am I?

under the wire  
more problems with SS  
maybe solved maybe  
not my cup of joe  
I will keep working on it until it works

---

July 30, 2014

## Shadow Fast

dozens of years past  
I'd sit on the brick of a fireplace  
watch the sun just gone down past  
pines and oaks  
never imagine a crowd  
a following  
an importance  
between times I believed I had those  
now I know it was just a shadow  
coming at me fast

July 31, 2014

## Simple Aphorism

I thought once that speaking smart  
meant being smart  
how else could I “learn” to be smart  
I learned smart was something else  
I can write though

August 1, 2014

## All The Melancholy

people pace the causeway to the bridge  
they are spoken for  
there is something inside them  
something not their skin and heft  
I watch from inside my camera  
people there have never seen me



August 2, 2014

## Possible Finally

I plan to walk the trail  
along the river it seems  
to strange sites / sights  
my memories are all that still work  
I am fearful but ready I think  
for the possibly finally  
are all of you?

---

August 3, 2014

## Days Still Left

the stranger met me after customs  
she knew my name and welcomed me to  
not her country nor mine  
I was tired from 20 hours of travel  
she bought us train tickets  
I thought it was just for me  
we boarded and she played me a song  
on her iPod  
it sounded like a love song  
sung by a clear voiced woman  
to a man  
when we got there  
she stayed the night  
and then some

August 4, 2014

## Foo Some More

always something breaking and wrong  
my plan always is to give up  
and let everything go

August 5, 2014

## Drain Away

a lot done  
a lot to do  
I watch Summer drain  
I've lost most of it to random things  
today I tried to rescue myself

August 6, 2014

## Poem About

this is a poem about someone else  
who looked like me but couldn't look back  
how what he wanted wasn't what he wished for  
he looked away looked away  
this is a poem about someone else  
hiding by a curtain and hiding out of sight  
I looked away I looked away  
I am someone else

August 7, 2014

## Old Age

I am listening to new age  
sets the mood

I wonder what song will be running through my head  
the moment it stops

August 8, 2014

**In Front of Draeger's**

tonight I sat on a bench at twilight  
waiting for my ride  
warm night with some cool breeze swirls  
I remember sitting like this many times  
when I was first in California  
when I was nobody at all  
familiar / scary / all that's left

August 9, 2014

## Gnags vs Soul Poets

where are you sex  
in your blue rain cover  
with a burger in one hand  
a pink rose in the other  
fits well to the music  
multiple colors  
I so don't you  
standing in the Arizona Food at Rytmeahans



---

August 10, 2014

## Catching Out

I speak of tramps / like a tramp  
someone who's hopped a train to a fine town  
hopped off / spent a bit  
then hopped on a train to any town  
along the way I watched beautiful women walking away  
I've rested along blue water rivers / blue from excessive sky  
heard the eagles / the fish leaps' splash  
seen the rings expand  
now the tree at last / to lie beneath it  
all is black dark and gone

---

August 11, 2014

## Dying After Laughter

as you've all read  
my gloom deepens  
today someone who rose much higher than me  
was engulfed in more than I  
he didn't make it  
my mind was quick  
Dave Waltz once said  
you have the fastest mind I've seen  
it takes me minutes to see what you're saying  
and then I realize you were there way before me  
Robin Williams was more  
I think it's a disease

August 12, 2014

## Ear Covering

so who's to stop you  
you shut your ears  
who you are is who  
you say you are  
it's no joke  
the old tree welcomes you

August 13, 2014

## Outcomes

I have little reason to expect a good outcome  
I am again in the midst of calamity  
all I can do is speculate and keep inventing  
I cover up and cover all  
uncover my small heart  
the way to thinking is moving

August 14, 2014

## Crazy Chinese Woman

I have fear for the future  
working may not work out  
there is nothing specific  
to my fear  
just a lack of connect to the boss  
I keep working  
hard  
maybe that's enough

August 15, 2014

## Learn Better With A Different Partner

he's no friend of yours  
then he wouldn't say  
we repeated  
later I had a Skip's burger  
and in between reading words  
I cranked on the puzzle  
year later / no progress  
I had some ideas for pictures tonight

August 16, 2014

## Against Method

I used to walk the same fields  
along the same stone walls  
the little streams and swamps  
blueberry bushes near them and trimmed by cows  
there were small roads in the woods  
I wondered who made them  
he like my mother  
would think me lazy  
would know it  
still I can dream through my mind there  
listen to wind in the pines  
walk over the cold dead grass before winter  
the rocks that ring like bells when hammered  
he walked here and dreamt of his faraway place  
his is the only story I've made up

---

August 17, 2014

## Topos

I lived in places  
on our farm  
sometimes down to the pond  
another time walking the electric fence  
the back field  
the long swampy field  
the roads running place to place  
on our side  
the short road with a bend  
my favorite clearing  
the blueberry patch with its low trees and waist high bushes  
the big field and its hidden hiding rock  
the pear orchard  
the barn  
the abandoned chicken coops  
other places not as much  
and nowhere now  
I have nothing



August 18, 2014

## Under All

I am afraid for my future  
my support system weakens  
all I can think about is the river  
and summer trees  
I've made progress on my program  
but not enough maybe  
I feel under it all

---

August 19, 2014

## Heavy Walker

she walked heavy down the ramp  
hostess at a fusion Thai place  
in Newburyport  
I had just bought a book  
her skirt was dull floral but slit  
a metaphor I suspect so close  
to the bookstore  
she bothered to walk heavy not lady  
later that night she forgot about my stare

August 20, 2014

## Even Remaining

families who've known each other  
for 120 years  
what can it mean when one family is mean  
are there battle lines  
are their feuds  
how can families be so familiar  
and remain even

August 21, 2014

## At Scherbon's

they loved him  
they hated him  
they wanted him gone  
they wanted him back  
they cried  
they yelled  
they said truth be told

August 22, 2014

## Stop Lost

I have reasons to worry  
I want to drive though  
everywhere and all the time  
I want to be lost  
I want to just stop

August 23, 2014

## She Was Cold in Her Dress

always write down your best ideas  
memory likes to fuck with you  
I had a great title and it's gone for the moment  
but tonight it was Natalie  
she pretended interest in what I was reading so hard  
she became interested in what I was reading  
she shook my hand

August 24, 2014

## Suffer Fear

I was afraid of the narrow dock  
my balance is shot  
I fear  
I was treated well and to good food  
I saw houses and talked to men and women  
the views were great  
I suffered fear

August 25, 2014

## By The Merrimack

I stood by the waters  
unsteady and scared  
mid water line  
grass that can grow out of or under  
no one expects to see me there  
when I'm gone it's just as surprising



August 26, 2014

## Circle

then I left and I  
wish I were back  
to watch everything change and change  
until it's back to same  
except me

August 27, 2014

## Giving Up

the irises grown thick  
finally / a signal of acceptance  
I need to accept me too

August 28, 2014

## Home Bound

the raven stepped away from the ground squirrel  
lump on the road gathering rot  
after I passed  
he aimed his beak at me  
it was too hard to smile

August 29, 2014

## Baby

the fire burned out years ago  
the ashes blown  
I have many ways to say this  
experience baby

August 30, 2014

## Photo Op

the photo of bridge / night  
the warm air up river / cold down  
I want a quiet ending around there  
around now

August 31, 2014

## Last Stand Off

even from her I've given up  
I am my father  
the one who faced the brace of woods  
wondering what he had done wrong

September 1, 2014

## Bee Flower

many ways to slice it  
the bad feelings are more and more  
I suppose it's like this everywhere  
broadly taken  
every day I wonder  
whether the bee that lifts from the petals  
will lift once more

September 2, 2014

## Following Bird

the weather coldens  
things get darker  
my fury is that I didn't grow wilder when young  
and it could have made a difference  
too cautious  
too cowed  
a bird flies away  
I follow



September 3, 2014

## Sign and a Half

bad week  
packing  
hacking  
car hit from behind  
reading  
teaching  
can't meet an old friend

September 4, 2014

## Minus

mother didn't believe in me  
she loved me my wife  
said tonight  
be defending my bad habits  
love minus belief

September 5, 2014

## Lament on Cement

she walks away  
each one down the crowded Paris street  
plainly beautiful  
cloth has more than me

---

September 6, 2014

## Abrasive Regret

tonight a great storm slammed a small place  
people there see no farther than two towns over  
it's a dark place / secrets all around  
they toil to make it to nightfall  
to the end of the work week  
their tears just stain their pillows  
but salve nothing  
but salvage nothing  
I of them circle  
the river flows not caring

---

September 7, 2014

## Powel

he is standing in a field  
holding a scythe / cutting tall grass  
swampy grass  
behind him the pines are fresh and robust  
he doesn't know that soon he would be fated  
I wonder sometimes what he would tell me  
something like  
I was killed like this

September 8, 2014

## Tomorrow

tomorrow I drive  
like an old animal pacing his territory one last time  
I won't travel alone like this again  
I planned it to be easy / low stress  
but I will fear along the way  
the silence beauty / a downwardness  
tomorrow

September 9, 2014

## Day 1

the long drive fell quickly  
I was not perfect but nothing happened  
now in Wendover  
the Utah side with no casinos  
I am so tired

---

September 10, 2014

## Day 2

people are friendly in Cheyenne  
woman stopped to ask how I was  
(from another table on the way to the bathroom)  
another yelled are you traveling?  
from Germany? Switzerland? Sweden?  
I ate my dinner without looking up



---

September 11, 2014

### Day 3

today in 2001 I was heading to  
where I am heading to now  
tonight I am in Des Moines  
I am driving  
then I was flying  
many flags were low today  
people otherwise crazy can be friendly  
go figure

---

September 12, 2014

## Day 4

today is Kathy's birthday  
older than me by a bit  
I spent a lot of time today  
listing the ways I am nothing  
I think maybe it's time to  
count on a short life and retire soon  
so I don't have to be confronted  
with my failures all the time  
just less of the time will do

September 13, 2014

## Day 5

such a day  
blue and green Allerton  
green and red Allerton  
tonight the room where I sleep is musty  
I will sleep fitfully  
I will program up the treasure hunt tomorrow

September 14, 2014

## Goner

I can't be anyone  
my nightmares kill me  
I wake in tears  
I need to stop  
I need to stop

September 15, 2014

## Loins

I disappoint / the thunder  
claps upon the wind about  
me / I find the seat by the pond  
and wait for tender loins  
to stand astride these lines

September 16, 2014

## Romanciful Luster

musical mistake  
or advanced search party  
what is left to wish for  
no problem is worth my dish

---

September 17, 2014

## Safe?

she said it again  
now I remember  
it would be too dangerous  
her way of signaling  
my way of passing by it  
the deep voiced other  
seemed questioning too  
but I leave  
every way possible

September 18, 2014

## In St Louis

forgetting stuff at hotels  
need to be more careful  
time to make it more  
it all sounds wrong



September 19, 2014

## Till

anonymous / in the corner  
people walk past  
some are old friends  
I imagine  
who recognize me not as I don't recognize them  
I'm happy now that my work time is done  
and I can play till I drop

September 20, 2014

## Then

when I return I  
will be in a bind for  
what to do and how to act  
work for the preso and some other things  
code up a storm on Inkwell  
then what  
what then

September 21, 2014

## Static South

pin your hopes on the hopeless  
losing is the result  
instead just enjoy the static  
tomorrow we drive home  
four days southern route

September 22, 2014

## Soft Spoken

drab colors pretty in a red sun  
heading west toward the seat of dying  
we all wonder what it means if meaning means at all  
I am sleeping one town over  
when there are only two things that can happen  
we are the wind and the wheat

September 23, 2014

## Devine

aspens sun yellow against blue spruce green  
sun leaden with sporadic clouds  
blue otherwise  
we made it with some strange maneuvers  
I am dead fatigued and worried for life  
onward to Kingman / devine

---

September 24, 2014

## Encircled

I'll find a place  
on the southern end of a northern sea  
a place where the water and wave never show blue  
where roads soften to green with earthy delights  
I'll find a woman kind and warm  
who will set my soul on a driftwood raft  
and watch my passing out of her sight  
the first touch of woman  
the last touch of woman

September 25, 2014

## Catch Out

in Kingman trains always move past  
they are heavy with poetry  
earlier I would have caught out  
now I watch and as they move away listen

September 26, 2014

## Snarls

home / long trip  
tiring / seeing familiar places  
and new ones / rain / sun  
never past dark  
sleep early / wake early  
home / trip over



September 27, 2014

## Gorgons

I wish I didn't have to beg  
and then mope when nothing is granted  
do I need to change my habits  
ask elsewhere  
instead I'll find ways to promote myself  
to the world of gorgons

September 28, 2014

## Return to the Cabin

I am so tired tonight  
the long drive and stress finally leaking out  
some parts I'll remember with kindness  
but most will pass into the trash bin I've become  
it seems I always turn those who love  
me into those who don't

September 29, 2014

## For Home

as fall rolls on  
I pine for home  
the needles / the colors  
the warm days on top of cold nights  
how at evening the cold rises from the fields  
how the trees sigh as the winds slow  
I spend time remembering  
wishing for the simple  
wishing for the river again

---

September 30, 2014

## She Before Me

she danced while we played  
she moved across in front of us  
and I could mark her progress by the mistakes  
she of little cloth  
today I walked to her resting place  
my fingers recalled the bends and notes  
when stood in my eyes / staring in my eyes  
now she feels like grass beneath my feet  
I drive into a dusty twilight

October 1, 2014

## In a Hotel

my finger is right  
here next to you  
as they say you  
are a woman-smelling warmth  
by a window  
dark and cold  
the city out there  
doesn't care about lovemaking  
my finger is pointing  
at you

October 2, 2014

## Ask Not

what do we do about  
the missing problems  
we dodged  
how lonely we are knowing  
the softness we could have swallowed  
instead I toss on my bed  
away from some of it  
because I cannot ask

October 3, 2014

## Care of Life

been reading about care  
at the end of life  
you can count how many more poems are after this one  
I worry about decay  
loss of will to live  
something out there  
I need to  
find it soon

October 4, 2014

## Bad Everything

hard for me to upbeat these poems  
when now my body is failing  
at least falling  
I suppose I'll fight on a while  
until the writing is ended



October 5, 2014

## Inner Outside

he sat outside at the café  
his coffee was low in the cup  
his danish was crumbs and flakes  
blue sweet on the plate  
he was watching a fabulous babe  
a table over and reading / her hair blowing sweetly  
into her eyes  
after a while she stood / brushed everything off  
walked away her legs tightly bound in her office dress  
he reflected on all this and had a lengthy inner monologue  
about his feelings and his life  
but I'm not the sort of writer who reports things like that  
because apparently I don't experience them

---

October 6, 2014

## Not Far Expressions

we connected by Skype  
I in Berlin she in Copenhagen  
I traveling far from home  
she only a day trip  
her mic didn't work  
so we just sat there looking  
as each moved small  
as each felt a love  
as the trees behind me wiggled in spritely wind  
as the traffic behind her moved in her slightly darker scene  
toward hearth and home  
I decided to stop and quit the app  
what she saw she never said

---

October 7, 2014

## Dentist

today I faced the face of the future  
for me / decay and falling apart  
harsh truth as Morgan Freeman said  
in Shawshank  
nothing was a surprise but  
the frank telling / no sentimentality  
I went home in pain and lay in my bed for hours  
then the pain was gone  
and I could eat

October 8, 2014

## Lessons

the stats aren't on my side  
I need to regroup or give up more thoroughly  
I need more time left not less  
I need to find a way to reflect

---

October 9, 2014

## Be Mine

after watching the Addams Family  
I walked out of the house  
out of the garage into the air  
misty or fogged and the road was damp  
I saw nothing but I smelled the leaves rotting  
in the fall of the year  
I walked up and down the road  
but you can't imagine it because  
both sides of the road were our farm  
small in New England and wooded  
in fifteen years I would become known  
and operate in the high reaches of a technical world  
but all I ever wanted to do was write about this  
walk / make you feel it / because what  
is beautiful is what is melancholy  
feel it please feel it

---

October 10, 2014

## Disappearing

my dream way back  
to live with a beautiful woman  
in the least appealing place  
in Kansas I thought  
I pictured the house  
an old barn  
cottonwoods around  
a long dirt driveway to a small road angling across the grid  
I saw myself holding her hand  
long very long dirty blonde hair  
I would make her what she was  
she would make me what I was  
I pictured people trying to find us  
in my picture our backs were to me  
the sun fronts us  
disappearing

---

October 11, 2014

## Up North They Say

what it meant to me  
what it meant to her  
she saw me as a future  
I the present  
we spent cold days outside  
nights warm under feather comfort  
she was warm too  
something about her  
pulling / pushing  
she came to hate me after those days  
she came to like me after the hate  
we were like lonely people  
holding through the night to our selves  
we forgot the other  
I mean I did  
not too much beyond me

---

October 12, 2014

## Fall Early

the woman in the yellow skirt  
turned her head as I passed  
not me / no  
she kept walking  
when this happens I wonder the life  
that could be had  
how long would the yellow skirt keep it up  
how long before love teaches hate  
she wasn't a straight walker  
all of her moved  
she put everything into it  
her hair the color of Kansas in early Fall  
I could see her



---

October 13, 2014

## Contra Message

I never speak of the coast  
here / the high bluffs  
blue water unlike green of home  
the grass is yellow and the cypress a deep green  
it's all so hopeful sitting where the sun sets  
unlike the metaphors we're taught  
the East starts early  
the West ends late  
the two combine for a long day  
isn't that a hoot

---

October 14, 2014

## Driving By / Driving Snow

in the western part of Kansas  
during a rare heavy snow  
a charging set of engines powers west  
through a town where once  
innocence went to bed early  
and got up only to die  
before the train the whitened ground is flat  
and behind there're two rails shining bright  
with hints of cross beds marching in strict rhythm  
two stories in this / which is the one you prefer

---

October 15, 2014

## Caffeine Dream

in my haste to find good coffee  
I roamed down Romance Road  
which I thought was ironic  
but every café table housed a chick  
so superb the last one seemed a frump  
and each turned toward me as I walked past  
after coffee I walked back  
something had changed

October 16, 2014

## In Lingerin' Too

New England is a dark place  
trees surround you  
when darkness rises you are engulfed  
dark sets in early  
persists beyond dawn  
with everything bearing down on you  
the air fills wet  
pavement shines  
or would were there light  
but there is  
streetlights showing us ways to give up  
windows at night before lovers make the dark  
headlights of cars carrying people who believe  
where you are is better than where you are going  
becoming dark is the blessing of seeing old age  
from the haunches of youth  
sit on the stone wall and weep for the red sky

---

October 17, 2014

## Kansas West

on a day like one coming soon  
a murderous thing happened  
where murderous things should not  
no one was there who is here any more  
but we all read about it  
such a joy of writing  
horror of fact  
what I want to say is that  
the modest man who wrote it  
was worth far more than the richest man  
not along ago I happened by  
all that's left are artifacts

---

October 18, 2014

## Right?

I favor small roads  
long stone walls  
sun filtered through soft green leaves  
a river that can't leave you alone  
a lonely woman sipping espresso  
a man who wants to follow but feels another urge  
this leads me to a tiny conclusion  
just starting to form in my body  
something I don't mind telling  
it's about what we write

---

October 19, 2014

## Portlandia

the river outside my window hovers  
like a still life settling downriver  
many people have made themselves nearby  
this place appeals and repulses  
the friendly are too  
I was puzzled as things rolled by  
and you?

October 20, 2014

## Conference Wear

tonight it rains  
the river reflects  
the lights are crazy  
people have forgotten me



---

October 21, 2014

## Onward?

what do we do when a man of power  
uses that power to bad will  
what disruption can be tolerated  
I don't care much any more  
but those who have followed do care  
I want to not be part of it  
but I want to publish there  
and the powerful force is building

October 22, 2014

## Insult More

you can't count on me for anything  
I am beholdng to you  
you insulted me and I am done with you  
get that through your head

---

October 23, 2014

## The Friends You Made Along the Way

rain / coming around and filling up  
the tapas we ate while the girls outside shook their hair  
you tilted your head up the street  
we ate more and your eyes were the green of consumption  
we fought a mirage  
a danger beneath the breathing  
when we finished the table was cleaned  
the rain came  
the tattoos shone blue and red  
the backs of your legs light in their walking

October 24, 2014

## The Books You Read

she laughed an opening  
she was longing for living space  
I told her what I could  
it wasn't enough and I thought  
fly up for the day now and then  
does it make sense  
sense?  
does it make a love

---

October 25, 2014

## You've Cooled My Desire

my warm hands spent the night alone  
I almost cried and then I did  
the cold air swamped my sleeping room  
why do they drive all night  
why do trains sound lonely  
why do the doors far away close so quietly  
when I'm all alone  
I left the curtains apart so the orange lights  
from a nearby iron bridge would shine off the ceiling  
and onto my blanket  
I shivered I think

---

October 26, 2014

## Went Away

we walked through the rain  
when one reckons the days of rain  
the crowds through the past  
that we would walk together that night from  
point A to point B  
nothing else / only one next to the other  
river to our left  
bridge just ahead  
when we parted something went away

October 27, 2014

**October 27**

today is a day  
we rarely spoke of  
rarely celebrated  
why?  
my mother's birthday  
what I remember from then  
the sweet-sour smell of fresh hay in the barn  
fermenting to yellow  
the cows in their stalls / necks held by slats  
my mother sitting by their sides  
one by one  
their tails tied to their legs  
her hands pulling milk from their udders  
I lay in the hay while my mother filled the buckets  
on the night of the anniversary of her birth  
a day never spoken of

---

October 28, 2014

## Kodak or Something

we didn't celebrate mine much either  
only one birthday gift I recall  
a Kodak camera / cheap / twin lens reflex  
I took pictures around the farm  
I was 12 or so  
I remember no other gifts  
a card maybe  
maybe some cards from classmates  
I still don't celebrate  
what's the point



---

October 29, 2014

## O Long Ago

no kids came around on Halloween  
the farm too far  
from town / too few  
kids around on the farms around  
ours / we stocked up a little  
I went around a little  
once I went into town with a classmate  
we were around 12  
we gots lots of stuff  
made some trouble  
but just the once  
I had bad blood in me then  
there still?  
too old to tell

---

October 30, 2014

## Last Day of Youth

sitting by the computer  
waiting for the day I've feared  
the day I am officially old  
the birthday when I'm beyond repair  
like the day of my birth it will rain  
it will be dark  
my mother loved intermittently  
occasionally  
tomorrow I will write stronger  
I will reflect the day  
if only the farm and I were together

---

October 31, 2014

## 65

in school I worried of aging  
being unable all the time  
I planned to die at 50  
nothing works as planned  
I'm here  
today was like the day I got here  
cold cloudy rain a bit  
dark and low  
what does it mean  
what should it mean

---

November 1, 2014

## Fields

coming down the escalator in Copenhagen  
aiming for the airport train station  
I plan to buy a ticket to Aarhus  
while riding down I search for the ticket booth  
at the bottom a woman walks up  
and says are you  
I am  
she has a ticket for me  
one for her  
in the quiet train car she pulls out her iPod and says listen  
I hear "in the days still left"

---

November 2, 2014

## Blackbird Song

I read the names  
familiar but mixed oddly  
combinations as if the choices were few  
I mean the people in the town I grew up in  
were there only a dozen families?  
aren't there places nearby?  
or even far away  
marriage / births  
I read of deaths and before I know it  
the death is of the child of a classmate  
not someone older than me  
pictures are posted  
I witness the loss they tell  
smiling faces of the passed  
dull colors of the past

---

November 3, 2014

## Pussy Play

so it's dark  
the black roads shine  
something warm is nearby  
later the pond will freeze  
children will skate there  
I remember my first pussy  
feeling it  
seeing it  
we played games to pretend we were pretending  
Joanne  
funny how that works  
our house was a cardboard box  
did our parents really not know  
I came home to her with my pants down  
it wasn't cold that day  
nor dark

November 4, 2014

## The Waste Land

days are long  
dark  
cold  
rain sometimes  
even where it's advertised as better  
as things wind down I worry about the time left  
I work hard but what for  
time is a waste

---

November 5, 2014

## That City

you know that city in Denmark  
the one that gets dark early and where  
it rains a lot  
the one with the hotel high enough to see the harbor  
sometimes I wish I could be there again  
for just three days  
three days to explore and remember  
but to have never happened  
so no one could discover the truth about it  
it would be something not to have happened  
like fiction always recalled



November 6, 2014

## Janis and All Them

too often we picture our old loves  
with the wrong shade or with bad whites  
blurry / sometimes faded  
make up a better story  
develop a better photo  
discard the bad time does  
make it a shiny white with stimulated colors

---

November 7, 2014

## Old Photos Some More

looking at the pictures taken years ago  
what can it be  
the looks on faces  
just the light and no light  
far away  
far in time  
each one was thinking when the photographer snapped  
they are all dead though they likely lived long and cried many times  
the shoes they wore have all worn out  
and their smiles are permanent

---

November 8, 2014

## Downtown Affair

tonight a pretty woman sat nearby  
dark shiny shiny hair  
bright eyes and all that  
but her mouth and face were alive and so alive  
I was laid low  
she probably was bad for everyone around her  
there was more to her than this  
she expects no less  
I have all I can get

November 9, 2014

## **Paid For**

pay for what you need  
no more no other  
I can't find the way  
it was through some trees  
it was past a pond  
I didn't find the sway  
but I heard someone mention it

---

November 10, 2014

## Speaking of Tongues

the river that borders my old town  
is worrying its neighbors tonight  
or maybe I made that up  
perhaps the level's too high  
gone dry  
filled with deadened fish  
speaking in toxic tongues  
too calmly reflecting a super moon  
forgetting its several bridges  
becoming ordinary and so disappearing

---

November 11, 2014

## Appeasement

nothing would make me as happy  
as being to just sit by the river all day  
read / write / doze  
eat less often but feel filled  
buy books at dusty bookstores  
grab a lobster / why not  
think about the differences  
between green and blue  
while forgetting yellow on principle  
appeasement

November 12, 2014

## Careful Friend

one thing after another  
goes wrong  
my thinking is too soft  
a friend is in bad shape  
after a health thing  
he is still sharp but afraid  
I think  
of losing  
himself and the ones he loves

November 13, 2014

## Good Bye

I wanted him to be better  
but we weren't friends  
not really  
he came after me many times  
I dodged mostly  
those around him play nice  
he has much  
I waved goodbye nicely  
and meant it



November 14, 2014

## An Electronic Device for Losing

A man I knew had a big butt shaft.  
I thought he was a big nut case.  
I thought he was a big generalized anxiety disorder.  
I thought he was a big insult.  
A man I knew had a big cockspur hawthorn.  
A man I knew had a big law of partial pressures.  
I thought he was a big pain in the neck.  
A man I knew had a big fundamental law.  
I thought he was a big sex offense.  
A man I knew had a big contradiction in terms.  
I thought he was a big snake in the grass.  
A man I knew had a big case law.  
I thought he was a big embryoma of the kidney.  
I thought he was a big prickly ash.  
A man I knew had a big screwup.  
A man I knew had a big transurethral resection of the prostate.  
I thought he was a big mental case.  
I thought he was a big adult respiratory distress syndrome.  
A man I knew had a big screw bean.  
I thought he was a big pricking.  
A man I knew had a big tree of the gods.  
I thought he was a big fruit of the poisonous tree.  
A man I knew had a big bill of sale.  
A man I knew had a big war whoop.  
I thought he was a big false lily of the valley.  
A man I knew had a big bastard pennyroyal.  
I thought he was a big breach of the covenant of warranty.  
A man I knew had a big war hawk.  
I thought he was a big case.  
A man I knew had a big prisoner of war censorship.  
I thought he was a big man of the world.  
A man I knew had a big defensive measure.  
I thought he was a big quality.

A man I knew had a big dumb bomb.  
I thought he was a big range pole.  
I thought he was a big crank.  
I thought he was a big part.  
I thought he was a big color.  
I thought he was a big sound film.  
I thought he was a big wind gauge.  
I thought he was a big display.  
I thought he was a big seat.  
I thought he was a big lift.  
I thought he was a big simple leaf.  
I thought he was a big personation.  
I thought he was a big viewer.  
I thought he was a big blue star.  
I thought he was a big negativist.  
A man I knew had a big tail fin.  
I thought he was a big suck.  
I thought he was a big glass.  
I thought he was a big tenth part.  
I thought he was a big radioactive decay.  
I thought he was a big blues.  
I thought he was a big winner.

---

November 15, 2014

## More

a lot of places in Europe are yellow at night  
when it snows people weep and carry umbrellas  
my eyes / on nights like those / water  
and like a camera lens the lights are blurred  
iced branches are fearful on such nights  
they have no warm place to sleep  
aside from yellow there are no colors  
a woman has taken off her clothes  
hoping for me  
the snow loves me more

---

November 16, 2014

## Rain & Anger

if I walked the streets back there at night  
I'd fall into the rain and would slip  
into a persona  
I know why now  
I lose friends rapidly  
a bad part of personality  
anger of sorts  
I know where I get it  
my mother's side  
her father  
on those streets I forget those things  
I think of things to say  
wrong things  
if I'm right the yellow lights will catch me walking  
leaves stuck to the sidewalk  
I need to be someone else  
maybe here

November 17, 2014

## Quick Quick and Dark

so I thought about the nature of yellow leaves  
against a blue background and have concluded  
the more northerly the site the more delightful the sight  
I've studied the women there  
I mean northern Europe / but study in a distant manner  
from afar is what I mean / I watch them  
but not like a stalker / like a writer I hope  
they dress darkly and in winter  
in layers of dark over light  
and shades from grey to black  
they wear booted heels and walk cautiously on cobbled sidewalks  
they wrap scarves around their necks  
I can only guess how they hold you on a cold night  
I imagine their touch is quick or frantic  
they smell I imagine of unusual soaps and lotions  
when they exude erotic pleasure their accents are still in place  
something learned acting where instinct should take hold  
when they talk to me they are wary  
what I might say is a worry  
I could be something evil holed up in a fragile frame  
when I watch the leaves I watch out of the corners for them  
they walk past quickly  
I wonder about them just as quickly

November 18, 2014

## On Our Bellies

many words have been written  
explaining how love cannot be explained  
I have a hat in my hand and a road beneath my feet  
all far away / all farther each day  
I want what we all want  
a slow walk to the end of the road

---

November 19, 2014

## Square Lands

in the farmland in the midwest  
the dirt is like a lotion  
the horizon is a circle we live inside  
the sky everywhere  
the trees are low most places  
cottonwoods / streams in death throes  
smells of crops and hogs  
I started to learn there  
I was still broken  
I am  
now it's quiet and all I want

---

November 20, 2014

## North Again

quiet and still cold  
I wonder who's waiting in bed  
a fire in the pot belly is a reminder  
the streets are empty aside from one dog  
a motorcycle peels out  
the smells of fires hang low in the cold  
how many times has this happened  
a woman is brushing her hair  
to the sound of music made centuries ago  
a time she will not read



---

November 21, 2014

## Streets Yes Streets

a garbage truck leaves tracks  
in the shallow layer of snow  
left earlier in the night  
in the city no one wants to live in  
they are sharp going almost to the pavement  
for the snow is savage in its tenacity  
I'm standing at the curtained window  
watching earlier tracks nearly refilled  
along the sidewalk that leaves from the door downstairs  
she was neither beautiful nor successfully warm  
but we kept the universe above out  
for another night on a cold rock around here

---

November 22, 2014

## Feel the Pain

we take pictures of the sharp day  
blue in the summer / green in the grass and trees  
the brights days / good days  
what of the snowy and blurry  
the days too dark to make out  
nothing with color  
someone watched me take the picture  
watched the slow care I took with the tripod  
how I waited for a nice time  
let the camera open for a minute or more  
then they walked away  
around a bend or behind a bush  
she / let's say / wanted me for those minutes  
an artist she thought  
not looking for the common  
then she thought better

---

November 23, 2014

## And Am

when I got here I fell  
for the dusted golden late afternoons  
where insects and odd smells blended just before  
the sun went behind the Coastal hills  
eucalyptus trees / tar weed  
I was once then exotic so attracted many strangers  
I came believe I was smart but I was just adaptable  
flexible / a good talker sometimes  
none of that was in my head back then  
only now do I recognize how undistinguished I was

---

November 24, 2014

## Ferguson

we learned again tonight  
that evil likes to smile  
when it wins but shouldn't  
people making the rules favor him  
the evil  
the scared cop was a coward  
or a wimp  
the law says that cowardly cops  
and wimpy cops should never go to jail

---

November 25, 2014

## I Expected More

we drove to Southie for Thanksgiving  
we passed my father's father's  
grave / unmarked  
no one knew it was there  
everyone said  
but I found it  
I  
found  
it  
the turkey was always good but overcooked  
and brazil nuts  
and sour cabbage  
I was bored and slept  
they all talked  
sometimes in Lithuanian  
I was bored

---

November 26, 2014

## Back Then

we walked to the bay  
then down to the castle  
talking like I never did with mother  
we talked like adults  
what he thought I can't imagine  
we stayed until near dark  
we ate more then drove home to the farm  
for the next days I'd gather princess pine  
for wreaths and we'd make them  
we'd plan for the town forest and a snuck out tree  
these rituals seemed permanent  
instead I am transient / fragmentary  
I wish for just one year of those old rituals  
with a notebook in hand

---

November 27, 2014

## Phoney Niners

how silly to pin your self worth  
on a sports team  
you are not they  
they are not you  
they work for money you can't imagine  
how they perform is up to things unrelated to you  
how you perform is unrelated to them  
when they lose a lot it's easier to watch  
so there

---

November 28, 2014

## It Is

everything about me is wrong  
the best I've had was the most wrong  
staying on the better side is a chore  
easily botched  
listening to my leads I can hear the issues  
enough raw talent and beauty to note  
but enough mistakes to make it all a joke  
when they said life is but a joke  
I guess they're telling it



---

November 29, 2014

## Reality and Religion

hunting for the snow that hits the river  
looking for a place to lie down  
a place where it will feel warm  
even in the coming storm  
people I imagine will read these poems one day  
and be surprised I was once alive  
I won't know anything then  
didn't know anything before

---

November 30, 2014

## Asshole They Told Me

something messed up  
I am shedding my lights  
I have little to say anymore  
no one listens nor should they  
lots of people have concluded the same  
I have wasted my life being the bad person  
I  
apparently  
was taught to be  
by someone  
or by genetics  
I hate having to reconsider every single thing

---

December 1, 2014

## Lokhvytsia

digging up facts from 100 years ago  
not so easy when the people are unimportant  
they nor their children made one but of difference  
for me it's passion curiosity  
my plan as always is to make up what I can't know  
and what's made up becomes what's known  
reinforcing the story  
because we are people  
people

---

December 2, 2014

## Neither Is She

she found a lot of reasons to sway  
while she sang  
but slow for the music was down / chill  
I am reminded of the central valley in a hot dustup  
driving through it  
down it really toward Tehachapi then Mojave then Barstow then Needles  
finally Kingman and the Dambar for steak and nuts  
she sang with a bit of sadness or resignation  
I imagine her sleeping in a hot bed in a hot room  
I imagine trains pulling past the hotel all night  
heading up / heading down  
I am not for her

---

December 3, 2014

## Special Captured

the desert is layered flatness  
you might think not much colors  
or perhaps not many colors  
they are all there  
and a lot  
everyone takes a picture  
of the straight road from the vantage  
of the passing stripe  
creosote and strange clouds  
a model was driven up to me  
she asked directions  
her name was Nicoline  
I snapped her great

December 4, 2014

## FTB

I hate this state  
I will dissolve Dream Songs  
when I can  
damn them

December 5, 2014

## Fundle

I am itching all over  
lots of work to do  
that is no fun  
I wait for the world to back its phobias  
like a lake out of luck  
with only a dam to keep

December 6, 2014

## Mommy

she told me tonight  
she thought my obsession with cemeteries  
was silly  
I wonder how many other things she doesn't much like  
many have a list  
little mistakes a long time ago add up fast



---

December 7, 2014

## Farmland

in the end we all worship our pasts  
because back there is where all that went between  
is about to happen  
but we only construct those middles  
they seem so innocent  
even for the worst of us  
I remember the soft fields before the first snow  
the hollow yellows almost brown  
the ground hardening under  
leaves piled along stone walls  
shagbark sharp still and hard birds only  
I want it again

---

December 8, 2014

## No Wonder

then there were not many houses  
the road was narrower  
the air was more filled with wood smoke  
in Autumn we could hear gunfire booming in woods  
where hunters were roaming  
I could see only poorly then  
I understood little and was lazy  
I didn't have much upside they all said  
the farm was broken down / not much upside  
we were all nobodies around there

---

December 9, 2014

## Dance Class

I remember the time my mother dumped  
me at Stephen Kimbrell's to walk over to the elementary  
school for dance class / around 6 or 7 I think  
the school is two blocks away  
Stephen was not home / no one was  
I walked there alone in the dark  
crying the whole way  
crying so hard I still remember it  
vividly / my mother sensed something was wrong and came back  
I went home with her  
any wonder she thought me feeble minded  
any wonder I still can't travel well alone

December 10, 2014

## Left Alone

she had left  
on the early train  
back to her unknown home  
I stayed back  
went back to my room  
wrote some / slept some  
I resumed  
she too  
now it's now

---

December 11, 2014

## N° 5

when Meredith was on my mind  
at Christmas I would think of  
n° 5 / young  
I was thinking old  
my mother knew of this  
I don't recall her comment  
but I recall her commenting  
I would look at our tree  
think of how to do it  
I never did  
never could  
still can't  
or couldn't

---

December 12, 2014

## Heh

so what's to say tonight  
about using my program to help create a good name  
for a program I don't care about  
my program's cool and demos well in some cases  
I like playing with it at night  
like just now  
and I called it work

---

December 13, 2014

## 12 13 14

another one of those days  
a sequence or pattern  
it's hard to like days like this  
they are artificially interesting  
but is language too  
around now I want to stop doing things for a bit  
no coding no writing only reading  
thinking about snow  
wanting something new  
along with my skin tone

---

December 14, 2014

## Deceased

we tobogganed everywhere we could  
put up mush blocks to toboggan through at the bottom of steep hills  
aimed for narrow pathways between fields  
took a movie camera with us sometimes  
the film developed blue from the snow  
we watched those movies over and over  
then our family ceased



---

December 15, 2014

## My Legacy

today a man retired where I work  
who had forty foster children over his long life  
many of them attended his retirement party  
some were still young / one in a wheelchair  
in front of all his scientist colleagues  
who stood to praise him he  
talked to the young ones  
made faces at them  
calmed them down  
plainly loved them  
I stood / watched / wondered

December 16, 2014

### **Is She A Porn Star?**

if you have a good point  
don't lie / don't exaggerate  
don't invite people to question your motives  
your point will be lost  
you will appear a fool

December 17, 2014

## Myself

it comes down to beliefs  
I guess / I am chagrined by my silliness  
I want people to tell me I suck  
so I can justify throwing it in  
I weep

---

December 18, 2014

## I Like It Smooth

calm black water smoothed  
by watching over time and remembering  
people like this too  
smooth and uniform  
the places we lived um loved  
slick and sleek  
time rubbing away the quirks and uniquenesses  
like a soothing massage after a long  
long day

December 19, 2014

## Ink Well Wrote These

dark gravity—  
an orphan drifts drunk  
into the pink

a drop of holy water—  
as if the world had been filled

---

December 20, 2014

## Staring at a Mountain

one of the funny things is how  
unlike earlier times I think  
it's possible to revisit the things  
of our youth  
like music  
music I thought long gone  
on tapes not likely to have persisted  
digitized and I listen on the road  
from my computer  
everywhere  
like a bad dream revisiting in the day  
a memory I hoped to forget  
all that and good sound quality too

December 21, 2014

## In A Motel Room I Once Slept In

a poor motel in a low town  
a woman with a deep desire that floats away each morning  
has checked in and is checking on dinner joints  
the people who live here work hard jobs  
they are not literate but they are not lonely  
faith is their milk  
the town is divided into the strip  
and the homes  
the strip the former main road  
the homes down in a wide valley no one thinks is a valley  
trains follow the old road  
really the trains cross the continent  
the woman has too  
she wants sleep and sex  
but settles for a tough steak in onions  
she logs on to read mail  
the motel room just keeps on smelling

December 22, 2014

## Far Over the Sea

am I dead  
there are too many roads left out there  
one of them passes through a town  
where a woman with good lips might be waiting  
in a diner by the highway that hijacked the town  
she was once homecoming queen and now just a woman  
I was once dead



December 23, 2014

## Marriage Number One

only two marriage dates I recall  
this is one  
my first  
a cold day but clear  
we stayed in an old inn in Sturbridge  
she stripped for me  
it was an adolescent fantasy  
we weren't shy  
many ways we were perfect  
but crazy dreams got in the way  
I thought I was more  
she thought I was less  
as time went on  
no we are nothing  
as if nothing like that ever happened that day  
or any other day

December 24, 2014

## Eight hAIku

a man  
steps out  
of the old woman

a route of steel:  
as if the nature had left

a game—  
this play in play  
best not a game

morn light:  
a cicada killer comes to the fore briskly  
into the bitter orange tree

a bitch,  
this piece in school  
for the first time not a relative

a bee fly  
eases up out  
of the flower

a patch of ice:  
as if the roof had followed up

a snail  
gets out  
of the box

December 25, 2014

## Nine hAiku

a boy  
this moment in time  
for the first time not a bird

a city of marble:  
as if the sun had changed

a two year old  
breaks out  
of the violet

ephemera / a ray of light—  
a bird of prey travels  
toward a common oak

a source of preservation:  
the roof had popped

a lion  
this night of change in life  
is not prey

a yellow jacket  
starts up out  
of a tree

this winter of winters  
close to the wind  
is not a bitch

a source of bitter principle  
as if the sun had changed

---

December 26, 2014

## Perilous Journey

we would play every week  
a night with 2 or 3 hours of music  
we never got any better  
recordings are sometimes sweet  
mostly inept  
only one or two of us took it seriously  
the others / just social times  
archeology brings it all back  
how we can dig things up  
how well we preserve them from then on

---

December 27, 2014

## Finding It

you can read a sad story  
of an evil man and his insane wife  
he was executed on death row for a bad crime  
she married him while he was in prison  
in his execution she found humanity  
in his execution he found humanity  
no one else who read the sad story of it  
found humanity

---

December 28, 2014

## Squaw Ways

sometimes I pretend to be a writer  
everyone knows better  
one word in front of the other  
easy peasy  
for example  
for many years I could not get into Squaw Valley  
even with Brenda Hillman bugging her husband about it  
finally I made it  
but why  
nothing good came of it

---

December 29, 2014

## Goodbye All

I never can remember what other last weeks of the year were like  
cold and I read a lot  
maybe  
worked too much  
maybe we went up to Tamworth  
for the snow and cold  
back then not many went up in the winter  
we would stay warm with a furnace and a fire  
each other too  
nothing great to eat there then  
I find the past too long gone

December 30, 2014

## Resolutions It Seems

year about to end  
cold tonight  
the rigors of figuring out work  
is an enemy to happiness  
next year will be better  
do less  
get back health



---

December 31, 2014

## Taking Stock

when people are tied to their land  
they are settled and all is good  
when they have little or what they have  
could fall away easily / without much warning  
untethered / fear grows / life seems less  
every day seems far away from the farm  
my mother hated it / her father gone in her arms  
was it simpler / did she work harder  
was I feeble minded / why am I

# Dunking Distracted Sardines

Richard P. Gabriel

December 31, 2015

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---

January 1, 2015

## In Small Parts

so many small towns  
across the middle of the country  
growing stuff / harvesting stuff  
the people who live there are real  
to each other and nearby  
for me they are abstractions  
people in quantity / but what do  
they do every day / and how  
do they find a beautiful way to live  
in the evenings or early mornings  
drinking coffee / drinking  
women live there with the men  
what do they need every day  
every night / everyone has a story  
that fades each day to nothing in the night  
weep for them if you can  
I do

January 2, 2015

## By One

misty day the day  
they buried her father  
cool after record heat  
fourth of July few days back  
out in the open / the grave stark and bare  
the casket on cloth beside it  
men who spoke now gone  
her mother now gone  
she remained as the men with shovels waited  
under a beech smoking  
she knelt beside the casket  
her hand resting on it near his head  
she didn't cry because crying was not her vocabulary  
the men waited a long time  
nothing changed that they could see  
the afternoon wore on but they knew  
night was far away  
each of them decided not to laugh  
nor tell jokes nor even remark  
they knew it would happen to them  
one day one by one

January 3, 2015

## Predictable

later that day she fed the chickens  
they clucked as usual  
she let the cows into the barn  
fed them grain and later milked them  
cooked a meal a simple one of kielbasa and potatoes  
for her mother who preferred one old cup  
filled by a jar from the woods  
her brother left after not long  
left her with nana to work the farm  
to work in the factory  
to be the man of the farm and all the farmers around who promised  
broke them the next month  
that night she nearly cried  
after yelling at her mother and stepping out for a smoke  
the grass laid flat where he lay on this way to dying  
you know I grew up there too  
why hide these shy facts from me  
you knew I would make them a fiction  
I'd read and read until they became facts  
the next morning before driving to Haverhill  
she fed the chickens

January 4, 2015

## A Day Later

the next day she stopped at Linwood  
she was driving his car  
the one he fixed up from parts from his autobody job  
the convertible  
the grave's hole was not filled  
filled three quarters up  
the sod cut with sod cutters still sitting next to the felt blanket  
around 7:00 but an hour or more before dark  
she stood looking down into it  
facing the direction the sun was going to set in  
because the river was down that way  
because she would one day buy her own grave up  
on the hill directly behind her back  
with her son standing confused next to her  
because she would never share death with him  
so now as he writes this he fears it so



January 5, 2015

## Not At The Late Home

everyone knew that everything about the paper's report  
of the funeral was wrong  
there weren't a son and daughter  
and also two daughters  
being Ukrainian they used first and middle names  
so Helen and Pauline were Helen Pauline  
my mother and Paul and Concerta were Connie Paul  
my uncle / the standing wreaths were still standing  
off to the side of the almost filled grave  
my mother wondered where to go  
home to her mother to cook and feed  
to the chickens to feed  
to the cows to milk and feed  
to the horses to brush and feed  
to the turkeys to feed and comfort  
to the apple trees to pick them  
to the pear trees to pick them  
to the grapevines to pick them  
to the tomato plants to pick them  
to the corn to pick and shuck them  
to the cherries to pick them  
to the hay to mow and rake to dry  
or to the river by the green bridge  
where she once kissed a boy by the boat ramp next to the hand tub house  
where he stared gratefully at her ample bust  
or stay here all night and talk to him  
which to choose  
which to love  
which to hate

---

January 6, 2015

## Pond and Cows

later she walked from the barn to the small pond  
frogs bellowed and behind them in the mix  
tree frogs and crickets / it was a warm night again  
no one swam there anymore because the water was too tannic  
the oaks and maples dropping leaves  
twilight and the up the little hill the house was lit like Christmas eve  
for her this was a different new and ugly world  
she felt she was just starting and her will to go on had gone  
the cows lowed in the barn / she returned to her home  
and her bed

January 7, 2015

## Who Is She?

she walked just ahead of me  
in a light rain back from the tony restaurant  
toward my hotel and her car  
she stopped to reflect on the dark river  
flowing in orange down to the ocean  
under bridges alone steep cut stone river walls  
she said nothing to me / I think she was content to let me walk on alone  
I had stepped past her and came back to her side  
her hands were on the uninspired metal railing  
and my narrator thought perhaps she was misting  
she said in a low voice I need the warmth  
and she put my hand with hers into her coat pocket  
I stopped thinking / twenty minutes later  
we continued

---

January 8, 2015

## As Real?

my plan for figuring her  
she shares thousands of years with me  
she raised me  
every made up story has a chink hammered off her  
she ran as a girl around the same farm I did  
the buildings old when I was running  
were old when she was running  
what happened to the big barn my father told us to behold  
what day were those pictures taken / wedding day  
a man from Boston / a dandy really  
there to take on the farm  
he did and died after the try  
she left it in disgust after I left  
I wanted it and still do  
I can build it again here on pages like this one

January 9, 2015

## Laments

discovery is how I do everything  
I have not much knowledge  
at least not reliable knowledge  
I need to worry less  
I need to do less  
move more  
live more  
be less responsible for other things  
be me

---

January 10, 2015

## One Photo

if I could go back and take one picture  
of a time and place in my life  
would it be the farm  
one of my wives  
a great sex scene  
my mother and father young  
me very young or the farm when I was young  
when I looked the best  
the first time in bed with Kathy  
Kurkjian and me singing the classics  
my big keynote  
the prettiest day  
do I need to name it or just describe what it should be  
later later

---

January 11, 2015

## Get Low

all the times I would run from my house  
across the road  
over one stone wall then along it  
up on it again and around an old apple tree  
back down / jump over the sewage drain or stream  
then along an old cow path / up the little rise  
to the edge of the foundation pit also a dumpsite  
past the big lilac over to the two gravel rut driveway  
to the barn / slide open the door and up into the hay loft  
I wish I could do it again

---

January 12, 2015

## Odd Things

the house was so big growing up  
when I visited it 50 years later it was tiny  
I judged it both times by my size and my parents'  
when they tore it down a few years after that  
I saw the fiberglass cloth and newspaper insulation  
the rough framing and boards  
later I heard an earlier house he built  
had a rifle as part of the chimney  
if I pile up the mysteries  
they reach the second floor landing



January 13, 2015

## Wet and Tears

as she drove away in the heavy mist  
she wondered whether the casket would leak  
and her father become soaked  
others would have simply wept

January 14, 2015

## Heavy Work

still confused over the senses of words  
working it out in code  
maybe more bugs to clean out

---

January 15, 2015

## Dennis's Story

Dennis Clark you idiot  
helicopter pilot in Vietnam  
bully in school before that  
home in the '70s' a drunk out with his bud  
in a pickup his head out the window to puke  
Dennis  
his bud swerved toward a pole in Amesbury  
went back to pick up the head  
put it in the bed  
drove to Anna Jaques  
and left it all for someone there to find  
the story I heard

January 16, 2015

## Uppsala

cold city so the beds are warm  
dark so the fire is bright  
lonely so the women are making  
at night all the colors are deep and sharp  
piercing the ice are fenceposts and straw  
where is the light coming from

---

January 17, 2015

## Affairious

she thought it the ultimate sign  
love for life lighting up after the sun was whisked away  
she prepared herself each night  
by dawn she was crying for luck  
her children in her open thoughts  
he thought it the ultimate trip  
warmth for the evening and into the dark  
he wrote before bed each night describing  
in the morning he needed coffee and thoughtful talk  
his wife getting ready to phone

January 18, 2015

## Repeat One

some of the many roads  
took me merely round and round  
on them I'd think hard / drive slow  
like reading a story over and over  
watching the same movie again and again  
the repetition soothes a mind  
or makes for strong nightmares

January 19, 2015

## Again

some problems are too randomly presented  
unrepeatable  
struggle to figure what it means  
a puzzle maybe not solvable  
and the night grows weary of seeing me  
again

January 20, 2015

## Titanicful

the captain has told us  
time to disembark  
some of us obey  
the rest will drown



January 21, 2015

## Sitting By The Graves

why do we wait  
our mothers gone and the questions come to the fore  
we go every day to wait by their graves  
for a sign they are ready to answer  
but coming before dawn  
staying past midnight  
as the woodchucks prowl and the owls hoot  
there are no answers  
but the ones we invent

---

January 22, 2015

## Fire On The Mountain

up on the mountain one time in the past  
I could go up and up  
the air in haze and maybe the sounds of cars far down there  
parts where stone was steep and hard  
I'd wrench my fingers into cracks  
and hope the fog didn't disguise  
a flat hard ending below me  
my father still young went ahead  
and spread encouragement back to me  
I heard in my mind the same song  
just over and over

---

January 23, 2015

## What Does It Mean?

I think my father's birthday was around now  
we never celebrated it  
never mentioned it  
my mother's not much either but we noted it more or less  
my nana's funeral - they didn't let me attend  
nor the burial  
my step grandfather  
my father's mother  
births and deaths off limits  
beginnings and endings off the table  
sometimes the smallest difference  
makes the largest difference

---

January 24, 2015

## Five Haiku

a lot of dust:  
as if the world had cleared

a dog in the manger sips coffee,  
it's important,  
the style is assuming

a woman of the house drains the cup of heavy whipping cream,  
it's fit,  
the gall of the earth is waning

a stubborn trick—  
by myself,  
killing defenseless bitters

a lot of debris:  
as if the web had evolved

---

January 25, 2015

## Storm of the Century

far away it promises to snow hard  
the day will become dark as white  
snow drops in chunks not flakes to the pile  
of snow already there  
from the riverbank the black river will look diseased  
I want to be on that bank in a light tent  
hugged by a thick down sleeping bag  
all through the blizzard  
I was born for that sort  
of thing

January 26, 2015

## Dee Dee Dee

the brook that starts on our farm  
doesn't freeze but flows somehow  
snow comes right up to it  
when I stumbled across it one year  
I didn't walk along its bank  
the snow was so soft and felt-smooth  
the dark water moved slowly toward the river  
I listened

chickadees

January 27, 2015

## No Girls

the magazine's name is girls and corpses  
something I don't want to crack  
they featured a story on their website  
about what happens after the crack  
a fat ass was on the cover  
I am thankful my libido is like those corpses

January 28, 2015

## River Storm

the river came up pretty high  
during the storm  
ice flowed down too  
almost to the top of the wooden pier  
some familiar yellow on the surface of the snow on the ice  
some brown too  
the kind of day I wanted then  
the sort of faith in change we crave



---

January 29, 2015

## Stormy River

we were surprised by the snow  
the amount  
how light it was  
where it piled up in the strangely strong wind  
how the tide pushed the ice back upriver  
how the birds hunkered down to reduce their furnaces  
once when I was young I thought about racing across that  
ice at the point of swiftest flow on the coldest day  
just before it was too dark  
I stare at photos now

January 30, 2015

## See The Levels

we  
each of us  
have our levels  
mine never included the  
spectacular / the dark haired  
beauties with long flanks and steel  
stares / I was always second tier or third

---

January 31, 2015

## Haverhill Where I Met Her

I found her while walking the promenade  
down by the river in the old part of Haverhill  
who am I kidding  
every part is old  
I've lived in California for forty years  
near Haverhill for twenty-three  
counting seven when I wasn't with it enough to know anything  
but that's home / this is an ephemera  
count the poems to get the stats

---

February 1, 2015

## That Smell

my mother / shy about going out  
not many friends but I'm sure she went driving  
out the roads / to the river for example  
she smoked I know  
drank beer but not much  
from the farm or social / who knows  
her father had anger / she too later  
how ugly the town smelled and the river  
and Haverhill next door  
this is me

February 2, 2015

## Gone Girl

the river is that way  
snow fog and wind-flung flakes  
the clouds are uniform but heavy and dark  
the wind drops my eyes to the ground snow  
if not careful you could walk into the river  
and like me you'd be gone for good  
gone from good

---

February 3, 2015

## One Fall's

you know there's a bug I've been hunting for weeks  
puzzling it in and out of existence  
to find exactly the cause  
many possibilities of course  
and involving huge computations  
many times I thought I found it  
figuring around it don't work either  
puzzled desire indeed

February 4, 2015

## Sometimes a Great Haiku

some great words are strung together  
surrealistic to be sure  
interesting combinations that can irk  
put them together yourself  
try not to worry

---

February 5, 2015

## After Seeing Snow Storm Photos

I work hard for no real purpose  
being arty not sciency  
I wonder about duration  
my program progresses  
I want it to live but the edges are peeling  
I want to spend time elsewhere  
doing other things  
spending a little time on the program  
but not all the time  
I wish



February 6, 2015

## Tonight As Always

too many random things to do  
and work on top of that  
I long for a long rest  
time to recover from all that work  
but it piles and piles up

February 7, 2015

## Slowly Dawning Insights

slowly improving the program  
one big test to try tomorrow  
with getting original words and not the downcased ones  
this will be tricky  
a major revision  
it will take all day and I should make careful copies of things

---

February 8, 2015

## American South

the American South beckons  
warm moist air  
soft gentle forests  
slow life in breezes  
I would walk long roads  
down abandoned tracks  
I think maybe there are women there  
who would open their doors  
their coverlets  
who would not expect cold to hit their hearts  
I warm to the idea of spoken liquids

---

February 9, 2015

## My Annual Review

the snow has gone crazy  
I am not there  
this would have been a perfect time to photograph  
instead I am here in front of the computer  
working on writing a writer  
I would instead be holed up in a potbelly warmed room  
writing the life of myself and like that  
driving as best I could to the bridge  
maybe staying with my Rocks Village people  
with them / writing about them  
a dream and not a thought leader

---

February 10, 2015

## One Like This

when we sit to remember  
the past we remember only  
the pretty things / the soft things  
Kurkjian's story about getting up to change  
the tv channel ends likes this / wrt his father  
then he'd tell me to get up, go (all the way!)  
to the kitchen and  
bring back two nice red apples

February 11, 2015

## Spread

what surprises me  
are the small things  
the small words in a simple rhythm  
that make us all more human  
stuff like this reminds me  
of dozing under the pines in our close woods  
not fancy but it was ours  
a thing I once had I wish I had again  
a spread

---

February 12, 2015

## Home Snow

back home all the tall straw is covered in snow  
low fences and bushes  
bird baths and what's left of corn  
in graveyards maybe only  
the tops of headstones can be seen  
and if they are slate  
it's a black crescent on white  
if I were there there would not be  
places to park so on  
I'd drive from place to place then back to an uncertain driveway  
or lot / I'd be up to here in snow

February 13, 2015

## Writer At Heart

thinking of how I write  
it seems so fitting  
launching from place to place  
hoping something will fall out  
or apart  
as I work on my writing program  
it is slowly revealed to me  
how to do this fitting  
there



---

February 14, 2015

## Simple Scene

I know how it will end  
me dreaming as the brightness dims  
of walking up the road past Scherbons'  
to our farm from deep in the past  
it will be like those sentimental  
scenes of the dead walking to their loved ones in a rural heaven  
I will believe it's happening but my dying imagination  
will be simply hanging on  
then it will be

---

February 15, 2015

## Violin Studies

the suffering is idiomatic  
rates of change calculated and measured  
show it's random not designed  
but the measure assumes design is smart  
or designers  
what if they're stupid  
or their own reckoning of improvement is flawed  
design then is random

---

February 16, 2015

## Republicans

I would like to take the crazies  
and shake their brains out  
replace them with real ones  
I would make them reject workforce preparation  
to favor search for truth  
I am not a consumer or a passenger  
I resent being thought of as one  
I would stare at them for hours  
then laugh for hours  
they aren't crazy  
they are stupid

February 17, 2015

## Multi-Ku Four

the gray's tears  
have gotten over  
the first snow

a patch of grasses  
its change  
the back decking mouse

of watches  
a storm is shining  
but shitworks kill

yellow-orange  
but somehow the orange  
is changing

February 18, 2015

## Me Away

early results  
the best winter ever is passing by  
I was caught in a warm place  
being snowed in would have been perfect  
if I need it I will need a different place  
not a familiar one  
there is eight feet of snow there now  
and a river barely able to handle the runoff

February 19, 2015

## Best

to sleep and not wake  
like a break in a dream  
just your memory will know it  
something has changed it will process  
someth

February 20, 2015

## Bad Thumb

when something bad happens  
my brain flinches and I cannot avoid thoughts  
I writhe and wring  
I will get over it because I was luck and outwitted  
I learned and will grow cautious

February 21, 2015

## Forget He Said

what is there to fathom  
first a big thought  
then a small regret  
in panic we act like dopes  
I know how it feels now  
I will be more sympathetic



February 22, 2015

## What I Mean

ups and downs  
silly things we do when our thinking stops  
I want it all paved over by time  
and new memories  
fix what I can  
move on

February 23, 2015

## Tour Nike

through time we find what turns us  
we fight for pleasure but pain sometimes  
finally I found a pleasure and finding more would be  
I will seek

February 24, 2015

## In All Its Glory

eventually people make what we seek  
then we seek more  
how long till we disregard  
I wonder why it's taken decades  
the fetish / the interest  
no explanation for why  
why not  
why not till now  
just the thing itself

February 25, 2015

## Last Love

so we weep when weeping time is here  
we face the last door then tenderly open it  
the other side is nowhere  
the road here went wide then narrow  
the last bit lonely  
I wish someone who cares  
would watch me walk the last part  
watch the door open  
then close

---

February 26, 2015

## Bad Thinking

writing programs slowly and testing them  
because the computations are long and I need them to be right  
this time / earlier it was more experiment  
learning how to write business letters  
is not learning how to write  
learning how to program simple algorithms  
is not learning how to program

February 27, 2015

## Dawning Bugs

slowly dawning insights  
playing with the code  
see what works  
no strong plan  
like design thinking I suspect  
always I find bugs that should have broken everything  
but they don't  
don't understand this

February 28, 2015

## Am I Blue?

simple fact or not  
salt water can freeze  
waves of half frozen sea breaking  
on a shore will fill  
your mind alien  
we don't expect some things  
with no words for them  
they seem gold  
when they are really black  
or white when blue

March 1, 2015

## My Computer Is Hot

the program runs  
16 way parallel  
still days to come to finish this stage  
maybe a week  
then testing and verification  
feels like a lot of effort for how little payoff



March 2, 2015

**Ha!**

today I spoke with Dr Zilch  
know what he said  
nothing

March 3, 2015

## Failing to Delete

running out of space  
race against time to move files  
so I can delete them  
I won't make it  
(I didn't)

---

March 4, 2015

## Twilight Calls

this is twilight  
come to call in its chips  
demand stories of explanation and recall  
the light though won't admit truth  
so stories count  
you will suffer  
or maybe twilight will stroke you head as you drift to sleep  
indistinct / swirls around the trunks and down roads  
twilight has a special place in its heart for dark back roads  
for dense colored cities  
for stories that unfold unplanned

March 5, 2015

## Massachusetts Dreaming

days are gaining length  
warmth coming  
I pray to make it to my home turf again  
eat the junk food there and buy a book  
drive over the roads and over them again  
I want to sleep by the river  
feel and smell the moist air  
fall in love with me the boy as I wished I might have been

March 6, 2015

## Making a Bed

tomorrow a lot of hacking

and checking files

till take all day

I think

I am exhausted from all the work on this ngram project

I could hack now and make my computer work all night

but I just want to sleep

---

March 7, 2015

## Haying

we worked hard to get the hay in  
before the rainstorms predicted for the next week  
a small family of mother son father nana  
none good at it  
a spit together mufflerless tractor  
flat old hay wagon  
with slats for sides  
old fashioned sickle-bar mower  
side delivery  
we worked with the Red Sox game on a battery radio  
1962  
they lost

March 8, 2015

## Bare Metaphor

there was a last day  
I was on the farm  
when it was ours  
I can't remember that day  
or the last day I was in the barn  
but there were such days  
last times for many things  
forgotten  
first times remembered  
now think about this  
birth and death

March 9, 2015

## Avoidance

we want it to be quiet  
calm / simple  
fitting to be that way  
while the fires still  
burn



---

March 10, 2015

## Falling Away

the program rolls on  
reading and pruning  
big dirty data  
they don't talk about that much  
the program doesn't care but works hard all day  
all night  
until it's done  
how it acts cannot be predicted  
so what looks like errors are just business as usual  
I need to revise something

March 11, 2015

## Old Maps

an old map  
teaches old things  
like what was once  
here and over there  
if I can find my old farm  
from before it was a farm  
I could plot the course of my life  
and beyond

March 12, 2015

## Why Tonight

wow I'm tired  
like a tree about to fall  
rain about to stop  
wind about to be turned back  
I have strong  
fatigue / so strong  
it weakens the soul

March 13, 2015

## Pi Day Tomorrow

confused by food and drink  
string of words portraying sense  
loud rhymes cracking their knuckles  
some say there needs to be a point  
I say no point is the point

March 14, 2015

**Finally**

finally the program is done  
still some polishing to do  
but it completed its tasks  
and the ngrams are being tested  
all the data being backed up  
so tired of all the screwups  
making things restartable  
doing things in parallel  
I've waited a long time for this

March 15, 2015

## Design Thinking

the basic design  
attacks its dominant feature  
the hostile defense  
leads its problematic rear  
a bug appears to be five killers  
this pattern / no one finds it  
doomsday interruption

March 16, 2015

## Alone at the Keyboard

I've worked hard always  
never got far but tried a bit  
aimed to play more than work  
managed to do it for a while  
till I became passé  
we all will  
now I fester  
I wish I could stop  
before

March 17, 2015

## Good Night

staring at spring  
water except for drought  
warm except for the cold shards of winter's breezes  
hanging on / leaves still on trees chipping off  
streams carrying things to rivers  
rivers to seas  
how many are left  
rage or gentle



---

March 18, 2015

## Insane Paris

along the Seine  
walking alone of a warm very warm night  
lights of boats and dinner boats  
glimpsed in the strong current and wakes  
ahead of me the French woman I crave  
walks with no purpose away faster than me  
her skirt shakes no but my hopes are above us both  
water or woman / which charm is greater  
which way closer to a wet passing

---

March 19, 2015

## They Are Now Dead

some nights I walk alone down yellowed streets  
dogs look up  
if anyone passes by I look down  
I want no one  
no thing  
sometimes I stop by a stucco wall white  
and rest my hand on it until the cool and wet  
are dry and warm  
my thinking is fragmented and poor  
some believe I am frail but they don't see my eyes  
the yellow is the lights placed to push away  
a fear of death  
those whose homes are here sleep here  
those with none just sleep  
no one begs of me  
they give

---

March 20, 2015

## In the Homeless Grove

the homeless gather around themselves  
in a grove none expected  
they cook meals from discards  
their lives are subtle with slight movements and small sounds  
they eat near big meals  
they hope for them to scatter  
when they fall for each other it's small  
quick / instant  
fat is worshipped

March 21, 2015

## Nothing Yet

something important to know  
when a woman walks away from you  
meaning is revealed  
study it  
I did and do  
what I learn is about me

March 22, 2015

## Haikuiana

you have found birds attacking—  
get to this book  
read the present conditions

winning mother—  
an original worker  
working my rear

watch!  
a white sound  
the thunderstorm

March 23, 2015

## Take a Haiku to Work Day

dumb tombola goof—  
just enough to make the right  
grave cryptophyte

moments of liquorices—  
piece attachment, is it the US?  
Yaltopya?

a short distance—  
by myself,  
free-basing cryptological honey

aggressive,  
but somehow the orange  
is colorizing

a bitch,  
this year in death  
just not a man

March 24, 2015

## A Thing Called Evening

there is a thing called evening  
it's where people go to cry  
for warmth and for the end of the day  
it's where lights men have made fill voids  
it's where orange and yellow are calm  
once in a city away from my home  
I opened a door and in stepped the end of the world

---

March 25, 2015

## Remembering

who's at the door  
my hotel has many floors  
in it new things happen  
we are strange hot tenuous  
cumbrous but we sleep all night all day  
a world formed for two days  
then popped off its stack  
memories persist in us  
nowhere in the world



March 26, 2015

## On a Stay

we stayed from early evening  
to late afternoon  
huddled and warm  
curtains drawn on a high floor  
evening coming early again  
it was obsessive  
was it real  
a story  
everything

March 27, 2015

## Guess What's Next?

the thing I can't see  
them looking at me with love  
happened many times they tell me  
I recognized not a one of them  
can't see the look  
the eyes / the gaze / body making  
then there're the words  
my ears close  
they follow my eyes

March 28, 2015

## Like This?

a Red Cross  
nurse takes down  
the last words  
of a British soldier  
in 1917  
he speaks quietly  
looking up at heaven  
she listens delicately  
looking down at him

March 29, 2015

## Romantic Ku

when I watch a movie  
with a stunning woman in it  
I curl until I disappear

---

March 30, 2015

## Cold Far

off the plane and I'm dead  
friends meet me and it's a buzz  
the drive is long  
sleep is there I hope  
maybe more  
I write and read  
I sleep 20 hours  
here is what I once wrote about a place and time like this

she was here she was just up there she could have easily  
turned to her window opened it and spoken down to me  
instead those around me kept walking without speaking  
heading for a place well defined but unknown and unknowable  
soon the woman was left behind she is still typing

March 31, 2015

## Truth Under A Dress

words are all I have left  
pain has pushed all away  
my mother had a secret  
and I found it out long after she died  
forever is one now after another  
Emily told us  
we can only believe  
she hid everything else from us

April 1, 2015

## Don't Read This

she told me once  
to stay together overnight  
would be too dangerous  
it passed over my head  
wonder / I still do  
there was never any hint  
I am too afraid to ask  
what she meant

April 2, 2015

## Big Project Arrived at in Small Parts

menard project  
how do we put together  
a paragraph of complex prose  
linked to topics  
linked to each other  
the stray thoughts  
is it small bits coalescing  
or abstract bits put together  
then expressed



April 3, 2015

## Simple Nothings

year drags on  
I sleep a lot sometimes  
I don't look forward much  
fatigue rules  
I wonder how to make a complex paragraph  
I dream about words

---

April 4, 2015

## Kurkjian

when I talk to old old friends  
they gush over my abilities  
I pay them no mind  
I mean  
I don't hear them  
I see what their texts are about to say  
and I don't read them  
I cannot  
my attention is not much  
paid to these  
I don't suggest changing anything

---

April 5, 2015

## Alone With You

as you can guess  
I like walking down slightly wet streets  
in Northern European cities  
at night in Winter  
I like to look up at lit windows  
and see the curtains closing  
I like shadows and silhouettes  
I like echoes of high heels just around the next corner  
the swish of a dress or the thump of an umbrella opening  
I like to see which windows shield readers  
which tv watchers  
which lovers  
which diners  
which cooks  
because I like loneliness  
but not lonely loneliness

---

April 6, 2015

## Ma

in front of me  
a wide black and white photo  
of my mother's high school classmates  
in 1933 and some are handsome  
some pretty / some ugly  
most bright faced / many in home-made clothes  
my mother could never imagine  
me looking at her face tonight  
more than 80 years later  
zooming in on just her

---

April 7, 2015

## In Merrimac, 1964

most evenings nothing would happen  
we'd sit in front of the tv after supper  
I'd practice the piano a little  
to change channels someone had to stand up and walk over to it  
in the winter the wind outside  
would rattle the house  
my father would make warm milk  
ovaltine really  
the three of us  
my mother smoking in her rocker  
my father standing behind a counter  
me lying on the couch  
time didn't matter as much then

April 8, 2015

## Absolution

sometimes the work  
goes late  
puzzles on puzzles  
tomorrow more of it

---

April 9, 2015

## Rled Rzepin

when we visited Poland it was just to the second  
exit in from the German border  
we stopped to take photos  
and grab a coffee  
it was Rzepin  
the waitress was a killer  
years from now people reading this could wonder  
how did I know she was a killer  
it was her blonde hair a tricky gait

---

April 10, 2015

## Call Still

people are out  
I sit at home programming  
my life is this computer  
computers always at the center  
for some years I biked hours a day  
that seemed like a good life  
can I get back to it  
will the wind be there for me  
will the downhill slopes  
still call



April 11, 2015

## Lost Track

progress today  
yesterday too  
it responds better to trigger words  
and there's a new session manager  
that varies how much it pays attention  
there are some easter eggs too  
and a new favicon for now  
I want things to get better

---

April 12, 2015

## If I Could

I look forward to too  
many trips / my fear rises  
I will need help somehow  
I would rather walk from the center of my small home town  
to my old farm  
find it there waiting for me  
as it was 50 years ago  
I would live there alone and write of my family's tragic lives  
I would walk the woods  
the little roads in them  
pick princess pines in late fall  
for Christmas  
toboggan down hills I don't own  
until one day they find me  
and everything I've written

April 13, 2015

## Let Me Go

I have the right to be forgotten  
not for dignity  
because dignity is for things getting better  
but for sanity  
because me in the past is not me now  
I want old versions gone  
I want to be forgotten  
let me go

April 14, 2015

## Projecting

I won't beg  
they can stop my project  
but I can stop too  
I don't want to stop the paycheck  
but I will if needed  
I just won't spend after that  
until it's safe

April 15, 2015

## Rabbits I Thought

forgotten  
I've craved it and got it in small amounts  
don't ask me anything  
I want long sleep nights  
I would like to hear my dog again  
barking out through her dog door  
and into the woods that were mine  
barking after something she never caught

April 16, 2015

## Anguished

I need a way to stop  
stress and work less  
I want to write and photograph  
I want to play like a kid  
ride my bike again  
be outside  
be more of me  
but it doesn't work that way  
now / but soon?

---

April 17, 2015

## Forget Me; Remember Me

sentimental story in front of me  
so sad but still a comedy  
about being who you are  
about passion  
I want an ending that excludes the me  
everyone (mostly) has come to know  
forget that person  
let me be the lonely kid  
lying in our field  
looking up  
as the cold air keeps the clouds  
moving quickly past

---

April 18, 2015

## With Luck A Story

there was a crook between two trunks  
of a small tree at the top of some stairs  
I knew nothing of and a third truck  
much smaller / the two trunks formed a seat somehow  
and the small one a gearshift and I would pretend  
to drive / what bothers me is I never wondered  
why the stone stairs went up there  
what was that little highspot  
and why the pump at one end and why was it flat all the way  
to the barn door  
later I learned a building was there  
and this was its entrance  
deduction / investigation / luck



April 19, 2015

## NH

in the north pines are tall and straight  
wind near their tops whistles  
the trees sway  
near the ground / calm / warm even  
a place to think of the future  
then in the future to remember  
the past

---

April 20, 2015

## Coop

I tried to make one of the old coops  
a clubhouse  
cleaning out the chicken poop  
scraping off the whitewash  
removing the roost boxes  
never really worked  
I got sick breathing the bad stuff  
it would have been a great clubhouse  
big and watertight  
far from our house  
behind the main barn  
never worked  
and I was lazy

April 21, 2015

## Like Buffalo

some days we walk down  
old streets that once were important  
now bordered by debris  
on a warm day there will be odors from the past  
there are lots of places to nap  
far away from here

April 22, 2015

## Riveredge

what separates the beautiful  
from the slim and pretty  
ideas and how to think  
I want to walk along the river's edge  
on an old sidewalk with a woman  
who knows the river well  
who can bring a laugh into her sadness  
be more than slim and  
more than pretty

April 23, 2015

## Paul Hudak

so everyone dies  
and now they all are  
the brilliant and not so  
pleasant lives and spectacular  
for some they report deaths early  
though I love reading I can't read that

April 24, 2015

## It Will

we read the good stories  
about a man about to die  
but what about what  
he hid away in his  
head and heart those years  
his secret secrets  
what will become unknowable  
when the uneverything happens

April 25, 2015

## Street in Haverhill

there's a street where sad people live  
they aren't sad per se  
I call them sad  
because he has lost his mind  
and she takes care of him  
for reasons we can't determine

April 26, 2015

## American Dream

I am ready to pack it in  
I spent the weekend sleeping  
and I was finally relaxed  
the roads pull me as usual  
I regret it will be light travel back home  
maybe I don't last the year



April 27, 2015

## Of A Flirty Season

tomboyish Spring  
the sea and the calyx fields  
all one coloration  
first womanizer  
falling  
on the half-rounded scanner  
a blue  
has moved without a zero blueberry  
season flood

April 28, 2015

## Bette Davis Eyes

dawn  
frosts the constrictor's receptors  
and the hooters start reasoning

starting June—  
thread and garlic starts  
all one start

starting cotton—  
a starting escherichia  
starting in my ear

a young,  
this time in fall  
just not a man

that time squark—  
without nag's back  
my timed timing

leaded liquid—  
a regular deathwatch  
leading my leg

as regularity liquidizes,  
the control of the kingwoods leads—  
noon leg

not this economic fulfillment,  
king of the herring,  
but your best beat

dying slaughterers,  
being killed—  
death in Boston

immortality death  
a world pussyfoots always  
into the crownbeard

April 29, 2015

## **EK et al**

there they were  
all those I knew and who knew me  
knew them all too well  
one of them spoke with ease  
we all were old  
the speeches put us to sleep  
the food was otherwise  
how silly was I

April 30, 2015

**Macadam**

we are on the road  
whistling through towns  
by them  
off the road there are barns and sheds winking small lights  
main houses with strong lights outside  
gravel driveways filled with pickups and vans  
if I open the window and ignore the hot wind zooming past  
I might hear crickets or cicadas  
on the road  
not dead yet

May 1, 2015

## Can I Say It?

a supporter moved on today  
my project in jeopardy  
I am wondering about the scene  
I like mechanisms  
my fears are piling up  
against the fence that separates  
us from the future

May 2, 2015

## Really Really

I watch videos and place myself beside them  
far away it seems  
I can tell it's bad when what I dream of is long ago  
my dreams are the colors of faded color film  
and I wonder  
will I be able to string enough words together  
to make an impression on the sad passing  
of the eternal world

---

May 3, 2015

## Grand Exit

the sand driveway from the road to the barn entrance  
grass in the middle / two ruts  
made from decades of wear  
trucks / tractors / wagons / wheelbarrows  
up a slight rise  
seems so ancient  
seems like a warm place to live  
I don't want the attention any more  
let me go



May 4, 2015

## Secrets Evolved

the western field  
sharp thin black branches webbing the sunset sky  
stalks of old straw and a rock  
woodchuck holes around it  
an old apple tree  
a back field  
how did it all come to this  
beginnings never spoken of but they weren't secrets then  
they are now

May 5, 2015

## What Partners Do

tell her  
a man said  
the other man paused then said it's a long story  
he told she  
she granted redemption  
his job was to love her

May 6, 2015

## On Top Of All That

I sometimes have a hard time  
believing how far we would bike  
in Illinois when we lived there  
then spend the day playing  
then ride back  
long summer day  
but many miles each way  
we were something  
and she would strip  
too

---

May 7, 2015

## First Nights

I met her outside my studio  
rented for trips / better than hotels  
snowing which was rare for the city  
we never spoke  
at first the language barrier  
then the seductiveness  
finally the lust  
every first winter night we spent under covers  
until 4pm the next day  
just touching  
this time we sat by the window  
watched streaks in the yellow light  
then she released herself and the night began  
all that mattered was the smell of her hair

---

May 8, 2015

## Day Two Away

then we'd eat a light dinner  
in a dark place  
she would order for us  
in her husky accent  
I would rarely look at her  
nor she me  
our rules were to look askance  
indirect / hidden passion  
at night only the lights from outside the windows  
orange and yellow  
touch not speech  
taste not sight  
her fingernails were soft on my head  
my back

---

May 9, 2015

## Not Magnificent

our spot's by  
the river / a bench where we watch  
the fast current and the boats that push up against it  
behind us the cathedral  
I warm my hands in winter between her thighs  
she watches women walk by across the river  
in their Frenchness and zest  
all I can do on Paris streets is walk just behind  
and watch with awed eyes

May 10, 2015

## What Does Not Beautiful Mean?

Paris is not beautiful  
French women are not beautiful  
their strength is allure  
human scale loveliness  
take the streets  
cobble and rough most places  
smelling of piss  
the buildings are drab for being a northern city  
the sky is pale  
used to be dog shit everywhere  
against this the strong colors of markets  
reds and greens and yellows of produce  
blacks and silvers and whites of fish  
pinks and whites and whites of shellfish  
reds of meat  
off-whites of chickens unless they are feathered  
many colors of bottles of oils and jars of spices  
see what I mean about allure  
human scale allure

May 11, 2015

## Not Time Tonight

I've found bugs galore and strive  
to fix them or patch around them  
to not much avail  
I have to call Scotland tomorrow  
for our trip  
this is just a progress report



May 12, 2015

## Woman Next Door

today I met a crazy woman  
I tried to calm her down  
her husband agreed to everything that was done  
he backed down  
I would too  
she is super crazy  
I am still flustered

May 13, 2015

## Is It Too Much

I suppose I am in the midwest now  
I haven't left yet but I avoid stress  
I'm full on in despair  
it will be warm there and I hope not crazy  
I want to chill  
I need rest and nothing to think about

---

May 14, 2015

## Pi Zza

tonight a good pizza  
Nancy couldn't stop talking  
I didn't recognize her at first  
we ate good pizza but not overate  
cabs both ways  
a long walk to and from the Arch today  
a warm day not humid  
I hope we make it home

May 15, 2015

## Gradual Difference

ceremonies over  
hot day then some rain  
a good meal and conflicting conversations  
I felt alone little  
didn't feel alone at all  
felt a little healthier  
felt like the story is unwinding

May 16, 2015

## Finally Near The End

going back to the small womb  
forgetting the special things  
cancel my history  
let my dreams live as if they never were passed by  
I think it's going to be a long long time

May 17, 2015

## Ass Symptotics

when she walks away  
the sadness saved up in the world  
pours into a hole  
never seen before  
inside you

May 18, 2015

## Valuation

too many days spent  
doing other people's business  
I won't be a slave much longer  
I've worked hard to achieve a strong result  
few see the value  
value  
it's about science  
not value

---

May 19, 2015

## Slave to Love

looking back is all  
there really is  
at this stage / I am a memory  
loser / finding my way toward  
a woman of fantasy  
I was taught the strange  
finishing moves and gestures  
there are many I would love  
many I did



May 20, 2015

## Long For

when will I be home  
too much travel starting last week  
lasting all summer  
almost / the world back in black and white  
I want just to write

May 21, 2015

## Slave To The End

how terrible  
to work to the day you die  
for someone else  
your life is here and it's yours  
not the man who pays you  
be grateful and hateful

May 22, 2015

## Being Explained

the beauty of casual wording  
things slowing down  
ready to stop  
the usual place  
at this time  
casually explained

May 23, 2015

## Eva

forty one years too early  
the one zipped by  
she shone  
she owned  
she drew us all  
out / she was regal and funny  
beauty of time  
I fell for her  
it is too late for me  
I was her last choice anyway

May 24, 2015

## Fingering

suppose love  
suppose a lit day  
on the street corner  
eating codfish and buttered bash  
suppose a the one passed by  
would you dare

May 25, 2015

## Old Enemies

they say hate is a potion  
rubbed on the ego  
sandpaper on the eyes  
I could see it  
but

May 26, 2015

## Rui Paula

her face dour  
hypnotic as she grabs you in her eyes  
she smiles to others  
not you  
I am as one lost  
as her gaze heads  
for the restaurant door

May 27, 2015

## Out

I have lost the urge  
to join and work  
it is a hard place to find comfort  
it is something I can drop



May 28, 2015

## Bye Bye

I am done with my contributions  
to this group  
I worked hard for not much  
no thanks eg  
I hope to make it home  
I will eventually

May 29, 2015

## On Plan

sugar girl soured on me  
an old train instead of the hipster one  
and where'd she sit  
by the window as the old track  
rusted alongside the green river  
let's go

---

May 30, 2015

## Why Always Sleep

to airport early and still half asleep  
last night my buddy couldn't get it done  
today it's a long haul  
no one in Spain so far likes to help  
so I didn't cooperate much  
but I wasn't rude  
just not a pal  
I want to sleep

May 31, 2015

## When I'm Too Tired

poets are dopes  
don't live in our world  
make livings by hobbling  
when they write it's all about frogs and leaves  
sometimes / I know I know / cats in windows  
and classical music  
yuckoente / as they say

June 1, 2015

## On To Summer

so it was a nice week  
aside from the working and crazy folk  
I spent time wondering about writing  
how it gets in the way of writing  
yes I meant that  
now you need to figure out what I meant I meant

June 2, 2015

## Sim Ann

working for the poet  
making schedules  
sigh  
what torture because it distracts  
me from real work  
but for Hass  
why not

June 3, 2015

## As Best He Can

progress on the scheduler  
but I notice I'm missing New England  
the code is delicate  
but when Hass asks  
Gabriel answers

June 4, 2015

## Female Form

woman is a platform  
I mean this positively  
the worlds are built on that platform  
life and love / the experience of passing on and  
passing it on  
without a woman to watch  
there is no reason to cry



June 5, 2015

## Truth All Over The Place

the beauty of coincident deaths  
an illusion of storytelling theory  
an equilibrium they tell me  
their real story was of interruption  
and sporadic intensity  
I cried at the ending

June 6, 2015

## At Once I Knew I Was Not Magnificent

while we were there planting  
several women stood by nearby / graveside  
one came over to talk  
she said how beautiful were the irises  
how much she enjoyed seeing them  
as she was visiting her mother's gravesite  
were we the gardeners of the family?

we explained that our very good friend (you)  
carefully tended to the plantings every year  
but you lived in CA and had been unavoidably kept  
from coming out this spring so we were planting  
the geraniums this year for you  
she said her mother died just a couple years before  
and that just one day ago her mother's dearest and best friend  
had also died / she teared up a bit

we exchanged another pleasantry or so  
then she departed  
and we finished planting

June 7, 2015

## Sometimes Losing is a Habit

feels so far down  
feels like bad luck  
what will it cost to fix our house  
will be be forced to the laundromat  
first time in 40 years  
what a comedown

June 8, 2015

## Tonight As It Cools

today two problems solved  
hot as all get out  
making plans but I want to stop that  
I wanted to like some of those things  
but the cost swelled and I wilted  
nowhere but alone here

---

June 9, 2015

## Speak With Her

the paths people take  
outlined in an odd blue  
where people pushed themselves with small efforts  
I can see my road  
as if at night / the routes I'd drive  
wandering to find someone  
I think myself  
are like these others have taken  
but mine repeat as if traversed  
by a maniac  
was that me  
I stopped places but those there then  
are now gone and their memories too  
mine of them / theirs of me

June 10, 2015

## In A Death Garden

if the poets call  
groundhogs will lumber from den to den  
in cemeteries all over the country  
other countries too  
poets are getting ready to call  
they hate technology  
though

---

June 11, 2015

## Gently Wondering

in a town now downed beneath  
someone's like the man who through  
two generations made me was made  
a man I can never know  
the place I can never go  
women I can't quiz  
only while I live will this be a puzzle  
I will solve it with my stories  
and why not

June 12, 2015

## Ink Well Awake

my program is relentless  
in its creativity  
it doesn't tire  
doesn't get distracted  
(much)  
it surprises me with its clever connections  
surprises me with its dumb mistakes  
build in learning / that might help  
only how



---

June 13, 2015

## Argentina Upscale

somewhere on the other side of the world  
someone built a city  
in that city an old hotel  
has been remodeled time after time  
because everyone loved the view  
of the streets at night  
and in a room there now on a mid-upper floor  
a woman beyond what I can imagine  
is spreading her legs  
and waiting for the end of the song  
before taking off into the Southern sky  
in foreign air

June 14, 2015

## Down a Road Opposed

I have made many bad choices  
written too many bad things  
loved too many bad women  
I want something to calm me in these lingering days  
I wish my memory had kept up  
now I patch with makeup  
travel in time / travel by person  
I limit myself to expand limits

June 15, 2015

## Funny CS Joke

I found a way to make a new world  
it's called programming  
in it I'm a stranger  
who magics mistakes  
I like the feel of parentheses  
others crave types  
I'm not that type

June 16, 2015

## Summer Canal

what do you think it would mean if a woman wrote this

it isn't like his erection  
they bone—  
our Summer canal

if a man wrote it  
if a computer  
I would answer

many lives in the screw  
and not bastardized yet—  
the death of death

June 17, 2015

## Off Track

not on today  
words not coming right or well  
things not working well  
but I am catching up a little  
sometimes I wonder if I write too simply

---

June 18, 2015

## Cool Grass Dream

last night my dream was of time travel  
to the old house and the most vivid  
part was lying down in a cool bed of clover  
by the kitchen door  
the walkway from the front of the house to the back  
and gazing at the grass / at the house / at the garden  
at the oak tree  
then the woman who would sell the house stripped down  
and we held each other until I told her my age  
prevented everything  
it was beautiful / sad / disarming

---

June 19, 2015

## Like Missy P

she was beautiful  
when I saw her sitting at the Moustache café in Porto  
her friend was a beautiful man  
they were paired  
his life was on its way  
to being beautiful  
with her  
when they stood up to leave she turned away  
and I watched the backs of her legs  
propel her away from me  
as from all like me  
they were ordinary  
her legs  
a little fat

June 20, 2015

## Heading to Scotland

my program is a surprise  
even when I find bugs  
they are friendly ones  
I poke through ideas  
code blankets the world with drunken sardines  
and the control room of the banquet



June 21, 2015

## Information Hiding

how to frame an argument as fiction  
how to find pretty words to make it vivid  
details to make it real  
information hidden in writing  
writing is not information

June 22, 2015

## This Is The End

lots of ways to look at those passed on  
just a chance meet up  
just a lifelong friendship  
I wonder why I am a pusher away  
why no one speaks to me  
some day the end will find its  
way to me

---

June 23, 2015

## Sundown Art

every night growing up I'd  
watch the after sunset sky  
I'd hope for a dark stain on porcelain  
I'd settle for porcelain alone  
or a bluster / maybe a poof of snow  
through the night I'd make a mental painting  
of a day that could end with those colors  
that temperament / in the morning  
I'd wake fully forgotten of the meaning of the canvas  
the end of yesterday made

June 24, 2015

## On Bath Street

occasionally one would be stunning  
tight short skirt  
over leggings  
so sudden would one be  
that the mind could not keep up  
you'd hear yourself say  
what?

June 25, 2015

## To From Edinburgh

today it was rain  
and a long walk  
and so-so food  
a long train ride  
two of them  
now muscle pain  
and a need to sleep

June 26, 2015

## Health and Marriage

sadly for many  
what's written needs to be read  
studied / interpreted  
when it's their pet thinking it's great  
when it's not reading is imperialism  
ha ha ha  
I say

June 27, 2015

## Scottish Genius

in the botanic garden  
the women of Glasgow spread  
themselves like cheap laundry  
on the lawns and read or text  
few of them are electric  
but they are all  
the men of Glasgow have  
aye

June 28, 2015

## Rain Again

here rain is everywhere  
we soak while walking  
more rain than the Amazon  
women hide umbrellas  
but they have them  
they have everything



June 29, 2015

## Obviousnecessity

we live in a time  
when hatred is king  
where the rich want slaves  
and create the conditions  
that make them so  
it doesn't take long  
to figure out how to hate them

June 30, 2015

## Just Me Baby

maybe I should bail  
bad room and too much heat  
or find a hotel and drive each day  
I don't like being a pauper  
when I don't need to be  
I want something calm and lovely  
I am too old for anything less

July 1, 2015

## Captain of My Heart

if only I had a list of questions to ask  
if only the desperation of my parents were something I could correct  
I would be on the farm now hiding from everyone  
not worrying about my overlords  
or maybe it's time to take the ultimate seriously  
this is all I ever dream of

July 2, 2015

## Portland

too unfriendly a place maybe  
need to find out a little more  
need to decide  
maybe it's not worth it  
maybe too much to do otherwise

July 3, 2015

## Stop Fixing My Typos

she can't escape her brand  
speaking of things as grammar  
it was cute fifty years ago  
she's maybe too old to see it  
the space between the moon and its noun  
who cares about the space  
I care about moons  
I care about nouns

July 4, 2015

## Fireworks Above

something like this  
twenty hours in bed  
sick and nauseous  
in bed so long my back went out  
will this be like the end  
the fireworks seemed on top of the house

July 5, 2015

## **Ink Well Blues**

my program writes great  
but revises poorly  
too many not great words and phrases  
I've tried to beef it up  
how long do I need to hang on

---

July 6, 2015

## Our Ethel

we recover slowly from memory  
the dark evening we campaigned  
and met Ethel  
Ethel Cullinane class of '67  
she invited us that next weekend  
to a game at Haverhill High  
we went / when she saw us in the light  
she was convinced  
it wasn't us  
no not us



---

July 7, 2015

## Ethel Too

the night was rainy  
we campaigned without passion  
school assignment after all  
November / it was dark  
no one was interested in our candidate  
later we went to party headquarters  
we met Ethel there  
we talked a long time  
we were from the small-town school  
she from Haverhill  
she asked us to the football game  
we said yes thinking something was meant by it  
nothing was

July 8, 2015

## Just Air and Sweet Barbecue Pit

he gives his tack signaling devices a buck  
to communicate if there's some deed.  
the only other telephone message is the sex  
of libidinous weather and persuadable bank

July 9, 2015

## River Dream

I am not back yet  
not back home  
the river is likely slipping downstream  
as it does / the rocks are exposed  
slowly polished  
birds find what they need by it or nearby  
I would be ready for a week or two there to remake myself  
how many more times can I make it  
I can almost hear the flow

July 10, 2015

## Ouch

too much work this week  
the simple breezes need to take charge  
I have two more hard days  
then a trip / will it all work  
hard eye work maybe one more day  
pain not friends

July 11, 2015

## Quick Wrong

tomorrow I pack  
final preparations  
why does it take me days to get ready  
soon I want to get back to writing real poems

July 12, 2015

## Asbestos

I've read a lot of poems  
that celebrate butterflies  
stuff like that  
sure it's all pretty  
pretty butterflies  
pretty poems  
but serious  
or boring  
go home and eat somewhere sweet  
like all typos  
the worst are best

---

July 13, 2015

## Dog Cemetery

there's a path through the woods  
leading to where dogs have been buried  
I never go there  
it's a small field growing smaller  
saplings leaning in  
sky closing  
those dogs were my dogs  
my friends buried them for me  
and said some words I wrote  
I was just practicing

---

July 14, 2015

## Road to the Observatory Site

when I was a kid  
I wanted my lines to be lines from books  
how long to cut the road to the observatory site  
I'll have it done in one week  
it took a day  
because there was already a road  
and only small bushes blocked the way  
my father thought I was lazy  
instead I was being dramatic  
he never changed his mind



---

July 15, 2015

## Passion as Imagination

there is an imaginary sun that when  
it sets sets the edge of town on fire  
and in that fire women flame their passions  
and the men around them burn in their loins  
from where I sit the town's all orange  
and the women red and weeping  
join me as I join this scene  
as a lone looker

July 16, 2015

## In a Wood

somewhere north of my home  
a mountain rises that I could climb  
and my parents could and we'd listen  
to the music while watching the movies  
of then

the way I am now  
all options are gone  
the green dark woods are lonely for me  
they weep while it rains

July 17, 2015

## Body Wills

today a long drive and the bodybuilders  
smelled of liquid tan  
I reeled and left  
the cut girls scared me  
they all looked old  
no matter how old their asses looked

July 18, 2015

## Find Out Less

today a long drive and the hotel is welcome  
tomorrow I return home  
and more work to be done begins  
to be done  
my interest grows weak and seeks  
the death penalty

July 19, 2015

## Royal Mile

mother and daughter  
different noses  
same mouths and chins  
sweet / pretty / aligned alongside  
it was raining of course in Edinburgh  
the rings they told me what for

July 20, 2015

## What You Want To Be

at the end we may just slump  
and be gone  
we enter nothing but white  
nothing written on us  
we depart scribbled upon and confused  
confused at both ends  
many branches scratch  
many nails dig  
the gaps covered with soft kisses and touches  
are few / are none  
what we find from the past of others  
would kill them in their surprise  
my mother stares at me from her class picture

July 21, 2015

## On A Partway Up

I am sitting halfway up the tough mountain  
at the point where easy turns to hard  
on a rock that would be grand comfort higher up  
I can climb no higher  
a boy reaches a point not far below me and sits his rock  
he shouts up  
you are wonderful / you were my dream  
one of us weeps

July 22, 2015

**Alone Naturally**

every now and then I find the tracks of people I once knew  
they sweat happiness after a long string of average luck  
their patina is a rust  
they've traveled long ways  
they cluster by each other  
I stand alone with only one or two  
the choices



July 23, 2015

## Who Told You?

chickens are great  
I once had a glass of hens  
they represented terse condensations  
in the silly-season Moon  
hot initially  
then suffering

July 24, 2015

## Merrimac Dreaming

I read about Merrimac  
small and unpleasant  
I lived there for 23 years  
ages 1—23  
haven't been there for a year now  
I want something warm to happen

July 25, 2015

## Oblong Reminder

many have left  
both the earth and my memory  
they all seem so important  
I hunt them down and write them down  
I search for my past in the present

July 26, 2015

## Stop I Say Write

a lovely woman lives in northern Europe  
she cannot say a word to me  
she drinks / eats superbly  
dresses in long scarves and nonlinear skirts  
her thoughts are formed in ways surreal to me  
my impression is a jumble  
cold is all I recall  
I never met her  
I've read we'd be perfect  
but I think I wrote that  
her name doesn't match her red hair  
I think it's artificial  
I spent hours fiddling with that color  
and the spelling of her name  
I was not coordinated enough to do both so each drifted  
I watched her walk away down a dark street in northern Europe  
one cold night when the snow was the thing  
that was the closest I came to punctuation that year

July 27, 2015

## Wally

the old ladies are clucking their poems  
they sound like they were written 100 years ago  
all the old ladies love all the poems

July 28, 2015

## Wally Silly

tonight I learned about the bermuda triangle  
the cat thing in the lap  
an old woman writing of someone just like her  
and some doctors of this and that  
I spoke of the attraction of possums dead on the road

July 29, 2015

## I Am No

I can't swallow who I am  
I need even more backgrounding

July 30, 2015

## Bad Turing Test

what is wrong with me  
why can't I be normal



July 31, 2015

## Oswego

the heat followed me to my car  
I pushed it out after I closed the windows  
on the way home  
the sun pressed its revenge

August 1, 2015

## Redhead

a stupendous woman walked by my café table  
I was drinking strong coffee with heavy milk  
I held the coffee cup near my mouth  
until she passed around the corner  
my life passed in front of my eyes

August 2, 2015

## Feet Don't Fail Me Now

I landed on this planet  
expecting my feet to work  
but they failed  
because feet and water only mix

---

August 3, 2015

## Farm Attitude

as I fade out  
I dream of having stayed on the farm  
with my world circumscribed by its boundarird  
only what comes in  
no socializing but in the fields or woods  
instead the tears of distance and strange  
instead the bad hope of fame  
the silly hope of fortune  
no hope of happiness

---

August 4, 2015

## Catherine in Berlin

there was a downpour  
and we had ice cream sundaes in the eastern part of Berlin  
my student and his gf  
she was severe but kind  
both grew up in the former east  
surprising how many friends of mine did  
sometimes I visualize her scowling  
sometimes smiling as she helps me  
an old man / find a toilet

---

August 5, 2015

## And We'll Talk

roads don't quit  
often / even ones unused for decades  
keep their ruts going strong  
under cover of overhanging trees  
the midlines fill with grass and brush  
but the tamped down tire ruts persist  
through writing / through maps  
I follow them and walk them  
perhaps someone I know will  
one day pop up on one  
of them

August 6, 2015

**Build Me One Too**

some of the days are weapons  
piercing and bashing into us  
the ground / shaking leaves and bending branches  
a bright flash of light near the horizon  
a steeply angled wind into trees and rattling shutters  
we spent millennia fabricating how to build shelters  
now to work on our brains

August 7, 2015

**Below**

down below the narrow ridge  
dried farmland growing nothing  
quonsets broiling everything inside  
hardy trees not ready to give up their green  
the air up here is warm not quite hot  
the conversation is irrelevant  
my poetry sees the dire farmland below



August 8, 2015

## Nagasaki

the whole discussion of the effects  
of the atomic bomb will be phrased  
in terms of three kinds of energy / no other more mysterious  
or immeasurable forces acted  
these were all these were enough

August 9, 2015

**Aki Akahori, Writer of Mysteries**

along a beach some young woman walks  
Japanese I'll bet in a teardrop shaped hat  
it's after sunset but before dark  
fog and clouds strangle contrast  
when she walks her slow walk her hips  
thrust a bit and a song like an untuned piano  
delves the grey blue sea and sky  
she stops / she stares down  
later in her hotel room miles away  
the lights are all an orange yellow  
like a noire movie made on the cheap  
the curve of her hip makes a bed impression  
and staring up with her rounded eyes  
she imagines a lover hidden in the fog  
waiting for her tears to be wiped away  
waiting for a landmark when the contrast returns

---

August 10, 2015

## Writer of Me Writing This

she draws a bath as the old way of writing goes  
her hair tied back as if she plans to step out  
her straight razor / a throwback / is very sharp  
she tests it on her wrists and a sound above her  
reminds her of drips / later instead she downs a cosmo  
having read about them in an airline magazine  
a man who wants to love her forever buys her drink  
but can only smell her fragrance drift away  
watching her we imagine what hides below her floor  
she wrote of me writing this of her / and in her work  
I was like a dripping fog hugging the heavy coast

---

August 11, 2015

## Holcomb I Suppose

on Kansas there is a long driveway  
that years ago figured in a famous crime  
Chinese elms lined it both sides  
almost exactly East-West the West  
end where the crime exploded  
once lined with shade now a dozen remain  
fifty years and no water with the river run dry  
I stopped at El Rancho and grabbed a Kalbac Yes  
back when it was Hartman's I grabbed pancakes  
I might have bought the house had I had more  
my wife would look on / she would have visited twice a year

August 12, 2015

## In a Mood

everyone finds their way to grief  
sadness at the start  
at the end  
many ends  
you would think there's a reason for all of it  
I watched many men digging and covering  
putting the sod back over  
waiting till the last of the family leaves  
waiting until dark rises

August 13, 2015

## Rising on Rails

sometimes the trains are acting funny  
slowing down to pick up folks but not  
at stations / along the rails / forlorn  
people wondering where they will sleep  
not catching out but catching up  
catching on caught like a catfish  
banged on the head

August 14, 2015

## Be Do

a bad poem grabs you  
while it's first being written  
forces bad words into your fingers  
phrases with deep ruts  
when it's over you cry  
out for your mama because  
that's what gunshot men do

August 15, 2015

## Sadness

suppose you are close friends with a family  
been to many of their weddings for forty years  
then you never even hear of the most recent one  
do you wonder about close



August 16, 2015

## In a Haze

what if you could find out real answers  
who you are / why you are  
what is behind it all  
sometimes when I visit the quiet places  
where groundhogs roam  
and the wind is noticeable  
I almost hear the answers being whispered

August 17, 2015

## Hot or Not

when the heat is like fog  
we dream of frozen nights  
when the lights shine blue  
and the path under our boots crunch  
we make our own fog under heavy quilts  
with close friends of a persuasion we adore  
crickets? / stiff wind in bare branches  
part of the life of love  
in a world made fog

August 18, 2015

## Sad Girl

there's a syrup bogging in my head  
I am sweating from overwork and underachievement  
I hope my cough doesn't undercut my keynote tomorrow  
I need to keep talking to overwhelm it  
then I'm done for a while

August 19, 2015

## All Dead For Sure

this is the sad girl  
she swings my neck like hawthorn  
I am ringed by undesire  
I want a group of children  
in an old picture to have one of them alive  
82 years later  
such a small number

August 20, 2015

## Rest Over

lots of little problems  
I want them to hole up while  
I recover / I want to wander  
New England roads and paths  
see where things are  
just rest over and over

---

August 21, 2015

## Fly Fish

some days people fish from jets of rock  
flaming in from the river shore  
they arrange themselves so that any photograph  
taken of them will produce a classic Rockwell print  
I snap them anyway  
I've never seen them catch a fish  
maybe they did  
I've never touched the water in that river  
I fear the strong current  
even when the river is still  
can I ever understand this  
the river flows

August 22, 2015

**RVB**

one day on the bridge someone pointed  
out the pier that a century ago was abandoned  
it was outlined clear in green growth under clear  
shallow water this one day  
looking at this river right here for 40 years  
I never saw it  
I photographed it  
all who saw it wept with delight  
at the surprise so far hidden and light

August 23, 2015

## Cousin

today I spoke to someone long lost  
she was so excited to find me  
she made little sense  
her life I think  
is simple  
I need to go to her and tell her what I know  
if her heart is able to take it



August 24, 2015

## Reving

I sit on the banks of breakdown  
I rev my engine too high to achieve what I do  
rev too high too long and I break  
I will break soon if I can't reverse  
everything I try to do is very hard

August 25, 2015

## Gorgeous Tonight

if god sees us naked and not as people  
but as souls do he and we exist somewhere else  
too or instead  
is our world a thing he made but ignores  
like the bits struggling in our software  
written high up and clear but in fact  
nutty and chaotic / approximate  
is our surely his maybe / his surely our wtf  
if so  
if all so  
how can road I start on end in his garage

August 26, 2015

## Form

careless / a fib  
there's been no change  
a reasonable interpretation  
they are careless too

---

August 27, 2015

## God's Lunch

God bought a burrito  
carne asada with pintos  
guac and a pesto style sauce  
a beer and folded legs on a side street sidewalk  
He watched homeless pick for food  
watch big cars go by  
His memory's good  
I'll see you all one day  
just wait

August 28, 2015

## We Notice

when it's time to be creative  
it's time to start watching  
noticing and marking things for later  
the hard part is taking off the leash  
the collar / opening the barred door

August 29, 2015

## Oh Shit

the qb rang out and the ball was hiked  
hike-en-em / bike-en-em  
as Jimmy used to shout  
the left-side pass rusher came hard and tight  
a pair of stacked blitzers came through the A gap  
the qb threw high and deep to hit a spot  
the right-side slot receiver ran to that spot  
caught it over his shoulder  
scampered for a td  
the qb raised his head and pointed two fingers  
to the sky and thanked the lord  
above  
the lord was talking to his buds watching games and such  
He said  
the falsely righteous believe I am fair to all equally  
that I love without conditions  
hell no  
I take sides  
do the wrong thing and you're fucked  
I hate Seattle and that qb knows it  
I nudged that ball  
and I accept his thanks

August 30, 2015

## Short Essay

there is something I always do wrong  
it turns people off  
makes them turn away  
hate me  
I'm not sure what it is  
I try to do nothing instead  
that makes it worse

---

August 31, 2015

## This Is Our Home

lilacs by the old foundation  
not empty but an old dumpsite  
and the lilac bush tall and full  
never lacking good panicles  
never lacking good smells  
I ran past it every day  
on errands to tell ma or daddy  
my memories sparse  
it was part of world  
my world  
a world gone and now just stories



September 1, 2015

## Home Home

soon I will do my wandering and unwind  
even if the leaves don't cooperate  
even if it's cold and rains  
even if friends turn their backs  
I need the rest and the rest need to back  
off

September 2, 2015

## Soon Trip

there is a caution upwind  
the night rains are swarming in  
I feel a danger somewhere  
I'm badly stressed / I must stress this  
I think a wind will wind up in my wheelhouse  
where will things be

---

September 3, 2015

## Why So Old

I could hear it now  
the soft brush of river past bank  
night whisp of wind down the river's path  
behind closed doors and shuttered windows  
something special has just completed  
now it's the time for books and new music  
in the dull part of town  
they listen to old old old old music

---

September 4, 2015

## This Was My Home

the last time I saw my old house  
it was dripping bad insulation  
fiberglass cloth and newspapers  
we were that poor I suppose  
I believed my father dug quality  
but he dug getting it done  
the shingles were off  
the walls were skeletons  
the yard overgrown with unpleasant weeds  
not the type photographers pat  
keeping it what it was was too  
much for the builder who bulldozed  
then built something of no character

September 5, 2015

## In Short

slowly the world undresses  
as if the future depends on it  
we read what's revealed and all it  
brings is sadness  
we can only write it all down in case someone lives to read it  
the short lines matter

---

September 6, 2015

## She Is Here

it starts when a woman steps into you  
looking up at you  
she is in control always  
to push yourself is criminal  
with luck she will lie close with you tonight  
you can never forget her / her smell  
her yielding skin  
many other things could happen  
these are the ones to remember

---

September 7, 2015

## Suppose

we aren't who we are supposed to be  
we should have stayed close to home  
taken simpler roads as mistaken Frost readers would say  
maybe it's time to simplify and slow  
be more who we are supposed to be  
the seed that falls too far finds itself alone  
in the end / its roots creep back

September 8, 2015

## Some Poems

I saw a picture of a family  
today / the comments were  
this is so wonderful  
beautiful family!  
some emoticons celebrating the sentiment  
enjoy your family!!!  
they were ugly  
except one woman  
who was ok only  
really / I wondered  
about life for a while  
then went back to writing poetry



---

September 9, 2015

## Lucky Child

I will sit by the river tomorrow  
eat food that's bad for me  
photograph what I always photograph  
drive where I always drive  
be good to myself best I can  
read by the river  
sit by some graves  
talk to some people  
wonder about the past  
the future / try to be in the present  
live like a lucky child for a day or two

September 10, 2015

## Dev Null

all went ok  
report tomorrow  
tired as can be  
I wonder where randomness comes from

---

September 11, 2015

## Good Vibrations

somewhere alive today  
a woman is learning everything she  
needs though doesn't know it  
doesn't suspect  
in her mind and heart  
with her hands and eyes and hair  
to finally find me  
help me die  
and the spend the last of her days  
watching her tears grow small  
and dry up

---

September 12, 2015

## At Graveside

after the hot sun  
in the open air  
and the burial service  
for her ashes  
after I read my small poem  
poorly but slowly  
at her house they praised the work  
and thanked me  
all I could think of was my old  
buried and cold tonight

September 13, 2015

## Not a Typo

what I learned today  
the intrigue / the interest  
makes everyone less a hero  
and more a character  
I am filled withun

September 14, 2015

## Nuts

the past is a snake pit  
everything broken and bad when you look close  
I am afraid of each turn  
the world just stops and laughs  
I try to figure it out

September 15, 2015

## Not Here

the perfect late summer day  
I spent it talking not driving  
not sitting by the river  
not enjoying the place of my home  
I am wasting

September 16, 2015

## Just News

I'm too tired to puzzle it out  
details of deeds and mortgages  
I'll ask Aunt Leeann later



September 17, 2015

## Home Finally

finally away from the craziness  
I hope to hear from them rarely  
I didn't relax or enjoy my spots  
it was all talking and confrontation  
why oh why

---

September 18, 2015

## They Are Coming

sometimes the craziness creeps up to your door  
except the door is your head  
and really it's your eyes and ears  
you read the craziness and it's like a potion  
you must answer but sense says you must not  
it's a pretty color / a warm melody  
soon / you're crazy  
ha ha

---

September 19, 2015

## Somewhere I Make It

somewhere a fine woman walks home  
each evening / she has no idea  
she had been waiting for a one  
who never arrived / her perfect match  
she doesn't know she is lonely  
doesn't know something is missing  
it is / only a spirit would know  
I see her always / walking away

September 20, 2015

## Yet Yikes

I am found craziness  
and no way  
yet  
to stop it  
keep it away  
find a better result  
from all sides  
like crazy clowns  
who love me too much  
and why?

September 21, 2015

## In 2015

the effect makes things look old  
like a Civil War photo  
it's just a background glow  
through blur and screening  
someone might see it in 50 years  
remark on how old-fashioned things  
were in 2015

September 22, 2015

## Not Far

the puzzle of difficult research  
it's not the form of what I'm doing  
but the hardness of the thinking  
I'm not stumped yet  
but not far

September 23, 2015

## Telephone Tag

some believe righteousness needs hate  
love some needs hate some  
they seem better at one or the other  
when someone tells you God doesn't love you  
maybe it's just a message being passed on

September 24, 2015

## Find Your Beach

day of talks and sadness  
I am now not good with my feeling  
I didn't get my vacation  
back home and now my head a buzz  
I want to stop everything



---

September 25, 2015

## In Camera

so what is there to say  
in a Midwest city hot with the heat  
of a pennant run  
with a team playing right now  
five blocks away  
where old buildings sweat staying up  
where good food is a hidden fortune  
my camera waits for a great shot  
to walk up to it

September 26, 2015

## In Town

the beauty standing there in tight skirts  
why do they do it  
I couldn't watch  
I went home and cried

---

September 27, 2015

## South of Philo

does she still live there?  
farm south of Philo  
no prospects we could see 40 years ago  
all that time alone  
even after we took her to the porn theater  
showed her a movie even I still remember  
a cloudy day and I stopped to photograph her place  
I thought of knocking  
but then how do I explain?

September 28, 2015

## Quick Tonight

we find the range too far  
the words are all silly  
I have trouble explaining things  
my words lack working

September 29, 2015

## Original Pancake House

at the pancake house  
two women caught my eye  
both larger than models  
both young and vital  
friendly but professional  
would I have stayed if offered  
hard to know now  
road not taken and all that

---

September 30, 2015

## Jane Keeler

her barn is not a New England barn  
patterned on English models  
but German or Swiss  
no drivethroughs to make unloading hay easy  
hay wasn't the point  
you kept hogs not cows  
they didn't roam and you fed them close to the barn  
the expanses were wide  
she lives there still I think  
she must be old now  
like me  
her poems are long gone  
mine just get worse

---

October 1, 2015

## Central Illinois

you know it's flat there  
small rolling hills though  
mostly flat  
see how far you can see  
a row of trees  
some barns and silos  
grain elevators  
must be a town over there  
and over there  
when the wind blows  
many people fall in love

October 2, 2015

## Glory Jo

when I look at the old movies  
so clear the love she showed  
the smiles / the bright eyes  
that's all gone now  
long gone  
I need to wonder even harder  
what do I do that makes that happen



---

October 3, 2015

## Witch Cramp

we cleaned out the basement today  
tomorrow for a while we'll work on the rest of the house  
the debris box is likely too small  
we might order a second one  
we'll see tomorrow  
my hand cramped into shapes distorted like a witch's hand  
no pain / just a crazy shape  
nothing else improved

October 4, 2015

## Like the Wind

I wonder sometimes  
how much of my mother is part of me  
the sometimes quick anger  
the vindictive strain  
the sharp wording  
just a fool trying to be my father instead

---

October 5, 2015

## That Day

someone/she will play a sad song on a tin whistle  
by the bridge of my dreams when it's over  
women will gather / some will weep / others watch  
perhaps a word will be spoken  
I will be so far away my memory will be white  
and encased in granite

October 6, 2015

## Instead

instead of a wise word a dumb trail  
instead of a bowl of cereal a little reptile  
instead of singing a short stool  
instead of a fantastic story a word to the wise

October 7, 2015

## Truth vs Beauty

when you look at the true beauties  
notice that their faces are literally painted on  
it will make you wonder about truth

October 8, 2015

## Critical Voice

I try only twice to understand what someone has written  
at most  
when they fail I just walk on past  
I like to be critical because it's fun  
lots of people don't get that  
I should probably stop

October 9, 2015

## Bike Home

sitting on their porch  
the west beyond a garden and low trees  
a gap it looks like  
where a river sits  
her father has told her to talk to me  
she at least  
sits there still and cute  
she seems eager for something  
something from me?  
I have singing in her parlor  
then the ring  
two short / a pause / two short  
she leaps to answer  
she now is alive

---

October 10, 2015

## Never Cold

the cold comes up on you  
when the dark folds around you  
I'm sitting on a bench at the edge of a foreign park  
the tops of the trees are flirted by flakes  
across a brown expenditure of dead-seeming grass  
a woman in a long coat down to her heels  
and a squaring hat and scarf  
walks with high dispatch toward a domestic night  
will she cook / will she smoke outside her flat  
will she invite some  
one in  
I'm chilling / I might nod  
then what will dawn mean



---

October 11, 2015

## Bel Ami

she's a woman now  
and can decide like a woman whom she loves  
and how  
but when she was a girl  
say sixteen  
many flocked to her and she had to decide then too  
then she was innocent allure  
now she is a peg in the shape of a bell

October 12, 2015

## In A Word

my pillow is always with me  
some people look cross-eyed at it  
it connects me to my old couch  
the big gap when I ignored it  
middle years  
I was ashamed of my childishness  
no more  
I feel comfortable

October 13, 2015

## Worse is Worse

after months the bathroom repairs are done  
worse than my old man's paranoid guess  
the lesson / no matter how bad it could be  
it can be worse

---

October 14, 2015

## Hi Lo

places / the future stopped  
time clawed away everything else  
dust and papers blowing down main  
paint peeling revealing pink beneath  
leaning against a broken wall  
God in jeans and low-pulled Stetson  
He's waiting for the wind to stop  
He's used to breaking things  
down the street only one bar's open  
He heads there for beer / the Hi Lo  
for His whisky / it's Comeau's

October 15, 2015

## Like This

I like glossy-coated seizure-alert dogs  
I like untuneful Newfoundlands  
I like congratulatory tarantulas  
I like semiconductive Tibetan mastiffs  
I like reconstructive crab-eating foxes  
I like unprintable Brittany spaniels  
I like glossy-coated straw-colored seizure-alert dogs

October 16, 2015

## For Cover

reading the great stories  
I wonder what it has to do with me  
I lift my mind back to when I could  
pull the covers over my head  
and worry about nothing  
no one loved me then  
nor now  
but then it seemed like good treatment  
I was running from everyone

---

October 17, 2015

## Who Will Write This If I Don't

in a town wet with night and dark with rain  
the little band in the corner of the pub  
brings it down and cooks  
their repeated refrain drains to melancholy  
and maybe even sad  
I'm sitting in my car outside the pub  
watching night lights flicker and dim  
go off  
something might be happening in those rooms  
in my car I flip open my black moleskine  
click on my pen

---

October 18, 2015

## A Meadow in Edinburgh

something about the dark  
photos taken in the dark  
long exposures in b&w  
a low sun in winter  
the far north especially  
women walking quickly from place to place  
they don't like the melancholy  
the long shadows / the odd grip  
of the place on her grief which will last long  
or her love which will last longer



---

October 19, 2015

## Green Bus in the Background

black soot buildings shine in the rain  
in an old city that doesn't like to be clean  
famous thinkers once thought here  
I found a narrow passage  
worn slick from many  
so narrow its sides were worn slick  
I wanted a woman nearby to make the poem slick  
I know which one too  
blonde on the bottom  
dark growing back halfway  
her clothes are heavy  
she is not special

---

October 20, 2015

## October Lightness

trees gone all branches  
some yellow leaves hang on  
the streams gone all black blue  
the wind whipped to near white foam  
fall now and my favorite times in the past  
when thoughts of passing passed through me  
with joy

---

October 21, 2015

## Amazing and Common

they walked up  
one by one up to the polished box beside the altar  
the priest was watching and holding his candle  
in the loft a girl was singing soft  
she was nothing to do with this all  
the women as we expected let tears  
drip down their dresses and those tears  
were pushed into the stone floor  
as tears have been for generations  
the men as we didn't let their tears  
drip down their jackets and so the life  
on the church joined the death in the church  
the priest lit each candle with delicacy  
and the muscles of music wore deep  
into those gathered

---

October 22, 2015

## Do Don't

I wrote once  
a poem that I found last night  
and I cried over it  
the beauty was so out there  
how did I do it  
why am I now so much less  
is it what Dean Young said  
don't practice  
do

---

October 23, 2015

## On A Plane

I watch people behind me congratulated  
and adored / my time is over  
climbing hard mountains can't be done  
pushing hard is hard  
I don't want to be relied on  
I need to find out how to write again  
before it's too old

October 24, 2015

## Cool Your Jets

I need to learn my opinion  
no longer matters  
so just shut up

October 25, 2015

## Melancholyish

walking into downtown Pittsburgh  
twilight or later  
a wet mist hangs around  
a yellow streetlight is trying to stay lit  
a woman in a long coat and wide pants  
walks away slowly into the mist  
into the dark  
I lean against the brick side

October 26, 2015

## Pittsburgh Today

today the mist rose toward the overly  
rich sunrise  
the clouds and hidden parts of buildings  
sometimes shone through the mist  
the low clouds  
the mist was rising from a barely  
flowing river



October 27, 2015

## Birthday Girl

99 years old today  
my mother was not one  
to shy from an argument  
this might sound valiant  
most say she was a pain

October 28, 2015

## Fully

we are the ends of the earth  
the filled are full of blues  
I am hot with the percentage

October 29, 2015

## Did I Love Her?

tonight I saw a woman  
with lavender highlights in her mouse blonde hair  
she designed in it piled layers  
I followed her through the gallery  
I wanted to watch her every minute  
not a good idea

October 30, 2015

## Monongahela

the river out there  
seems not to flow  
the wind blows ripples  
every which way  
trains go each way beside it  
boats too  
it's a cold hard fact  
that this city is under fire

---

October 31, 2015

## The Rest

my age is one I never thought to achieve  
or get to  
today is a day of darkness always  
coloring my life  
leaves gone off  
the roads covered in pine needles  
I sometimes believe I was special  
my fate was luck and collaboration with the brilliant  
I need to study my best writing  
to regain it  
for now I rest

November 1, 2015

## Romance After The Fact

down a dusty lane  
leaves shuffle toward  
a barn whose doors are rotting  
from the bottom up  
inside hay has fermented into mud  
timbers older than the country  
are shrinking into sheets  
leather harnesses into parchment  
in that barn I touched a girl  
we wanted to know  
it's not what you think / we were children / see?  
she touched me  
we wanted to know  
my theories were wrong  
hers less so  
mine too abstract really  
hers maybe a warning  
we built a house from a cardboard  
refrigerator box  
came home from work to a phony meal  
and two touches

---

November 2, 2015

## The Same Bad

bad wind all night  
imagine the animals  
clouds hurrying along  
no one sees them except in town  
you'd think a storm is approaching  
but nothing will happen  
you'd think a warm bed friend is approaching  
but nothing will happen  
I sit reading by the window  
branches flail between me and the neighbor's house  
she sits reading by the window  
we are reading the same book

---

November 3, 2015

## Vapor

in a big park in a big city  
they still run sodium vapor lights  
many men and women have embraced under them  
on warm nights and cold nights  
the color is the color of romance  
now they want to replace them with LEDs  
brighter / whiter / cheaper  
one wonders how'll we'll be made  
when all but profit is extinct



November 4, 2015

## Analytical Model

she is more than I can imagine  
she looked at me without turning away  
too many have wandered  
I will dedicate my next program to her

---

November 5, 2015

## Sharp Wind

when you look down you see the silhouette  
of an old pier under the speedy water  
beneath the bridge / someone built all that  
it was hard to miss the green outline under clear but brown water  
flowing steadily to the ocean  
an older woman pointed all this out  
to me / her hair scattered in unexpected ways

November 6, 2015

## Small D

a small decision follows you  
it balls up into large  
it fools you into lying  
until lying is truth  
a cliché but worth it  
her last thought  
was of that night  
when she didn't help

November 7, 2015

## Names Change

there is a large brownstone  
in South Boston where  
my father turned into  
John Gabriel

November 8, 2015

## Watching Her

I watched  
until the end  
I could watch  
forever

November 9, 2015

## Not Tonight

I am too angry to write  
sometimes this happens

November 10, 2015

## Nowhere a Rhyme

the little patch beside the bridge  
is filling with snow tonight  
night is a shallow time  
the day is wandering off  
a car will skid on new ice  
it shall fall by the edge

---

November 11, 2015

## Mystery of the Desert

the desert is vast this time of year  
among the forgotten birds are birds that can't fly  
many have built theories of mathematics based on this question  
birds that can't fly  
they forget all about the vast desert  
how empty it is without them  
for they scratch on their blackboards



---

November 12, 2015

## Brandy Brow

I was driving that night  
Brandy Brow Road  
warm so my window was open  
I heard dogs barking  
then there they  
were / two old women in a car  
parked in a driveway  
drinking from cups  
cupping cats in their laps  
I heard they were afraid of the house  
lived there but slept in the car  
the dogs knew it too  
barked to keep away spirits  
from the up road  
up where I lived

---

November 13, 2015

## Reinterpret

after my father died  
I spent time in his garage  
staring at his projects  
taking his tubes out of their boxes  
and packing them for the trip West  
I took his transistors too  
but I hated them  
every night after he died  
I heard the cricket behind the car  
every time it started after I turned on the light  
I'd stop / trying to find it  
it cricked less loud every night  
eventually it was gone  
I studied that

---

November 14, 2015

## Reminder

I used to watch the western sky  
after the sun had set  
in Winter there was a tangle of branches  
and puffs of pines  
it seemed like my future  
looming out of the low clouds  
no longer visible  
people who knew me then didn't talk much about it  
I left the place  
the cold reminds me of it

November 15, 2015

## To I

what happens when you live somewhere  
your whole life  
the narrow views so familiar  
they are gone  
they vanish  
your friends vanish  
your family does  
and you  
only one letter to change

November 16, 2015

## Under

imagine lying in bed  
for a day or two  
with a new one  
seeing and learning  
touching and all that  
cold outside  
but the blankets  
the warm air under them  
under

---

November 17, 2015

## Like That

I watched her paddle toward me  
standing on what looked  
like a surfboard  
on the Merrimack  
in her bikini  
against the tide which was coming in  
yellow hair / thin / shaped  
years ago I sat in my car  
at the same spot  
in Winter when the ice was confused  
and bubbling brown ice into prayer hands  
I never could get near  
anything like that

November 18, 2015

## I Cried That Night and Still Do

down a perfect Paris street  
trying to find a good espresso  
I found / she wore a leather jacket with zippered pockets  
over a long-sleeved sweater / no gloves  
a brown scarf knotted twice  
around her neck holding down and back her dark brown hair  
a wool-white skull cap hat in the form of lace  
one hand held over the other  
not much makeup but reddened cheeks  
on the cold day  
later someone said her name was Eva  
over her shoulder her long strapped bag hung  
she was perfect  
I snapped her even though she looked  
like she wanted to talk  
she never smiled but she was open  
I could see something was in one  
of her zippered chest pockets  
she could have been the other  
half of me

---

November 19, 2015

## Poof

if we could travel back  
and tell ourselves little snippets  
of our later lives  
I imagine the look on my face  
when I show me photos of the women I married  
the children I had  
and the citations on my awards  
then disappear



---

November 20, 2015

## East Berlin Formerly

some of them must be dead  
people in my photos  
taken in foreign cities  
people who don't speak like me  
women with new washed panties  
and the skirts that show outlines  
men in flip flops staring at them  
at me / cobble stones because foreign right  
and always the strange dog that stares  
up at me even as he sits awkwardly  
on his haunches

---

November 21, 2015

## Writerish

up on the hill I programmed day and night  
I was not good at it  
but better than a lot of the others  
I rarely had a clear plan  
today it's really about the same  
but with enough experience I can seem fast and accurate  
I have a fear of programming poorly  
I need instead to write  
write write

November 22, 2015

## Raw Desire

every day new evidence comes in  
showing how little I've done  
how poor I've been at most things  
how other talent is more talent  
I really am just the best  
of my small town / the bigger the world  
the smaller I am / let me hunker here forever

---

November 23, 2015

## Knowing

she said  
did you miss me or  
are you just aroused  
then I watched film of us 20 years ago  
how happy she was to play with me  
and now it's a chore she doesn't consider  
like the chore of listening to

I can't write it  
because one day she'll read all these  
and know

---

November 24, 2015

## Having Fun

into the piano room to practice  
used to be part of Nana's apartment  
but it was down a few steps  
in Winter it'd be cold & cold  
I started the little furnace  
then sit and play / I was never great  
but some liked how I played after a while  
parlor grand is what my father called it  
it had a deep bass sound / I mic-ed it  
to jam with bands / I was always  
a decent rhythm player

---

November 25, 2015

## A Story

kids grown up from my schools  
even now they don't like talking to me  
what what what is it that is wrong  
I am so fear instilling  
so smart / so stupid  
that uninteresting  
why do most of the places I've tried to work  
never even call me back  
why do women always come to hate  
if I find out I'll warn you

---

November 26, 2015

## Home Gone

someday there will be a way  
to remember things without grudges  
the good talks / the little touches  
like hiking a tough mountain  
many have made it beyond me  
I am sitting on an outcropping  
looking down at the way I'm from  
a long hike to here  
be happy about that  
tonight in a cold room  
with family gone home

November 27, 2015

## Or a Festschrift

some celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> year  
of great researchers  
I'm 66 now  
therefore like dogs that run and hide  
I'm under with it



November 28, 2015

## I Will Not

they hovered around me  
almost like friends  
but soon they felt me shrink  
the culture has learned  
so have the palm readers  
who close my hand  
and say no

---

November 29, 2015

## Shed on a Hill

a shed on a hill  
just some granite small boulders  
and short pines  
from there all I can see is the long path  
back to the rained on day I was born  
a dark day I imagine in the rain  
warm last day of October  
my job to line that path  
with a string of words no one can believe  
I wrote

---

November 30, 2015

## Orchard and Fences

our orchard was never used  
while I lived there  
the yellow jackets—the small ones  
ate holes in the small pears  
the grass never grew tall there  
branches were part of the pathways  
around it a barbed wire fence  
maybe sixteen trees and the sewage stream  
forming the start of Cobbler's Creek  
green

---

December 1, 2015

## By a Bed

he balanced poor skill with patience  
perseverance / he nearly sliced off his hand  
he planed off part of a finger  
I lived more in my head than in the world  
do I do differently now  
he died I think praying by his bed  
alone and unable or unwilling to call out to her  
I hope his prayers made a difference  
that night or after  
my family is a family of loners

---

December 2, 2015

## Donovan's

tonight a woman walked past our table  
in a restaurant on the beach in Melbourne  
whose walk away from me taught  
the purpose of thongs under a silky light brown skirt  
you should picture smooth elongated curves  
with everything around it moving slow and deliberate  
if you can't you are already faded

December 3, 2015

## Cross the Line

we saw them all  
they wandered past  
we had trouble keeping our balance  
there was a cold wind then a warm one  
strange hair color

December 4, 2015

## BeaChristmas

some days I can't make it happen  
like today but I had good friends for once  
I'm tired and will reflect later  
it's a warm sunny day and instead of the beach  
around Christmas it in the salon  
talking

December 5, 2015

## Those Asses

well no need to write about  
on another topic why is Brisbane  
around Christmas time like Miami  
at spring break



December 6, 2015

## Little Guy

I touched a kangaroo today  
a small one  
I chose it because even if it reacted  
poorly to my touch  
it couldn't kick the crap out of me

December 7, 2015

## Time Is A Snowplow

many people I know are happy  
I am sad and pass it on when I can  
tonight I am a one-liner  
I want more sleep than time can provide

December 8, 2015

## Sydney Asleep

some nights I'm too tired to write  
I struggle to open the file  
to find some words  
like tonight when sweat and more exertion  
than I am used to takes over

December 9, 2015

## Falling

it's sad to be fading away  
but it's nature's way  
need to step aside  
I've modified myself to be smaller  
soon nothing  
I will work in my own little shop

December 10, 2015

## A Day

we walked a long way today  
it was hot and I didn't do well  
too hot / not enough exercise  
I need to change back  
I want to go home

December 11, 2015

## Last Talk

today was better  
a good last talk if that's what it is  
I am content with going anonymous  
people asked questions  
made suggestions  
I felt like the old me  
for a last time perhaps

December 12, 2015

## Out Croak

last day and the beauty of Sydney  
old and dusty like my friend Kurkjian  
they both are old and seem cast aside  
women's skirts are too tight  
funny how the specially adapted  
fit better somewhere else

December 13, 2015

## Rest of the Year

I will spend the rest of the year  
writing the story of the InkWell Turing test  
and maybe an essay  
I plan to rest  
for the rest  
of the year



---

December 14, 2015

## Last to First

the long trip is over  
the last time in Australia  
a warm place as far as my experience  
almost like here but less somehow  
maybe more modest / maybe less addictive  
in some cities stupendous beauties  
in others americanlike fat  
the teachings there were otherwise down  
my career is oddly running backward

---

December 15, 2015

## In A Small Country

she held out her hand  
as of the way to the train were strange  
she pulled out an iPod and played me a song  
which if I interpreted it as her speaking  
said she would take me to the end  
the train didn't go there but we stopped  
along the way and spent some nights  
we slept some days / we ate poor  
in the end she showed me and I showed her  
she went north I went west  
we never speak / we linger

December 16, 2015

## Hm

odd fact  
sad music soothes  
makes happy  
we listen to be at home  
not the silly  
hm

---

December 17, 2015

## To Merrimac

it's a big stretch  
to make the trip East to see snow  
when snow's not on any agenda  
to be in the cold watching people  
eat in warm steamed-window eateries  
walk down slippery sidewalks toward the river  
that doesn't care / never has  
close to old friends I hope  
to never see them nor them me  
as I walk through their towns  
past their homes  
ignoring their lives

---

December 18, 2015

## Land Land

land land  
going to the land  
all the day

Emily didn't write this  
my barn has collapsed into forgotten memory  
it was once a place I walked through  
front to back  
up in the lofts  
hay bales made into cubbies  
smell of hay and hay dust  
only the little tree outside now huge  
opposite of my memory

December 19, 2015

## Lone Haiku / Cold Night

frosted winter,  
bridge black,  
ice white

---

December 20, 2015

## Running Out of Time

on my screen  
a photo of my mother in high school  
a group photo of all the kids  
all of them I think  
are dead or nearly  
their kids or their kid's kids  
knew me when I lived there  
maybe they would or did  
believe I did good  
now I have faded even from the small peak I once had  
when I young I dreamed of being far and forgotten  
dreams come true

December 21, 2015

## Wintertime Merrimack River

it's like that now I hope  
partly iced over river  
cold / best shot B&W  
low dark clouds  
fast moving  
hard to see warmth in the scene  
whoever made the world  
never expected this



---

December 22, 2015

## For Christmas

I want to get in a dignified backdrop  
I want to get in a tensional chateau  
I want to get in a dissolvable cryptograph  
I want to get in a Salvadorean ballpoint  
I want to get in a dignified fur coat  
I want to come back a prime pruner  
I want to come out a masterly bra  
I want to reach a Dominican seventy-eight  
I want to reach a case-by-case charnel  
I want to reach a fucking snare

---

December 23, 2015

## Wedding Day

I cry for the life I had  
for the mysteries I couldn't solve  
for the difficulties my work placed in front of me  
for those I couldn't love  
for my mother who lived a life of death  
for my father whose loneliness drove him  
I cry for the place I want to be  
to be alone there  
when the darkness encompasses

---

December 24, 2015

## And Free

far / the women walk quickly away  
and also to  
when they do  
their panties slide to the surface  
of their sweaty skirts  
yet they wear them thin  
wool and all  
instead of that I watch the red light  
at the top of a far away building  
warning off planes  
and me

---

December 25, 2015

## Miles and Miles

when Christmas on the farm  
we'd have a tree up we cut in the town forest  
not legal but my mother  
hated that town  
most everyone in it  
they liked that fine and showed how much  
snow and a homemade toboggan run  
I learned how to live  
with no one loving us

---

December 26, 2015

## Photo Found

today I found her photo  
I thought it lost for many years  
I fedexed it to myself in 2003  
I found it while sorting through stuff to throw out  
I never would have thought to look where I found it  
along with other photos  
I no longer loathe

December 27, 2015

## Home To Be

alone / far from voices  
far from comments  
by the bridge maybe  
or the river near the ocean  
close to the old place  
maybe then I could remember better

December 28, 2015

## Finders Keepers

how to be what you desire  
without the effort required  
a great wish  
a wanton leap

December 29, 2015

## Open Carry

how long can it take to learn  
right to carry is not a right to life



December 30, 2015

## Cousin William

amazing how wedged the situation can get  
when the untrusting bump up against  
the poorly equipped

---

December 31, 2015

## Hang On Loosely

did Pavel have it with Mrs Scherbon  
is that why the kick was to the plumbing  
was the fight about cheating  
not just the drinking  
is this why mother didn't save him  
did her mother drive her mad  
to make him her hero to me  
did she believe her mother deserved less punishment  
did she realize it takes four to cheat  
four not two

# The Authority of the Air Conditioner

Richard P. Gabriel

January 4, 2017

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January 1, 2016

## Frost Horizon

a new number  
the year starts off cold  
it will end cold  
in the morning the light will slip through the keyhole  
a woman will wake to pee  
I will read and write  
program and ponder  
the year will stretch and with luck  
I'll see it to the end  
either way  
there will be an end

January 2, 2016

## My Heart is Breaking

I will walk that road again  
from pond to stream  
past what was once my family's  
even with the yelling / hatred / deaths  
I've seen women smile and laugh  
as if the day were longer than life

---

January 3, 2016

## Anna And Powell

behind the part of the farm my parents owned  
a great granite boulder  
behind Sam's barn / next to his pine grove  
Billy Sam's son didn't know it so  
perhaps Sam neither  
a place to be secret  
soft bed of pine needles nearby  
far from the farms / safe for sounds  
rumor / not rumor  
treated as fact / deadly



January 4, 2016

## Thinking About It

can it be as simple  
as the land is large and trees are abundant  
that there are places to hide  
that coincidences can happen  
can it be as simple  
as love will find a way  
can it be my mother learned that late  
and hated her mother for it

January 5, 2016

**Under Imitation**

hazy smog driving north through the Central Valley  
at sunset when the dust blows up and the red sun  
is on a down adventure / we drive fast  
we haven't eaten today and not much to drink  
in theory we're dying  
looking East there is a kind of darkness  
looking West the future is veiled

---

January 6, 2016

## The Perfect Road

first time up Arastradero  
Fleetwood Mac on the radio  
back when there only were radio and tape  
the gums were huge wide and mega tall  
the fields on the upside were dusty and gold  
the little gully below was like a wandered-out fence lizard  
did I find my way that year  
did I make a good chunk for myself  
a heartbeat drives you mad  
and the stillness has evaporated

---

January 7, 2016

## Helpless

suppose this were the mid '60s  
it would be dark now and maybe a mist  
over the big field across the road  
I'd be planning a phone call to Meredith  
as the night went on I'd play the piano  
listen to music / stare at her photo in a yearbook  
I'd never call her / I never did  
I was too much then what I also am now

January 8, 2016

## The L Section

I see pix of cute kids  
commented in languages  
everyone knows these kids are being loved in those comments  
not everyone knows what's being written  
but we know what part of the dictionary  
to lookup the words in  
the L section

---

January 9, 2016

## Going Home

we'd sit in the living every month or so  
watch movies of us climbing Chocorua  
listening to a reel-to-reel of Dvorak's New World  
listening for coincidences / remembering the climb  
we were some sprite then and color movie film  
were we well off / were we blessed  
so many secrets before and after / like a train  
with engine around one bend and caboose another

January 10, 2016

## Mowing

mowing the lawn on tuesdays  
highschool summers  
a crude rider / it would take hours  
hot and muggy / parts of the lawn wet  
from an old stream mostly underground  
I did all the big stuff  
my parents the trims  
what I can't recall is awareness of time  
how that boring task would end  
and everything around me would mist away

January 11, 2016

**Death Or Worse / Off Balance**

I could ride all the way from my house  
to Meredith's with my hands off the handlebars  
on a crappy ten speed / even though there were  
steep downhills and modest ups  
these days I can't ride a foot that way  
it's a sign of impending death  
or something nearly as bad



January 12, 2016

## In Seven Languages

pretty girls cry when the sun falls  
too close to the ground  
or behind naked branches  
this goes for nuns too  
maybe nuns even more  
walking past a Catholic church by the bay  
a squall of tears cranks past

January 13, 2016

## I Saw She Was

when she walks away her little sway  
is a final wave / goodbye she might say  
she doesn't / she is just away  
I spoke to her though / we sat near the Bay  
and all afternoon the sun broiled the water  
the ships / the backs of our necks

January 14, 2016

## Federalist

consistency is hard on people  
they prefer to jump on ups and downs  
as if a flatland  
I sometimes argue it out  
sometimes I laugh  
often I am angered

January 15, 2016

## A Wind Does

winds move always  
you don't feel them  
they swing around you  
they cool your brow  
they freeze your hands  
they make companions lovers

January 16, 2016

## Questions Of Her

can you hear her voice  
do you sense her heels scraping along the sidewalk  
would you like to follow her home  
your home  
do you understand what her hair does to your soul  
flagging as it does

January 17, 2016

## Duck Inn, Merrimac

some remember the old places  
unpaved roads linking secret groves  
to sacred coves / we had different names  
for all the things / soon nothing will be left  
but old pictures and faded stories  
with a narrative invention is possible

January 18, 2016

## Ueno

across a wide plaza  
the Japanese girl on her way to practice  
her blueblack hair sways one way  
her violin case swings the other

January 19, 2016

## Another

she is unreachable  
some would say deceased  
instead she is always around  
a different corner  
I could have loved her  
but she had too much



January 20, 2016

## Burning for Home

the little stream starting on our farm  
makes its way slowly down to the big river  
which makes its way quickly down to the immense ocean  
some have commented on it  
a place of play and reflection  
central to the town  
it slips under roads and no one notices  
it is small and still there

January 21, 2016

## Walking Stones

she steps in heels across wet cobbles  
the yellow sodium lights are the last we'll see in Paris  
her hands are aimed for mine a long way off  
today it's cold / I'm cold / in some tomorrow  
it will still be wet but we'll be warm

January 22, 2016

**In A North**

there are lots of ways to cry  
like one's self to sleep  
or as the nude one curls up in front of you  
I've decided to stand at the window  
frosting from my breath  
below in the yellowed light lovers walk past  
I turn to her

January 23, 2016

## Some Detroit Area

a call girl on the next corner  
is waiting to eat  
you you might think  
no food and you're the prey  
she trades for it

January 24, 2016

## Mommy, A Sort of Death

in the end we all call mommy  
in the beginning too  
what would happen  
if we called her always

January 25, 2016

## Mound-Over Turf

the rhythm of a song in many forms  
loved so much each player makes their own  
the bits of it familiar but in different directions  
there is room for all of them  
the wind begins to howl

January 26, 2016

## The Wrong Self

each day that goes by  
evidence grows that nothing I've done  
has made much difference  
you know / I've been saying this now  
for years / how long can I take it

January 27, 2016

## Found Out About You

what I see in my dreamlife  
walking toward Carver's in a foggy damp twilight  
past the little pond down that way  
and not noticing that the future  
was nowhere to be seen or heard



---

January 28, 2016

## Pale Room Locked

in my dreams for dozens of years  
there is a particular house  
with a rambling downstairs  
but an upper room padded like a palace  
light blue walls covered in quilted fabric  
left locked up for the future  
in my dreams I show people that room  
or pass through while looking for something else  
an empty room / growing stale  
a place for expansion  
a place I fear  
or just fear

January 29, 2016

## If You Read This

as people from my hometown  
all old now / talk about their memories  
I see clearly how unobservant  
and self-centered I was  
did I / do I  
have a sickness

January 30, 2016

## Learning by Any Other Name

people survive because of many experiences  
a life has time for only a small number  
once you get to a certain age  
hearing a story is a way to them  
telling stories has evolutionary value

January 31, 2016

## Unnoticed

I invent my past  
because when it was happening  
I didn't notice it  
something made me  
look just inside  
nowhere else

February 1, 2016

## Dream a Dream of Me

the sun over yellow hills  
dark green hard leaves  
smell of sweet tar in the air  
some things cannot be pushed  
to the past

February 2, 2016

## **Born to Run**

you dream of a place  
a way to forget yourself  
encourage new impressions  
being an other to become a self  
the place is different  
several similar ones would do  
you choose one  
live there a life  
you dream of your home

February 3, 2016

## The Sad Facts of Lost Parents

the hot days around Christmas time  
middle of Florida  
I'd sleep in my mother's room / she'd  
sleep in the trailer  
God it was cold nights there  
I'd stay up reading until 1 / 2am  
I'd find all the blankets I could  
hounds barking and howling most of the night  
down the soft sand road toward the national forest  
hunting dogs  
the first years my mother and father  
then just my mother  
the no one  
we packed up what we thought of value  
everything isolated

---

February 4, 2016

## Fiction Lane

years of wind and a story like hell  
farmers who once were giants reduced to slow breathing  
still trains pass through town  
love is made in this town and towns nearby  
the air smells precious  
people who could be loved are dead  
the memorial is forgotten  
the one with the most to lose is losing more  
some asked about fairness  
but the tumbleweeds just blew on down the elm lined lane  
and now the elms are faded  
like the story still read as fiction



---

February 5, 2016

## Flush

bathroom bad again  
belly in the pipe it seems  
lots of flushing was supposed to help  
but six months later seems not  
I have to stop obsessing  
turns out a clog way down line  
a hundred feet from the house  
obsession for nothing

---

February 6, 2016

## Old Roads

the long myth of the road  
we drive like bunnies hopping for their lives  
we see women arms raised hanging clothes on lines  
clothespins in mouths / the next shirt chin tucked  
when we're young we graze for panties  
or the big cupped bra  
back when roads were small and serpentine  
who can imagine the strangeness of the past  
even when we once had our skivvies on the line

February 7, 2016

## Long Blonde Hair

Eric Clapton on stage / Wonderful Tonight  
two sweet chicks singing backup  
at the end he sings oh my darling  
you were wonderful  
tonight  
then something happens  
he goes into the 1-4 single string picking  
with the Strat on its two high pickups  
he stands by the mic doing the 1-4  
his eyes blink hard once on the 4  
he steps back the chords slowly ringing  
five steps back / winces on the 4  
because this song is real  
things happened to create it  
even in front of thousands  
the player can't help the melancholy of those things  
art is a tether to the heart through memory  
it's a set of strings strung tight on a Strat

February 8, 2016

## She Felt It Drifting Away

she learned of the heat and passion of love  
when her father maybe strayed  
and then her mother killed him  
you could call it the heat of the night  
this is why no one in his family took him  
why Sam reported it  
why everything not explained becomes explained

February 9, 2016

## Times Alone

Amelia was lost  
landing on a watered strip  
no one ever came  
her navigator died a month later  
then alone she ran out of water  
became a skeleton later  
washed away in a flood storm  
the time my mother let her father die

February 10, 2016

## Chasing Something

suppose it's a summer day  
people in the park by the river are picnicking  
among all those folks are two who one day  
will lock their hips together  
and something more will be made of it

---

February 11, 2016

## Cottage Grove

we lived in the smallest house possible  
when it rained the bottom of our mattress  
on the floor was wet  
we had to walk on the mattress to get out of the room  
kitchen the size of a couple egg crates  
living room smaller than two couches  
Urbana / the fields were not far away  
big yard though / a couple of trees  
I wasn't able to notice much  
or remember much  
the world watched a little at a time

February 12, 2016

## A River West

find a place near a river  
watch cottonwoods green then blow  
leaf wild in high winds  
watch so long you start to forget  
you start to lose sight  
start to lose smell  
to lose hearing  
lose touch  
feeling



February 13, 2016

## Finding Outs

understanding is the difficulty  
when no signposts are about  
we look for a clue  
but the clue needs a clue  
wander and look  
notice and discover

---

February 14, 2016

## Coops

we had coops everywhere  
at odd corners of the fields  
some large / small / low but never two stories  
whitewash and many years after their use  
the limey chicken poop was still a smell  
one old part of the barn was so broken down  
I never went in / I think it was for horses  
my mother said she was badly hurt there climbing in the loft  
her gait was off and she had pain  
make a story of it if you can

---

February 15, 2016

## 1960

recreations of 1960 just  
don't seem right  
too colorful / too alive  
I remember it as a cloudy smokey time  
but where I lived was not real  
the enclave they called it  
the farm / I didn't go places  
I didn't see right / didn't see much  
noticed very little  
what a sad boy

---

February 16, 2016

## God On Main

the center of town is bitter  
days like this God leans back against the old brick building  
and lights his cigar / a token from Heaven  
people passing expect him to ask for change  
change for a bag gripped on a bottle neck  
but He just considers the question of blessing  
as if passers by ask Him for change  
and perhaps he expects a neck and a bag

February 17, 2016

## On Tuesdays

I would drive there after hope  
or ride there  
not many welcomed me  
I was too unseeing / too self-surrounded  
fifty years later I have two friends only from then  
the same two friends I had then  
inability to think things through  
see things through  
feel the heat and cool  
sit still and just listen

February 18, 2016

## Noise Noise

building noise  
to test filtering it  
hard to exhaustively do  
it must be smart to obey  
English writing  
maybe one more day

---

February 19, 2016

## Not Mine Ever Again

I am like the clearing back behind our house  
when you have land you can walk it in peace  
you can do all you want / no one can watch or complain  
the leaves that fall fall always at your feet  
the white birches rounding out the white scene are yours  
the rocks pushed here by ice are here for you  
you sit in the clearing / break dry twigs into the dirt pit  
against the rock / light dried needles for a small fire  
as the snow puts it all behind you

---

February 20, 2016

## Dumb It Were

she was so disappointed  
she saw I was flawed  
in ways that mapped out mental problems  
she did all my homework for me  
she had people never tell me of our family tragedy  
because I was feeble minded  
what was I  
why did she believe this to the end  
where did the rifle in the chimney come from



---

February 21, 2016

## First Times

in our large first house together  
in Champaign we had a restaurant fridge  
with two big doors with cast iron hinges  
one side broke and when my father came out once  
he fixed the hinges with braces  
we lived in the kitchen / the dining room / the bedroom  
the house was freezing all Winter because of the oil crisis of 1973  
my wife taught me many things that year  
like how to show herself off to men  
by stripping / how to take it in the end  
it was a bitter year and I learned nothing about real writing

---

February 22, 2016

## Hadley Sand Pit

the sand pit was deep  
the road down to the bottom rocky and steep  
50 feet / 100 feet / it was dug deep  
how was it found / how was it made  
it's been dug out and leveled out  
we used to jump from the top and land halfway down  
swallows had nests dug into the hard vertical parts  
I used to shovel sand into the pickup as a kid  
we had vulgar fun

February 23, 2016

## Stuff and More Stuff

behind on writing  
difficult code  
computer out of date for work  
so much to do

February 24, 2016

## Decide

I grow more fearful every day  
like I want to just lie down and sleep for a long time  
too many things to do / too many things go wrong  
maybe tomorrow I can decide

February 25, 2016

## At The Café

he thought I was angry and would retire in anger  
or bitter / sometimes he said bitter  
it just feels realistic

February 26, 2016

## Kalaupapa

a small county in Molokai  
a peninsula isolated  
many sick once lived there  
now fewer than a hundred  
there's a small church at one end  
well kept  
the sixteen once exiled there and alive  
have grown fond of the isolation  
it is their seventeenth friend

February 27, 2016

## Bad Porn

manic sex in porn  
shows the farce of men's thinking  
nothing is exciting about fake screams  
the true connoisseur wants the buildup  
there can be many people in the scene  
but someone has to be focusing

February 28, 2016

## Old Goats

talking to an old friend  
who is losing his memory  
reminds me  
he said he had to work hard at it  
he said I less so  
I am reminded of my small place  
and I hope my noticing is not self pity



---

February 29, 2016

## I'll Be Sleeping

driving up to South Dakota  
Kathy asleep / her brother asleep  
I'm listening to Jimmy Webb songs on the radio  
hot early June day  
cottonwoods by a hidden river  
now what does it all mean fifty years later  
when none of us are nearby  
romance is the radio playing on  
the tires ringing on  
the cottonwoods fleeing behind us

---

March 1, 2016

## Black Hills Flood

once in Rapid City we saw the work of the flood  
houses gone or lifted up onto roads  
railroad tracks wrapped around motels  
smell of passed away  
Kathy's brother-in-law was sent to search for bodies  
we were visiting relatives from back home  
Patty took us out / it was crazy  
family crazy

March 2, 2016

## In A Cold Room Every Night

some women have always come for me  
not many  
I would write them / they me  
some have passed away by now  
I wonder when they remembered me  
I've learned what they saw had a lie to it  
they all saw the lie

March 3, 2016

## After Helping

she hugs the man she's been talking to all afternoon  
then trails her fingers in his hand when he leaves  
she loves him but not the way everyone thinks  
the right way

March 4, 2016

## Know?

who is the girl with Kurkjian  
he is wearing his yearbook picture outfit  
it's a sock hop / remember  
she seems young  
I know he danced with her  
did I ever know her  
will we ever know

March 5, 2016

## Wet and Wind

hard rain all day  
winds unhappy about something  
I question my thinking  
in the end it's time to slow

---

March 6, 2016

## Dead Or Alive

I traveled to a land / an island  
where cemeteries had tall stone high markers  
carved in the shape of the cros Cheilteach  
and had myself buried there  
graves close together / clever sayings about death  
people who wonder try to find me  
or the markers reminding of me  
among them a quiet woman in faded pink  
faded blue eyes / she weeps as she walks past

March 7, 2016

## Neuro Love

the surprise comes  
when the inner heart  
links to the outer  
and the too many flutters  
reduce to one longing  
lingering beat



---

March 8, 2016

## Play Now

when Clapton gets up to play at age 70  
he fills the room with notes dripping with past  
he is forever sad  
women he loved pass by his mind  
they make it to his fingers / the strings  
he makes mistakes sometimes  
they slide by / slide past  
his sidemen keep it quiet  
they never fail / their chops are in his service  
he will weep later

March 9, 2016

## Sorry For

I am the person no one ever calls again  
I've interviewed for many jobs and only a handful even called me back  
after talks no one comes up if there is an alternative  
it is me for sure

March 10, 2016

## Splinters

when I list all the words that begin  
with pl  
many things start out plain

March 11, 2016

## Farm Woods

I remember the rain in the woods  
when the leaves are fresh out  
when the birch tops whip side to side  
when the brook swells and last year's leaves  
toboggan down to the river and out slowly to sea

March 12, 2016

## Intrusions

with not many emailing me anymore  
maybe it's time to go offline  
diminish my presence  
become effervescent

March 13, 2016

**Forget This Fact**

when I would play the room would squirm  
move in broken lines  
the beautiful and the beastly  
the singer would ask one more  
I'd bend to my strings / use the wah to slide  
into a playing funk  
that vibrato I worked on for years  
would sway them all  
when the feeling is gone

March 14, 2016

## Covet

of those I've loved few  
loved back / and being afraid  
I walked away not toward  
of those who loved me  
I took them in

March 15, 2016

## Empty

I stopped liking the limelight  
shadows / I like to watch  
I have no passion  
little life force  
I need fuel to keep up  
not sweet / but fuel



March 16, 2016

## Ars Poetica

the words come out right here  
produced automatic like  
but after they are up there  
I work them over and over  
until they are right pretty

March 17, 2016

## Flying Get It?

I have dreams that overwhelm  
I hope they don't alarm  
whichever woman is in my bed  
those moments

March 18, 2016

## Pretending To Be My Friend

words piled up then fallen down  
Dean Young's heart's been thrown out  
another came flying in a punched it away  
he yelled at me for writing these poems  
poetry is too important to practice  
there is no practice / do

March 19, 2016

## Bad Bad Day

many changes today for my mail server  
some hacker coming at me  
might have lost my twitter account  
don't care about that  
changed a lot of passwords  
made lots of notes  
automated some things  
damn it all

March 20, 2016

## Beach Pizza

a friend is cruising my old grounds  
looking for reluctant food  
he drives a red car / a fast car  
he is not young  
it's a Mustang  
tonight it's snowing there  
but yesterday it was warm  
it's an up then a down

March 21, 2016

## Next Up

I long for many things  
I'd like to skip away from obligations  
I want the world to shrink  
for me to be less of it  
so pleasures alone impinge  
then the world will be my tiny egg

---

March 22, 2016

## Maybe Two

when they make movies meant to feel real  
the buildings and houses are all run down  
old and broken / breaking  
peeling paint crooked everythings  
shingles half off  
roof hole filled / good places for hits and zombies  
it makes things seem real  
and also passé  
like a love affair turned into an old marriage

---

March 23, 2016

## Ice and Snow on the Merrimack River

there's a house on stilts on the Merrimack  
when it's frozen and snowing the landscape turns monochrome  
black with white flecks actually  
there must be other colors  
but the clouds insist  
this house has a turret and a widow's walk  
a second floor bedroom  
if I could I'd be in that bed  
and not alone  
as the frozen river celebrates salt



March 24, 2016

## It Feels Slow

I am the elevator  
once on a high floor  
moving now  
floor by floor to the basement  
or is it the parking  
garage

---

March 25, 2016

## Water Street and Father

where we went for haircuts  
down the street that followed the river  
brick sidewalk and a couple of steps up  
men sat waiting for one of the two  
or three barbers on Saturday  
my father went first then me  
near the end the man would lather the back  
of my neck and shave close  
warm foam / a sharp strop  
after we'd drive a few blocks to Fowles  
to skim the magazines and buy one or two electronics ones  
this with my father now long gone

March 26, 2016

## Still Imagine

my sight was so narrow  
I saw nothing of where I lived  
even now as I drive through  
stop and look  
I see little  
how many dead on our farm  
from centuries  
could I guess  
that blue and red sunset behind black branches  
was all I could see

March 27, 2016

## Overhead

asleep in a twig teepee  
covered in pine boughs  
as a bitter snow almost freezing rain  
comes down

March 28, 2016

## I Was Sad Today

the problem with video from twenty  
years ago is that you can see love  
then that isn't here now  
it shows what you miss

---

March 29, 2016

## Undercut Lip

she unfolds her legs  
steps out of the deep chair  
and winks at the window curtains  
blowing inward like puffed  
cheeks / her hair follows suit  
you wonder right now what fabulous  
observation I have but if you've read  
my decades of poems you'll know  
nothing will happen before  
the end of this poem arrives

---

March 30, 2016

## InkWell Crushes Frost

The American angelica trees are ravishing, colorful, and dark  
The falls are wild, last, and great  
The forests are colorful, dark, and distant  
The forests are comely, black, and large  
The parts are true, first, and one  
The sets are variable, new, and such  
The temperate rain forests are beauteous, unilluminated, and unsounded  
The ti trees are just, only, and such  
The tropical rain forests are beauteous, etc too  
The woods are beautiful, dark, and large  
The woods are lovely, dark, and deep

March 31, 2016

## Cat's Feet

a trip soon and I'm scared  
I travel like crazy  
always crazy scared  
I love being there  
being here  
not going  
not coming back  
just scared



April 1, 2016

## Spring Drains

a little stream through a pine woods  
dropping down a little slope  
not much water but flowing fast  
granite stones exposed / water over them  
clumps of snow on the north sides of trees  
it's spring they say / every stupid thing  
that worries me makes no difference here  
how do I get there

April 2, 2016

## First Home Then Everywhere

if there is a right now  
lots of stuff is happening  
even if there isn't a right now  
lots of stuff

---

April 3, 2016

## Some Tales

turn in off Locust  
the cemetery is a blanket up a slight hill  
the maples are huge and my mother must have walked under them  
she didn't think to bury her father her  
close to her high school / just up the street a few minutes  
but in Haverhill where few would visit  
then her mother  
finally her husband and herself  
I visit them all

April 4, 2016

## Man Joy and Woman

typical man  
when you are born a woman attends  
she feels stupendous pain and joy  
when you die she watches over it  
drinks the pity and melancholy  
walks past your fresh grave  
who are they?  
the women

April 5, 2016

## Weeping Time

the morning is black and pale red  
ducks and birds make sporadic rackets  
the lake outside my window is flat and shiny  
past a certain time I can't sleep  
the sky turns mono to blue

April 6, 2016

## Too Much Drift

day with sore throat  
afraid I can't do my talk  
I eat well and chat well tonight  
with an old friend  
who has grown cynical in his age  
I prepare to bed down and hope  
sure that despair will claim  
everything I once thought I had

April 7, 2016

## Sleep Now

such a day  
talk ok but then a collapse from exhaustion  
I wonder if something is wrong  
sleep

April 8, 2016

## Bike Stop

she stopped her bike at the intersection  
a cello case on her back  
when the way was clear she stepped onto the pedals  
the edge of her hip aimed at me  
I wondered about that hip



April 9, 2016

## Griebnitzsee

cold outside  
sunny and Spring  
children and birds making noise  
water sitting clear and static  
I am sitting here writing  
hoping the world will forgive me  
wondering what is next

April 10, 2016

## Oh Well, Ink Well

another time lit  
blue in my heart  
whites of my hearts

seems like a poem  
starts strong  
but whites of my hearts  
why more than one  
heart / why more  
than one whites  
eyes maybe  
eyes as hearts  
in the end  
not a poem

April 11, 2016

## I Shot

instead of talent  
I layer passion  
persistence  
I bend the strings without knowing why  
by accident sometimes it's pretty  
rhythm is ok  
when people don't think  
it's music

April 12, 2016

## Too Tired

I am so tired  
worried about the dentist  
I am in the mode  
of thinking of every  
bad thing

April 13, 2016

## Tonight or Else

is it jet lag  
or age  
I sleep a lot  
I can't work well  
have to get a new computer for work  
temporary crown is not fun

---

April 14, 2016

## All I Deserve

I will make up a world  
fill it with no one  
but cars will move down roads  
park on streets  
stores will be open  
with no one in them  
I will buy burgers and ice cream  
but the servers will be pop-ups  
into existence to serve  
then away  
sometimes a beauty will cross my path  
she is there for just that  
one minute

---

April 15, 2016

## Boatman

let me introduce you  
to the woman who will watch  
over while you pass away  
who will care not one whit for you  
but who after will remember the slowing  
shallowing breaths and your final  
one and then walk out into the warm  
light and after a bit forget you  
aimlessly

---

April 16, 2016

## Pentucket Halls

I remember prowling the hallways  
looking for girls to love  
I was silly thinking how I dressed  
made me special when it made me only silly  
those girls though  
almost all are fat now  
some have passed  
none of them loved me even a tiny fraction  
fifty years later they still  
prefer to never speak to me  
wow just wow



April 17, 2016

## Crime Against Lobster

Binion's chicken fried lobster

really?

I mean

really??

---

April 18, 2016

## Why Him?

my father's been forgotten  
his life was filled with agony  
his father disappeared in death  
and my father never looked for him  
I was a forgotten son  
only me / I wonder still  
what I meant to them  
if anything  
I said goodbye to him at the airport  
as I went to North Carolina  
to graduate

April 19, 2016

## To a Stopping Place

I'll find a road that goes nowhere  
a pretty one with trees and stonewalls  
it will pass by a river or an interesting pond  
in summer it will fire up green and gold  
in winter the ice will be packed down  
birches will shiver as they shake in the buildup to a storm  
when it snows there will be no sounds  
one day I'll start down this road  
you will never find me

April 20, 2016

## Bad Lecture and Questions

better to keep quiet  
don't brag or lecture  
more better to leave  
leave it all behind  
then forget it

April 21, 2016

## The Question Angered Me

some days make more sense than others  
a well-tuned novel is filled with more emotion  
than the most earnest teenager  
people believe in ordinary people  
even when they've heard of the extraordinary

---

April 22, 2016

## Merrimac Nights

I would carry the fear all weekend  
parents gone to NH and I spend the days  
alone / at night I carry  
the largest knife around the house  
lock all the doors  
leave all lights on  
I dream of designing special sensors  
and lights to guard the outside  
we lived in the country  
no houses around  
I was afraid  
I could hardly sleep

---

April 23, 2016

## InkWell Learning New Things

your off the beaten track Doctor of Fine Arts  
your full-fledged haw-haw  
your effortless hymn  
your ex post facto junk e-mail  
your pocket-size OED  
your stock-still flash-forward  
your bit-by-bit Strategic Arms Limitation Talks  
your hand-to-hand bell-shaped curve  
your businesslike computer  
your knee-deep tete-a-tete  
your controlled parenthesis  
your carved in stone American Standard Code for Information Interchange  
your staring image

April 24, 2016

## Ink Well to the Rescue

your first first  
your unable commercial  
your go-as-you-please air-sleeve  
your alive how-do-you-do  
your naked as the day you were born cease and desist order  
your damn motive  
your hundred-and-sixty-fifth square dance  
your cold progress report  
your mummy-brown promotion  
your square-shaped variety show  
your eyes-only design  
your life-and-death bitch  
your purple-veined tra-la-la  
your originative product  
your dressed to the nines quarter-tone  
your blasted holler  
your commercial-grade endeavor  
your able ex  
your commercial-grade paradigm  
your hand-to-hand double standard of sexual behavior  
your all no



---

April 25, 2016

## Be My Baby

we cooked most nights  
watched tv in the cold dining room  
reading and studying  
no such thing as computers at home  
we were not interesting  
what we did would make for poor reading  
if fictionalized  
we were soon married and had a dog  
what we learn is that no matter  
the size and strength of the storm  
it will be sunny soon

April 26, 2016

## End Button

you push a button  
to make it ok  
they don't tell you but you know  
if you push it enough  
nothing will ever hurt  
again / ever

---

April 27, 2016

## What Is Fiction

the enclave they called it  
we lived west of the center of town  
but it always felt like north  
it was so small and pretty then  
it would have been a good haven  
to return to now but instead  
it's gone / to people who call  
it paradise / I would do anything  
to have it back / to have a week  
to quiz my parents / now I write  
their answers

April 28, 2016

## My Yearly Walk

so I still walk over to it  
still look down / sometimes kneel  
nothing really different from  
when it was a test of their lives  
now it's a test of mine

April 29, 2016

## I Found Her There

my dreams are my other place  
just as real as this here  
more interesting things to do  
sweeter people sometimes  
better situations  
as much guilt  
if only memory would help more

April 30, 2016

## Is She

I have been found  
to be no one at all  
I never was they soon will say  
I respond with this that I have seen  
leaves move

---

May 1, 2016

### As Whittier Might Think

many people found the little valley  
a wonder / a place to rest and retire  
a place to farm and forget  
a fresh smelling place still  
but quickly overfilling  
once a death rattle  
then a flourishing clean palace  
now too many with too much  
too few with too little  
it's just a small  
river valley

May 2, 2016

## A Great There

no doubt Whittier walked  
or road or drove down  
my road / passed by the barn  
I knew and maybe other buildings too  
regarded the great green grass  
and mowed hay a tribute to a nearby farm  
perhaps wondered what other writer  
would one day worry himself  
silly here



May 3, 2016

## What Is It About Amesbury?

never liked Amesbury  
too small or too scattered  
too few people  
like a small town but too big  
not a good street plan  
doesn't feel like home  
too many drinkers and drunks  
too many Dunkin Donuts  
too little there there there

May 4, 2016

## Long Away

I one day will go back  
to Merrimac and the river  
I will never leave again  
only the ones with long memories  
will be able to find me

May 5, 2016

## Soon But Not Yet

what will happen when I'm near the river again  
when I drive past the old places  
when I eat wrong things  
when I grow sad and nostalgic for the past

May 6, 2016

## Not One Grain of Self Pity

group of old dogs  
in a sanctuary back yard  
doing everything they used to do  
run around / bark / roll over  
play with toys / have fun  
only in slo mo  
and their voices are weak

May 7, 2016

## Wow I Mean Wow

I opened the door  
past midnight  
in a heavy snowstorm  
she waited inside a minute  
naked and eager  
soon she ran out and dived into the snowbank  
piled up between the door and garage  
I let her back in once she was done

---

May 8, 2016

## Goodbye Wife

some other day I'll write the end  
of a great story then dream up it's start  
for tonight I'll write the quick thought  
then dash away for a little cold drink  
words won't seem like much for days to go  
I'll need to listen to sweet talk  
and ambiguous love

May 9, 2016

## Fallen Friend

you have to admit  
it makes mistakes  
maybe it's time to withdraw claims  
work it more  
I feel discouraged and enraged  
by its too often silliness  
when can it work better  
what can make it work better

---

May 10, 2016

## Crap

the demo is now a big deal  
I have five minute of it  
full day and half a day are maybe  
not enough time to prepare  
crap crap crap  
at least InkWell just wrote this:  
a bluebird,  
this dead without winter  
infinitely not a bluebird



May 11, 2016

## More Work by the Day

worked all day on the demo  
found my program works ok  
found an el cap bug  
in a strange utility  
will have to kludge

May 12, 2016

## As Everywhere Else

I stood in front of the cold war  
era tenement and watched lights go out  
all but one  
from that room a little laugh  
burped out / the light dimmed  
from a front passage  
then it was the same

May 13, 2016

## Never Were

the clear dirty notes  
bent slowly and varied slowly  
plays a melody familiar  
full of longing and melancholy  
it will play while they fill  
in the hole around me  
it will be as if I never were

May 14, 2016

## Cosine Distance

the results are strange  
literature clumps logically  
when comparing language patterns  
almost all news stories cluster together  
in star patterns  
as if they were from another planet

May 15, 2016

## Onward

I won't hang with people no more  
I spend every night regretting every word  
the end of the run is right here  
right now / I applaud the loneliness  
seeping inward

May 16, 2016

## Waiting For Home

I like ideas and fight about them  
I talk too much and get into trouble  
no one really likes to talk to me  
I cherish loneliness  
it's a foolish way to ideate  
warm air / cut grass / dry hay  
salt air / heavy grass / wet hay  
we are always ready for something  
to open

May 17, 2016

## Hacking

making things fast  
patience and devotion  
trying and guessing  
writing things down  
tests  
hard and not much of a reward

May 18, 2016

## Don't Think Twice

there is a road I need  
it just loops and loops  
it will take me forward  
to where I've been  
then I will get off



May 19, 2016

## Changing Passwords

work to do  
still too full from yesterday's big meal  
wind whipping up  
tiring out  
made progress  
need to make more

May 20, 2016

## Along the Time Ways

the grand days have faded  
the beautiful long hair cut away  
finally and never to return  
love is not possible from now on  
finding ways to rest and work  
pain is always nearby  
all the lovely days are hard to recall  
nostalgia is a bore

---

May 21, 2016

## Look Here

experiments come and go  
I make only the mildest guesses  
then try it in code  
most fail / isn't that what's supposed to happen  
most take a day of programming  
a bunch of variations to see whether I'm in a vicinity  
usually not  
ain't science grand

May 22, 2016

## **Born in the USA**

funny to be at the end of a grand experiment  
our country became insane  
filled with people who hate those below  
and those below hate themselves too  
every ideal has turned on itself  
I am so so sad

May 23, 2016

## Careless and Sloppy

some reformulation to do  
means changes to be made  
figure out what's right  
always clean up  
make it better

May 24, 2016

## Dull Haiku

the smallest piece of beauty  
can be swallowed by blight  
during the shortest night

May 25, 2016

## Romantic Daydream

lots of rain near the river  
a fog drifting down the river like the water beneath  
slower and more romantic  
on a bank a couple is spooning  
they are growing wet

---

May 26, 2016

## Cold City / Warm Night

the door opened / she walked in  
outside the door the hall listened  
behind the door we dug in deep  
with a door between us and the world  
the world was sanded down  
when we opened the door food was waiting  
far away but we could walk  
approaching the door our paintbrush  
was wet and ready  
you have your door / I have one



May 27, 2016

## Citation

I made a fear  
tore it into many shards  
passed them out  
threw them hard  
laughed like a '50s jingo  
found them later  
flocked like starlings  
bringing down an old-time jet

---

May 28, 2016

## Chicago or America

top of a tall hotel  
in a city with a lake  
and flat plains else  
night and orange lights  
in long lines and rectangles  
a black snake line where the lake  
resides / either this or a warm  
body is why I travel to such  
a city in the cold of the year

May 29, 2016

## Recursive

the world dreams us  
we wonder because the world fills us with wonder  
we laugh because the world laughs too  
someday it will all stop  
when it's discovered there is no bottom  
we dream the world

May 30, 2016

## Learn Hard

learning isn't so easy  
I'll have to learn and hack  
but not soon  
hard and hard

May 31, 2016

## Grass and River

there's a river running right now  
it's been doing this for centuries  
you'd think it would have sunk lower by now  
but no / nothing like it  
many have sat its banks  
I sleep there

---

June 1, 2016

## Far North and Two

light from a sun low in the low west  
mist or fog lifting light off the moors  
outside the window they look out of  
enough light falls to raise the ridges of the roughhewn tabletop  
they sit on picnic-like benches with their tea  
telling stories of roadkill and art  
it takes a wise and small bird to see  
that this is all about healing

---

June 2, 2016

## Way Up

their house is stone made  
has been here on this short cliff  
hundreds of years / still it decays every day  
the man there and the woman there  
spend days trying to live  
nights trying harder to live  
the moor is empty except of short grasses  
brown bent / fine bent / hair-grass wavy and creeping  
everything abundant and common

June 3, 2016

**North of**

the roads there are one-lane  
rain and mist  
on good days you can see Fair Isle  
but really you can't see it  
many inlets and bays  
where it's paved and a town  
it's really paved  
doesn't snow much  
this is a place where the only things are friends



June 4, 2016

## Sad Echo

the song is sad  
we lift our eyes  
sing like puppies  
there is an echo  
it won't stop

---

June 5, 2016

## A Slow Vibrato

life runs on melancholy  
the sadness that forces contemplation  
meditation / sitting by water  
listening to wind in the leaves  
the wind-bent wheat  
the cavalcade of words saddened  
by life / that enemy of the perfect  
the tips of granite spires  
let the mist rise up  
our tears drop to meet it

June 6, 2016

## Burson

a part arrived  
I'll need to figure it out  
probably will break the device  
need to replace the whole thing  
I have luck like that

June 7, 2016

## Finest

what is the metaphor  
computing as thinking  
substitution in templates  
gathering without care  
one word stealing another

June 8, 2016

## Looping

counting all the things  
I can no longer do  
crying's not one of them

June 9, 2016

## Every

relying on beauty  
keeping it up is paramount  
the first / second / third / fourth  
things fall away / I hope for better  
I stretch to conclusions  
will the beautiful writing  
hide all others

June 10, 2016

## Move

you see it sometimes  
look of love they call it  
some have told me I've been gazed on that way  
I never see it  
never saw it  
I'm as blind as turtle wax  
doesn't make sense  
what I mean man

June 11, 2016

## Insight

progress / slow  
realization comes at a price  
like an egg is midair  
Where I was and where I will be  
differ



June 12, 2016

## After the French

outside the snow drops the pine bows low  
in a bar nearby a barmaid puts her hand on an old man's back  
I lower the shades and pull back layers of quilts  
I once held women here  
when that snow hits the ground a great rumbling will commence  
a communal shedding of tears  
sobs and drops

---

June 13, 2016

## Potsdam and Outside

the city's been rebuilt  
since the War / since  
the Cold War / since  
the Wall came down  
if it's authentic it's a Disneyish authenticity  
too polished sure but detail missing  
outlying cities still are broken / defeated  
in their near death they're real  
go there

June 14, 2016

## Slow Bus Coming

the bus is coming  
slow up the slightest rise  
I sit by the kitchen window with my mother waiting  
my hair has been sprayed into place  
and smells / I carry a leather briefcase  
I am just in seventh grade  
or I was

June 15, 2016

## I Sit Here Alone

I read all the stories and essays about families  
I never had one / not a normal one  
I can tell because people prefer to stay away  
not re-invite me  
they don't say much / I stay to the side  
I sit here alone writing I sit here alone  
James Wright taught me that

June 16, 2016

## Against Weapons

I work through my work pile  
I am not behind but it feels so  
I love to debate and I am not kind  
though I'm weak few outthink me

---

June 17, 2016

## Hoyt Hill

sliding down a hill  
toboggan and my father  
with good snow we go through the small gap  
in stonewall between this field and the next down  
sometimes we had to bail  
when we headed off course  
we made mush blocks for bursting through  
he's gone / I always rode behind him

June 18, 2016

## Times? Metric Kerning?

why rules over beauty  
maybe it's a way to go out gracefully  
I won't compromise

June 19, 2016

## Riverside

tomorrow / back in the heart  
pilgrimage / reforming memories  
will it all work  
fear grows / desire lags



June 20, 2016

## My Ears

the music is soft  
it plays quietly in my ears  
the music is quiet  
it plays softly against my ears  
the music plays on

---

June 21, 2016

## At The Wedding Bench

by the river eating beach pizza  
hot day turning warm  
good winds from the south  
I thought I got too little  
but it was too much  
too sweet / boats went upriver  
I was sitting at the bench right  
where we got married  
birds called to each other  
I called too  
I bowed and dreamt  
how a day

---

June 22, 2016

## At Thai

tonight at the Thai Newburyport restaurant  
the mid-aged dark-haired woman at the next table  
voice like an actor / she mentioned her fans  
she was captured by her dinner mate  
but scanned outside toward the river often  
I couldn't stop watching her  
everything she said was trivial

June 23, 2016

## Math Marriage

a man engaged to a pretty woman  
sweet and smiling / one could say innocent  
you wish them well  
wish her well  
you hope for a life with small standard deviations

---

June 24, 2016

## Today Warm Day

up on the second floor  
over Hampton Beach  
eating fried clams and talking  
Dave starts choking from an esophagus problem  
we watch gathering napkins  
we spoke of many things  
like Mrs Costain's funeral  
and the poem I read there  
one I wrote here / I still cry  
Dave recovered and we laughed

June 25, 2016

## Frozen Wireless

the path is frozen  
feet passing hurt and buzz  
the river is ahead and how  
will people cross / the wind  
is not your friend no matter  
how many times you've made it right  
we will cross waist deep and seem to die  
instead we're only frozen

June 26, 2016

## Mink

three mink in a 60 acre  
beaver pond / three small guys  
on the shore / on logs / under brush  
staring at me / knowing nothing would happen  
downstream from the farm

June 27, 2016

## Cobbler Brook Trail

the walk was short  
my toenail was jammed in  
so I quit soon  
not to repeat the last bad hike  
cautious in my age  
don't want bad news again



June 28, 2016

## After Home

I left and the river cried  
I drove one / two last times around  
to the farm / it was warm and very so  
as always it was hard to travel back  
still not over it  
where though where

June 29, 2016

## Parrot Love

two birds at last together  
we see them as us  
we cry as they groom each other  
when they pluck themselves bald  
are they pining for love

June 30, 2016

## All To End

the last of time  
a deviant walk through a city  
above the art deco spires conspire  
to make of the place a duende of fortitude  
a wild Emersonian cry for a shout  
I walked down an alley and found a man  
under piles of rags on a cardboard mat  
he was waiting for it all to be over

July 1, 2016

**By the Buoy**

I could sit there for hours  
watching water flowing upriver  
boats coming down / under the bridge  
slowing then speeding  
the light growing pink  
later blue / I knew a woman watched  
from her window across the road  
she wondered what I was looking at  
what I saw / she cannot know

July 2, 2016

## In Front Of School

the past in stark white  
against deep black  
the kids sit / stand before their  
school / after really  
their lives are dry now or not at all  
all my falling apart seems a part of them too  
I see some of the faces planted  
behind ones I still know or knew  
what a cruel sadness

July 3, 2016

## Repair / Retire

I fixed the pond today  
debugged and repaired  
probably some better patches to add next time  
I read a lot too  
I will go where the words are

July 4, 2016

## I Made It!

I would prefer to hear  
how great our country is  
from people who never made it  
near the top / who stayed low

July 5, 2016

## Ugly Coincidence

the beautiful sunset is farther north  
than I remember it in summer  
if I draw a line down Hadley Road  
to the south  
it intersects Linwood Cemetery



July 6, 2016

## Watching

I wish I were less afraid  
foolish times and a brandy or port  
my pain will increase and I'll stop  
short of an achievement  
stop I say

July 7, 2016

## Dallas

tonight they had had enough  
fought back  
now what

July 8, 2016

## Main Field With Wind

out in the field  
a rock that looks shallow  
a small branchy bush beside it  
a woodchuck den with two exits near it  
but decades later I saw the rock  
was a mass / one big enough  
for two or three popes

---

July 9, 2016

## Now the Wind

out in the field  
a rock that looks shallow  
a small branchy bush beside it  
before a storm a wind heads up  
along the rim and stonewalls  
oak trees and apple trees wave  
their leaves and drops hit my arms  
face / the top of my head  
I hear my mother calling  
but I'm behind the rock  
the woodchuck waits

July 10, 2016

## In A Town

a tree at the north end of a stonewall  
harmonica music changing timbre to signal feeling  
a change of heart / a new plan  
based on dreams or a sudden jerk  
in the heart of the mind  
he discards his hat / jumps  
on a bus to big water

July 11, 2016

## North End

what happens when an old man sits under the oak  
at the north end of a stonewall in Maine  
what happens when a young girl sits there later  
one might guess  
the events cancel and it's as if  
just an oak sits at the north end of a stonewall in Maine

---

July 12, 2016

## Pairs

so she walks the edges of the fields  
stonewalls with trees and bushes growing each side  
she doesn't know that if she lifts a stone  
from the wall an ancient odor will arise  
she doesn't know animals live in the centers of the fields  
she stays away from the path gaps in the middles of the walls  
crosses only at the corners  
she doesn't realize the trees she just passed are pears

July 13, 2016

## Calories in Potsdam

tonight I ate a pig leg  
just a thin cut through the thigh  
with bone and skin / when I pulled  
off the skin a layer of meat  
rested below / it tasted great  
with sauerkraut / then the blueberry too  
much



---

July 14, 2016

## Penny?

cool and a big wind  
over the lake my hotel room  
looks out over  
tomorrow Rome / as if barbarians  
were plundering the great city  
instead a small group of hackers  
heading for workshops  
how Big Bang Theory

July 15, 2016

## Forum Pix

hot and tired  
no wifi here  
expensive hotel  
too much food for supper

July 16, 2016

## Hotel Forum

Forum today and Colosseum  
selfie sticks / I photograph them  
not hot but a lot of walking  
ok food / sleep a difficulty

July 17, 2016

## Narrow Alleys

maybe she is just around the next corner  
she is wearing her best summer skirt  
her hair is so dark the sky bleeds  
a northern green  
we will lie in damp sheets and pray for a breeze  
maybe she isn't

July 18, 2016

## Waking to the Hotel

the house that starts as part  
of an arch has windows already dark  
I scan up and see the woman looking down  
but I'm walking away / she scans me sad too  
a doorway / stairs / a couch / a bed

July 19, 2016

## Ugh

exhausted / sweating / sore  
in pain / unhappy  
I will not play the pack mule  
tomorrow / I want to sleep for days

July 20, 2016

## Hot Long

ready for a long sleep  
feet swollen and sore  
the night is longing for friends

July 21, 2016

## What Do We Know?

chunky old woman  
laughing with her man  
she catches no eyes but his  
she sees no one but him  
their world has just two in it  
and we outside it call her fat  
call her old  
call her ugly



July 22, 2016

## She Is Not Mine

what would she be now  
a little worn but still vibrant  
a deep scar under one eye  
she moves like a big cat  
when I walk by she never  
looks my way

July 23, 2016

## On The See

water laps on the rough shore  
a wind down the lake is all that's needed  
motor boats and sculls / a kayak / canoe  
floaters / below my window young women in bikinis  
dream of things none of which is me

July 24, 2016

## On The Fly

the long trip  
I hate it forever  
I fear it  
once home I'll rest for days  
I will sleep restlessly

July 25, 2016

## Every Step

trip over and a regret for leaving  
I could take it to live like a transient  
not understanding the lives around me  
finding a way to elongate the living trust  
no one has when I walk past them toward  
the next best looking woman

July 26, 2016

## Sad Girl

a dusky voice getting  
quiet at dusk as you might say  
is it an invitation  
did I hear the word bed  
well it's a long walk we make  
from a place to the same place  
I was asleep and will be again

July 27, 2016

## Nose Blow

so sick today and last night  
something bad in Potsdam got to me  
now I'm sweating and congested  
hard to sleep  
will I ever get better is a question I ask

July 28, 2016

## My Mother

she was afraid but strong  
she died alone as she wished  
she suffered I think and I wept for that  
nothing was easy or pleasant for her  
why wouldn't we run from her

July 29, 2016

## Sitting Up All Night

still sick  
these things stick around for me  
sleep is hard  
congestion bad  
coughing fits and a feeling to vomit  
haven't had one of these for a long time  
makes me wish



July 30, 2016

## Dead-like III

still ill  
felling better during the day  
but congestion explodes at times  
had I not been on an airplane for  
twelve hours I would not have been  
still ill

July 31, 2016

## Looking For

I am feeling trapped  
to make trip I need not do  
aside from providing visibility  
to my group at work  
I could extend it to a vacation  
but that won't work and that's  
why I feel trapped  
I kind of hate them for that

---

August 1, 2016

## Legends

the deep beautiful scene of background mountains  
the sun almost in your eyes / a line of trees  
closer in and a rider approaching  
right there though is a bed  
of mud and manure and trampled grass  
the beauty has a chaos / is made of mud and manure  
crushed bugs and worms / there are odors and wrongs  
added up they make right

August 2, 2016

## Bad Temper

some things I did I've worked  
hard to forget / mostly I have  
but they are below the surface  
and like rocks in a river low water  
shows the tops slicing through  
creating an edged wake  
a wakefulness

August 3, 2016

## A Family

a pond filled with hornpout  
skimming the surface  
a mud cat  
boys jumping in getting pricked  
I didn't like the pout  
I didn't like the boys

August 4, 2016

## Road Fear

right now someone on a road  
is scared because something has happened to their car  
others rarely pass  
I'm thinking of that road across the southern coast of Australia  
no gas stations  
few places to stay or eat  
it is dry / it's a desert  
right now someone has just started to cry  
would you help her?

August 5, 2016

## **Brazil**

poor Brazil  
low budget for Olympics opening  
they had to rely on creativity  
and talent not money  
and extravagant technology

---

August 6, 2016

## Mineko

she didn't answer the phone  
not for hours  
the neighbors weren't home  
we called / we called  
then we drove there  
we panicked in our own ways the whole 90 minute drive  
I planned all the alternatives in my head  
she was watching a movie about lava spiders  
her phones had no dial tone  
I broke down



August 7, 2016

## Seems We Meet

tonight the cool air draws  
its last breath before darkness  
grabs hold of it  
I am sure there is no type  
to describe it  
any description made this way  
would be hollow

August 8, 2016

## Arranged To Fail

sometimes we rest  
when there is road to gain  
sometimes we sing  
when the wish shushes through wheat  
sometimes we write long poems  
when the pencil is just a stub

August 9, 2016

**Flint**

watching the old Star Trek series  
all the women whom a lusted about  
now old women / they are finally in my league  
I once dreamt of owning all these episodes on film  
and watching them every night  
how art changes

August 10, 2016

## One More

a fire was lit one morning  
in a dark wood  
it started small / just some twigs and small flames  
by noon it was roaring  
even though the day was hot  
it was as if dried logs were heaped on it  
by sunset it was fading  
embers for many hours  
by deep dark in the night it was cold and black  
white ashes underneath  
the fire / it was the fire

August 11, 2016

## I Freaked

my dreams are bitter and crazy  
they are like love  
but under bad covers  
it made no sense  
but I was warm and alive  
I cried when it was done  
when I was done  
when all was done

August 12, 2016

## River Watch

will I go another time  
this summer  
to enjoy my past and rest  
or stay home and wither  
I want to sit all day by the river  
and watch it

August 13, 2016

## Failing

bad evening for love  
hard time  
bad results  
need motivation

August 14, 2016

## A Farm

we shopped for stale bulkies  
at the A&P  
we mixed them with rotting vegetables  
and warm water as feed for hogs  
some called it slop  
later in the evening I'd walk the border of the big field  
maybe grab a couple grapes for a snack  
or a grape leaf  
it was a farm



August 15, 2016

## Once More

I one day  
will return to see myself  
walking quickly into the barn  
where I will collapse in wonder  
on the stacked bed of dried hay  
and smell the past grow fresh

---

August 16, 2016

## From Me

we sat / she and I  
on a bench by the Bay  
by the Bay Bridge  
a tough June day  
sun hard on us  
we had had coffee  
we had talked  
now I sat and watched her  
watched the container ships head toward berths  
near Oakland  
we sat silently / I watched her slide close to sleep  
after a long wait  
silence  
she stood and never looking back  
walked away

August 17, 2016

## And Underground

the woods are tangled  
small trees make for cramping  
low branches / bushes  
a path worn by cows and deer lead  
to a old granite boulder  
good for small climbs  
something big and patient  
rolled it here  
it cracked as it settled

August 18, 2016

## Waterless

the drought  
which years  
all the 60s  
our wells ran dry  
our septic tank tanked  
we flushed rarely  
crops went nowhere  
I remember some of it

August 19, 2016

## Larry Foley

the past pops up  
like a hummingbird rising to deck level  
this was never possible before  
slow and far was normal  
now anyone can find you  
and you can find them

August 20, 2016

## So Red

in a distant western town  
I spied a German girl  
walking in a warm coat  
around the town's plaza  
her hair  
her hair  
her hair  
so red  
orange almost

August 21, 2016

## No Place We Can

logs on a small fire  
just coals mostly  
in the room we look  
at each other  
at the fire  
outside snow drops onto branches  
onto leaves  
in the morning we will have  
no  
place to go

---

August 22, 2016

## I Heard Crying

I walked past the room  
the lights in the corridor were high and bright  
the colors were a white and a yellow  
I was walking out to the parking lot  
after visiting a man I knew who was ill  
and recovering but slowly

in the room a small family  
on the bed a woman they loved  
had just left  
I pray she left  
I pray there is a parking lot  
she's heading toward  
then home



---

August 23, 2016

## As Clear as Hyaline

these two tests differ in only one respect  
she began to recover from her numb unresponsiveness after the accident  
an army lying in wait in the forest  
the morning is as clear as diamond or as hyaline  
put your books on top of the desk  
he is in the care of a bodyguard  
the article about the artist inspired the exhibition of his recent work

August 24, 2016

## Not You

I took her picture  
made her wonderful  
she exploded with joy  
her grandchildren will say  
that's not you mee-maw

August 25, 2016

## Afternoons

sitting on a porch  
facing west I think  
fewer clouds would help decide  
later she would come out  
I didn't know how to approach her  
so I just sat  
has anyone been this shy

---

August 26, 2016

## Bulked Up

woman on a bridge  
walking across  
bundled skinless  
just her eyes  
the bridge is covered with frost  
lacework parapet / all frost  
river thick frozen  
snow on it  
snow on the deck  
she might look at me as I work my camera  
or she might not be real

August 27, 2016

## Learn Baby Learn

I can't learn the lesson  
everything about love is over  
notice the l  
notice the r  
love is over

August 28, 2016

## Voice From The Past

someone remembers me better  
my memory doesn't care  
I parry with grace so he thinks I do  
from him I learn what to parrot back  
par for the course

August 29, 2016

## Lonely Lonely Nights

something has been wrong for decades  
I am no one's favorite  
I do things alone  
when confronted with facing new things alone  
though  
I panic / I break down  
my mother knew it  
she did what she could then gave up  
they all do

August 30, 2016

## Art as Mistake

what makes a poem art  
is when you make a mistake  
with words and the mistake  
is better than your thought



---

August 31, 2016

## The Place and Me

the pond and skating on it  
frogs in summer  
the worn path from the road to it  
made by neighbors and strangers  
short and straight through a small field  
up the hill my nana's house  
I thought  
and all the history of it and  
poor photos with hardly details  
could this whole constellation of place  
be what broke me into myself  
my inscape / your instress

September 1, 2016

## True Random

what is new  
who makes it  
because we see people making things  
we believe things are made  
because we see people think  
we believe in thought  
we are fooled by artificial randomness  
but the real thing makes everything

September 2, 2016

## Last Year's Perfume

HoJos / Howard Johnson  
I went there not often  
but I did go  
reliable but boring  
none left  
not many of me left soon  
enough

September 3, 2016

## At Night

many lost  
they smiled at me in pictures  
I was important then  
now all have left  
I type in words  
tiring and tired

---

September 4, 2016

## Blizzard or Such

snow piled up to the roofline  
even without film it looks blue  
the roads were one car narrow  
maybe it will snow again  
the bridge was too hard to get to  
the last part was down a steepness  
and the river / what was it thinking  
as chunks wended down  
the ocean was as green as the first time

September 5, 2016

## Joe Walsh

when I learned to write  
I listened to sad music  
so that's how I write  
though I wonder how much I learned  
how sad I was

---

September 6, 2016

## Flat Bound and Clouds

when I drive the plains  
the sky is almost everywhere  
I drive toward it  
away from it  
I sometimes am it  
clouds / I see them  
they gather / turn black  
turn tight circles  
turn green / they worry me  
I drive even faster  
toward a slim shining horizon

---

September 7, 2016

## More More

I found a book to read  
and I read it over and over  
no one said there were more  
but that book / read differently  
each time because reading it  
the  $(n + 1)^{\text{st}}$  time is in the context  
of having read it  $n$  times  
the onion thing goes here  
with two books / there are more more books



---

September 8, 2016

## HiDef

Star Trek fifty years ago  
the first night  
the first show  
I watched but don't remember watching  
it made a difference  
I thought one day I would own it on film  
watch it every night with a projector  
I thought that for ten or twenty years

September 9, 2016

## Order Wrong

the great green emeralds  
lay on dark velvet  
I considered writing  
the green great emeralds  
but it felt wrong and I couldn't say why  
adjectives in the wrong order  
no one taught me that  
but I and we all know it

September 10, 2016

## Of New England

the beauty of the storm  
heavy snow / heavy sea  
clouds and fog low  
sea foam up  
I stand by the bluff and watch with glass  
for ships not well / not safe  
they want me here  
the dead don't care

September 11, 2016

## Will or Might

we sit on the hyphen  
that separates one death from another  
that joins one death to the other  
both deaths are my deaths  
the first seemed to pass quickly  
the other?

September 12, 2016

## Timelessness

right now the river flows  
right now a car is on the bridge  
soon the day will end  
soon I will reflect on it all  
later a woman will walk into a new apartment  
later a life will begin or end

September 13, 2016

## Bad Poem

a simple bug but I can't find it  
when fixed things will work beautifully  
tomorrow I will spend all day on it  
the bug is for performance  
it's important

September 14, 2016

## Code Not Poems

did I find the bug?  
not really / I fixed it  
or worked around i  
it all works ok now  
but I need to fold it back into the main program  
I will listen to sweet music  
and type slowly

September 15, 2016

## Limitations

figuring out / figuring slowly  
words are hard  
code is hard



September 16, 2016

## Hate the Man

what a miserable day  
maybe my time is limited  
I hate being made a fool

September 17, 2016

## More and More

misery  
I don't like slapsdowns  
it stops me from writing  
from working well  
other problems in the house

September 18, 2016

## Fear of Them

I fear and dislike  
why am I like this  
I await tomorrow with anger and dislodgment  
I will go into a zen state to survive

September 19, 2016

## Now Wait

so good so far  
no red flags but there might be with lab work  
I am not as terrified  
several positive points  
now wait

September 20, 2016

## No Wait

yes bad news  
not fatal  
but not good  
I guess my pessimism  
still works great

---

September 21, 2016

## No Way

I will work until there is no more work  
I was raised to be lazy  
no one had hopes  
I liked to lie in bed and dream  
awake or asleep  
they all planned for a sad fate  
Summer would pass by and twilight  
would ring the land  
the red behind the leafless tress  
signaled a direction  
I hated to lose  
but it's all I do

September 22, 2016

## Before

I function through the depression  
crawling a little faster now  
it would be nice  
to have the time to finish  
I could never imagine  
thinking that  
before

September 23, 2016

## Away Away O

let me be in a forgotten place  
no one knows me or where I am  
I want to be unknowable  
I want only some words to escape  
I want my friends to drive by my window  
never look in  
never know I'm there



September 24, 2016

## The Everything of It

the world buzzes in every corner  
so many things are happening at one time  
we think linearly  
we work hard to mimic what's real  
so real things can work real good

September 25, 2016

## Bad Notice

I am so clueless  
places I didn't know exist  
are common to friends  
makes we wonder  
how much I can see  
how I notice

September 26, 2016

## White Down

there are big flakes  
coming down on the fields  
in the woods  
they are forming a blanket  
on my past and every past in the area  
one beneath which we will all sleep  
like lambs covered in our own wool

September 27, 2016

## Winter Slough

the long days are gone  
it was a bad Summer  
travel sure but not to home enough  
not enough writing  
too sick sometimes  
now the crawl through Winter

September 28, 2016

## Bugs Who Cares?

wherever I look there is a little bug  
doesn't change things  
it's funny that way  
too distracted  
not that smart  
care only about the big picture

September 29, 2016

## Joys of Winter

I will wait until the cold and dark  
descend on the roads and the trees are blank scratches  
before I ride them and watch them sway in the cold  
Montréal Express and hear the ice crack when the late  
morning sun hits it / I will eat beach pizza

---

September 30, 2016

## Fear the Reaper

a year and some  
after he died and they were alone caring for the farm  
the hurricane hit and knocked down important trees  
some fell on coops and outbuildings  
the roads were blocked and milk for sale curdled instead  
one thing on top of another thing  
chickens were lost in the winds  
cows and horses broke bones and became meat  
windows blew in and the house was soaked  
electricity stopped for many days  
and their farm was a last one restored  
bad luck pitched its ruinous tent

October 1, 2016

## Don't Dream

I dream of my old home  
I rarely think of Champaign  
I rarely dream of California  
it is my only home  
my mind is wandering  
always toward it



October 2, 2016

## Helpless

you know I think I don't have long  
I must start writing soon  
or it will never get done  
I remember when I thought I'd be  
the youngest person to write a novel

October 3, 2016

## Hard Art

a man who carves stone  
died today  
his hammers / his chisels left by a roughed piece  
his rasps in a rack near his bench  
he will be buried nearby his studio  
in an old stand of trees  
who will carve his stone

October 4, 2016

## Half of My Heart

that darkness  
it knows I wait to return  
short days  
early dark  
late dark  
all reasons to wonder what  
that deep darkness requires

---

October 5, 2016

## S4

I was born so long ago  
photos of that time are faded  
things / cars barns cows / look like they  
never could exist  
my mother  
I can tell by her look she wanted something else  
something to make her meaningless life  
worthy of crossing that bridge  
tremendous across that river  
her face shining as if for smile

---

October 6, 2016

## Sincerely

in that photo  
of her  
she's signed it  
sincerely  
Helen 34  
which means she was 19  
but signed it to whom  
it was in her house  
something given back  
too soon to be to my father  
to her mother  
her father  
everything about her  
is a maze

October 7, 2016

## How We Go

decay creeps in  
breaking is commo  
the end is peaceful  
via gradualness  
like when tears  
dry up

October 8, 2016

## Google A Lot

I want to find a way to find  
edges in 1-d data  
I don't know how to ask  
my computer to find it  
I will google a lot  
tomorrow

October 9, 2016

## Accord

the cold out of the north  
beavers building dams  
leaves stuck to the road  
then blowing with poor aim down it  
I watch from my window  
holding a book  
like the ones I wanted to write



October 10, 2016

## I Ran Across It

abandoned railroad tracks  
through woods  
covered over in brush  
rotten ties  
rusted rails  
someone would make it a bike trail  
a hiking trail  
instead it just goes nowhere  
once it went everywhere

October 11, 2016

## Is That Right?

I saw a beautiful woman walking  
on the other side of the street  
I thought to myself  
she is a beautiful woman  
then I stopped  
I was showing too much micro aggression

October 12, 2016

## Transparent

there is a hopeless way to do things  
I read my words from days and worry  
the journey was just a detour  
bumps in the road  
jostles / bumpers  
now nothing  
nothing more

---

October 13, 2016

## Every Vow

the wood siding on the barn was grey in the light  
dark in the rain  
when I sat on the slab by the handpump near the barn  
I'd worry about how my future would relax itself out  
all the great things  
instead I became a hateful man  
whom many despised  
now though  
it all makes sense

October 14, 2016

## Beautiful

the past is a glacier driven stone  
large as a house  
sitting under a shawl of leaves  
surrounded by despondent pines  
and swayable maples  
sometimes you hear flutes

October 15, 2016

## Reformation

when he had invented  
he was so in December  
that he is equal to 95  
other things moronic

October 16, 2016

## Twilight Times

it will be a hard day  
for traveling along the banks  
scratchy branches not hiding much  
of the dark water looking still  
but flowing fast  
the twilight days are like this  
the water's faster than you see

October 17, 2016

## Errors

a cold day  
today / years ago  
it takes some practice to recognize mistakes  
maybe you never do  
lots of ways to do it  
recognize / mistake



October 18, 2016

## Worst

the end of the river  
islands splitting it  
the sand pushed in and pushed out  
they say it makes a loud sound  
twice a year  
or was it three times  
and each time it was the sound  
of a turn for the worse

---

October 19, 2016

## Fall Palette

there were colors all fall  
most years growing up  
I don't remember them much  
the late dark green  
the brown falling and on the ground  
how we raked them into piles  
and burned them on the road  
how we burned corn stubble in the field  
this is how life is made

October 20, 2016

## Dog Wiener

why are some bugs  
so weird  
like how could I ever have imagined it worked  
and I spend hours find / fix ing them  
what gives  
sleeplessness  
dizziness  
jeepers creepers

---

October 21, 2016

## Did Happen

and sometimes you think you've fixed them but  
you haven't and you revisit the code over  
and over / you've been careful  
written down your steps but  
but when you go back the next day  
it's broken as if nothing you did  
happened

October 22, 2016

## Centros Illinois

back tomorrow to the place  
I started to grow up in  
learned how to be in the world  
how to be with people  
I think I didn't get very far  
I will return and continue

October 23, 2016

## Allerton

dull colors in mid fall  
stubble in the fields  
warm days and difficult discussions  
my goal to lay low and say little  
the air is full of burning

October 24, 2016

## Loss

some bad ideas creep in  
I fix them and all is well  
maybe / I work slowly to dispel  
the facts of matters  
I am what they call a slow time loser

October 25, 2016

## In a Forest

an honor but  
talk dispersed it  
I wish I could savor  
nothing is as it seems  
outside the leaves turn  
in the cold languid air



October 26, 2016

## Centroi Illinois

down the long trail to the forest  
past gardens / past musician statues  
into the sunken arena  
leaves coming down and turning  
squirrels working it  
autumn is like this

October 27, 2016

## 1001

woman of stories  
keeping alive  
hair black thick and parted  
to one side  
when calm she shines  
when not is ordinary

October 28, 2016

## 100

yesterday her birthday  
I was driving all day  
then flying into the night  
there were many reasons to forget  
she would be 100

October 29, 2016

## Tranströmer Number 1

falls and the finding  
sun for wrongful findings  
the hand-wronging finding

hazel and that nature  
light and small natures  
my tail-downing nature

orange but the deep  
wind or sleeping places  
the right-watching sea

October 30, 2016

## Tranströmer Number 2

the head cans  
ends are standing past  
the sound is standing

the snow-on-the-mountain clears  
goods are heading past  
this head is sure

the grass perfects  
surfaces are working past  
all red is illegal

---

October 31, 2016

## Thoughts Are Actions

our thoughts are actions  
soon thought is all  
that rain that fell that night  
is everywhere things can matter  
no matter  
if I thought of the year I graduated  
high school / thought of someone  
born the turn of the century  
thought would be all

November 1, 2016

## River Ij

food is bad here  
I tremble with distaste  
the streets are slippery  
women have dark black hair  
men aren't noticed  
I want to finally fix the last problem  
why is it so hard

November 2, 2016

## On Such A Winter's Day

the wind blew horizontal  
rain and flags going that way too  
snow chime in and snapping pix was out  
I didn't sleep under feather covers  
but wish I had



---

November 3, 2016

## Oudezijds Voorburgwal

out there the clouds and hard gray  
the sky tinged slightly blue  
canals ringed everywhere like a limited Venice  
what you smell is the sweet tar of weed  
coffee shops closed as mellow knocks  
wired for a loop / yes  
you know what I mean  
a city where women where black tights  
under their short wool skirts

November 4, 2016

## Slowly

lousy day  
talk went poorly  
no respect I think  
I want to forget  
quickly

November 5, 2016

## Retiring

I hope to be home soon  
start to let this be past  
I think I want to hide away  
just write or something  
when I get to New England  
I will decide future things

November 6, 2016

## Lost and Losing

don't I wish for better  
the arctic-friendship twists  
out of chill's harsh bleakness  
my relationship to the cold snap

November 7, 2016

## Grab Words

I am sensing a change  
the pleasure is waning  
I wish for a curious admiration  
amazing rattling  
awes of tremendous marvel  
wildness lives here

November 8, 2016

## On Coldness

the arctic-friendship twists  
out of chill's harsh bleakness  
our relationship is a cold snap

November 9, 2016

## WTF

the early wake-robin goes forth  
flip-flops are riding herd past  
their lower mantle is god-fearing

the purple milk vetch sits tight  
mise en scenes are shooing away past  
a terra firma is bare-knuckle

November 10, 2016

## Calmlessneses

there is a hole somewhere  
holding a path to a better life  
or a worse one  
I want to slip into a slow book  
and become a piece of calm



November 11, 2016

## It Came To This

to think my last days  
will coincide with the last days  
of my country

November 12, 2016

## Cry Baby

despite the insane  
the river still flows  
in and out  
each day with the moon in charge  
cold and dark water  
strong current one way or the other  
I plan to sit by it  
until the break of night

November 13, 2016

## Faulty

someone said it and I thought it false  
I recall it and think it true  
one gets what one deserves

November 14, 2016

## Writing Don't Work

I hope to have eaten fish today  
it is not today yet  
when will I be able to write again?

November 15, 2016

## Near Newburyport

rain heavy / horizontal  
pushing fast through gaps  
between buildings  
the sea helps  
there is a grayness in the air  
like a welcome mat for death  
the leaves wish you a skidding slide  
into a ditch / the wind blows

---

November 16, 2016

## In A Harbor Town

cold / rainy / big wind  
the windows cricking from hard rain pellets  
I ate a hot meal and lingered  
the table in front of me  
two women facing and eating slow  
they are not beautiful  
but they linger nearby  
later I exit and the hard wind and the hard rain  
boggle me / I avoid dips and holes  
headlights sparkle in front of me  
though I work hard I get home slow

November 17, 2016

## ReVerB

who would you love  
if the strings were all cut  
not attachments  
but constraints  
like the strings attached to anything good  
the downsides  
the drifting river currents  
who would you love  
if love were all there were

November 18, 2016

## Yuck

how can I avoid  
news for years  
how can I just tend  
my small patch



November 19, 2016

## Rocks Village

the river's been filled up  
reckoning of a close moon  
the ladies want me to think them  
like to show off  
I walk slowly behind them

November 20, 2016

## Night Of

after the storm a deep clear  
leaves too gone for great pix  
every now and then a bright yellow  
bright red one  
a man walking through the cemetery  
reminds me of an old movie  
I watched until he left

November 21, 2016

## My Old Friend

now I'm back  
the toll is high  
I can almost read newspapers  
there were too many sadnesses on the trip  
now I cower

November 22, 2016

## I Wonder

today we mourn  
a bad day  
I took out my bb gun  
drew a shooter on a piece of cardboard  
leaned it against the base of our fireplace  
and shot it all evening  
who was most crazy

---

November 23, 2016

## Discover the Deep-Fat-Fried Sky

today my software wrote two short poems  
the same software  
thinking divergently  
which do you prefer

avant-garde Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art  
setting on fire  
the half-deep-fat-fried ship-towed long-range acoustic detection system

any part of grey—  
vivid discoveries  
on the morning sky

---

November 24, 2016

## Before or After a Storm

the spiritual is beneath a thin surface  
fullblown like an overwhite sky  
after too stormy a night  
I've walked slowly toward an oak  
with deep red leaves remaining  
I am as always outwardly alone  
what I recall is the wind  
the rain  
the bridge of haunting dreams

November 25, 2016

## Smalls

there is a pretty river  
near a dark forest  
I would walk from one to the other  
I am not productive  
I embrace leisure

November 26, 2016

## No One Dares

making a story out her experience  
making it more extreme  
more real  
more exciting  
how can tell if it works  
fiction is like that



November 27, 2016

## Out of Here

you know even when  
it's cold the river can be calm  
floods / hurricanes / blizzards  
killing heat waves  
all these and life and death  
visited along the river

November 28, 2016

## Closely Follow

trees and headstones against a hard blue  
winter sky viewed from the bottom of a small hill  
a place like one we all will inhabit  
stark beauty  
stark truth

November 29, 2016

## Bright Spot

I like to write  
but can I make it erotic  
situations I imagine are horny  
but to readers  
is the pace too slow  
the language too clinical  
sex scenes  
do I make them into objects  
not people

November 30, 2016

## Hacked

another mystery  
when was Nana's house built  
early 1940s or 1949  
perhaps one is the first remodel  
or completion date  
or just one more thing

---

December 1, 2016

## Masterpiece

the rooms in 1961 were pastel  
or walnut or mahogany veneer  
clocks were shaped like lens flare  
chairs were vinyl and couches faux leather  
life was complex only behind the scenes  
back then I had no ambitions or plans  
no future to visualize  
same as now  
I guess

---

December 2, 2016

## Dumb Writer's Trick

snow piled up overnight  
in the morning we could almost not  
open the door  
we shoveled out the driveway  
to get our car out  
we shopped for food  
brought it back  
the pot belly stove kept us warm  
once the wood was in and dry  
the pump worked  
the electricity worked  
the toilet and shower worked  
the sink worked  
we made it  
it was love

December 3, 2016

## I Keep My Visions to Myself

when I first arrived  
one song played over and over  
I drove to the Lab each day  
programmed but I was bad at it  
careless and sloppy  
that road had prehistoric eucalyptus  
tarweed sweet all Summer  
I was the best I would ever be

December 4, 2016

## Amen

I live in a country falling apart  
what I thought was sane and proper  
is considered by most as crazy and immoral  
I live in fear  
I will do so the rest of my life  
freedom is not the free market



December 5, 2016

## All One Can Do

in a town in the desert right now  
a pair of dogs explores the backs of restaurants and bars  
seeking good tastes / leftover morsels  
the I've sought out discarded women  
and not the fresh

December 6, 2016

## Similar Objects

town on the river  
at the edge of the sea  
the wind off of it  
the spray and salt air  
the one of great beauty there waiting  
for someone like me  
to leave

December 7, 2016

## Meredith etc

sun dropped down behind the pines  
across the field  
across the road  
across the yard  
behind the window  
I'm sitting on the fireplace hearth  
working up the courage  
(that I never find)  
to call her

---

December 8, 2016

## Hey Baby

no markings on the road  
in the heavy rain past midnight  
I can't see the way forward  
the car keeps me warm  
the wipers keep as much visible as they can  
the river is to the right  
after the bridge to the left  
it could all end here

December 9, 2016

## Ago

our spot in the woods  
on an island  
joined to shore by a levy  
the island ringed by bushes  
tall pines in the middle  
she and I  
we played there all day

December 10, 2016

## Back Back Field

we had a field  
in back of the back field  
which was overgrowing with new birches  
it was a sandy field  
someone had abandoned it  
the stories were once there  
now only the made up thrive

---

December 11, 2016

## Mourn for Us

I watch the rock performances  
recorded in the UK and I wonder  
is the warmth of the players  
and their camaraderie because that country  
is unexceptional / inward thinking becomes possible  
humanity means more than money  
freedom is not just / not only / not merely  
the free market

December 12, 2016

## Heart of Gold

find me a way to slide downstream  
stream past the banks eroding into the wash  
trees bent over weeping into the river  
yellow / gold / bridge of green  
let it all fade away past me



December 13, 2016

## Dizzy

one day I won't be able to walk well  
poor balance  
need to keep walking now  
maybe it will work

December 14, 2016

## The Ice

it is a cold time  
clear and sunny  
when the slides are developed  
the snow will be blue and white  
the sky blue and white  
many things to long for  
one day is too many

December 15, 2016

## Down

can't stand when things are broken  
not a good trait  
my backup works though  
now for the cold and snow  
to blow my way

December 16, 2016

## And Weep More

we weep for our former selves  
freedom is not free markets  
now we must long for the small  
things that make individual lives  
and the lives of close friends  
worth a ride  
otherwise all  
we can do is weep

December 17, 2016

## Guckles Says

cold like a night  
before a losing day  
dark like a night  
before a cold day  
funny like a night  
that never happened

December 18, 2016

## Newburyport in Heavy Winter

even the plainest people find love  
they and it  
are common sights  
the power of loneliness  
is not to be diminished  
even I

December 19, 2016

## Guide to Postness

near the river's crest  
a bridge and a road  
and a building / the old days are welcoming  
a new night / we flag down cars  
then laugh at the babies  
my advice  
be hilarious  
be vulgar  
be immensely thought provoking

December 20, 2016

## A Chance for X

long time ago  
far away  
unfamiliar  
gone for good  
passed away  
down the drain  
lost loves



December 21, 2016

## Under

many years of my life  
writing short things  
putting pretty words to lamentable feeling  
when one of us departs  
the writing stops as the heart beats more slowly  
until the tears have been forced out  
and the work resumes

December 22, 2016

## Kurkjian

Kurkjian retired today  
married 43 years ago today  
I married 43 years ago tomorrow  
coincidence  
I didn't last  
he did  
what fate for me after all this  
for all this  
with all this  
what a sadness over all

December 23, 2016

## **I Think**

too bad my country is gone  
I live among the insane  
I watch them closely  
walking near them  
I don't speak  
my eyes scan the ground in front of me  
the crazy people want to kill

---

December 24, 2016

## Eve

going to bed but  
not sleep  
thinking I'd hear who put the presents out  
downstairs under the tree not on display  
but in our living room  
some years many most  
years few / we were poor  
I know now and my parents  
appreciated cheap not quality  
I was wrong about everything

December 25, 2016

## Wishes

we wish for snow  
to cover pine boughs  
to soften footfalls  
to blanket our feelings  
to paint it new  
paint it innocent  
what if it's just a wind

December 26, 2016

## Nothing Can

our lives are slow  
Kurjian always says  
I like it slow  
but it means  
nothing happens  
and finally  
nothing happens

December 27, 2016

## Middle Ages Again

we enter an age of darkness  
bad people have hijacked our way of life  
I will retreat into small work  
I won't be here long  
any ways

December 28, 2016

## Frag

end of the year  
darkness upon  
trees in front of sky are scritch  
I can't fix things beyond this house  
and small things  
better to chill  
winter thing



December 29, 2016

## Why Go

successful  
not me  
famous a little  
smart  
not me  
clever in avoiding direct checks  
hard work to produce the best in a small circle  
I remember sights and smells  
I listen obsessively

December 30, 2016

## Surrender

my clever idea isn't working  
too well  
maybe time to retire before the shame sets in  
or work on it more

December 31, 2016

## At Long Last

years have a way of dying  
the beavers and groundhogs pay them no mind  
in their dens / in their dug holes they await the warmth  
we count the years  
we number them as if numbering were naming  
insults / lies  
no animal paused to assign numbers

# The Half-Deep-Fat-Fried Ship-Towed Long-Range Acoustic Detection System

Richard P. Gabriel

December 31, 2017

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January 1, 2017

## Reading How To Survive the Night

like last year a cold night  
for the first day  
unlike last year we face  
the demise of our country  
who would have thought  
we could become an archipelago  
of sense in one year

January 2, 2017

## Day Two

now that I've proven  
my work is useless  
time to take a vacation



---

January 3, 2017

## Longing

the light crumbles  
leaves fallen brown like dirt  
mixed with dirt  
I remember walking through our woods  
finding a stream running fast  
some snow along its sides  
I sat under barren maples  
birches I was surprised to find  
a strong hill pulling water down  
I had never seen it before  
never heard about it  
I sat for hours  
until I beat oblivion to the punch

January 4, 2017

## Authority

we should turn our backs  
we should write more poems  
we should shun the uncompassionate  
we should deplore the haters  
we should block every move  
I've picked mine  
pick yours

January 5, 2017

## Ocean View

oceans are absurd  
big / always moving  
heavy as anything  
pulling the land down into themselves  
the vast across  
lonely on one side  
sunrise on the other

January 6, 2017

## They Go Away

why do they all disappear  
close friends gone  
never email / never Skype  
some say to keep the distance  
some just are suddenly not there  
I just go along  
maybe I'm too inner  
something from my mother  
something from the farm too dark and distant

---

January 7, 2017

## Pilgrim Congregational Church

what struck me about the church  
was it was struck by lightning  
I was twelve / splinters and shards  
blasting across the road  
larger pieces through the roof where a choir  
rehearsed / rehearsing during lightning storm  
they praised the Lord and kept it up  
until I graduated and probably  
long after

January 8, 2017

## Soar

look outside at rain  
watch trees bend away from it  
bird in hedges fluffed and puffed  
against the rapid water  
walking into the woods  
after  
the drops conceal the sounds  
of life opening up again

January 9, 2017

## Lingo Bingo

last night I wrote a rant  
spelling out disquiet  
about our land  
later today I thought of  
fresh raccoon turds

---

January 10, 2017

## Outside Trucks

outside trucks bump by  
loaded cargo packing down the streets  
where once only the poor and donkeys walked  
heavy walls shaking just this much  
chandeliers and forks rattle in their places  
upstairs a great woman naps  
she will wake wanting an americano  
we will nibble on pastry  
we will watch trucks



January 11, 2017

## Who Needs Forever

hard to move forward  
when your country is ruled  
by unrelenting evil

January 12, 2017

## **Fear Is Like a Hat**

the tide is low  
the river's banks have shrunk  
like the lips on one long dead  
the revealed riverbed is strange black  
a thick mud  
as if the water had not been sawing  
back and forth for centuries

I am standing close by this bank  
I cannot step one inch closer

January 13, 2017

## Merrimac Blueberries

little path to blueberry bushes  
hard imagine how many  
some in a little meadow  
some in a dry swamp / these tall  
outside oblivion  
cows made this possible  
the farm lives  
paradise of soil

January 14, 2017

## I Love the Land

I want to see things work  
I though am weary  
I need an inspiration  
something to deep on  
my friends maybe  
where are they now?

January 15, 2017

## Don't Bother Trying to Find Her

the leaves are hardly rustling  
my view of reasoning is slipping on black ice  
after a hard storm with a warm center  
I promised one thing too many  
a promise to promise  
I just noticed  
leaves frozen under ice on the road  
to a green bridge

January 16, 2017

## All Along

like learning to write a good story  
learning to live a good life  
takes some talking from a good guy  
the key fact is that everyone has their own script  
and it isn't the same one for all

January 17, 2017

## Farm Land

if you've ever had land  
you can not survive without any  
you will dream of walking in the woods  
along stone walls  
among blueberry bushes  
no place else will matter  
but that land you once had

January 18, 2017

## End of the Road

twenty people looking for roads  
to take them to every valley  
in a near flat plain  
they can do only one thing  
fail like hell



January 19, 2017

## Trumpistan

my last night in an exceptional country  
tomorrow we become crap  
only our scientists artists and thinkers can remain on top  
our leaders will have nothing to do with them  
or me

January 20, 2017

## Fearful Sleep

trying to find a reason tonight  
to write  
I will try to sleep tonight  
afraid of what could happen to me  
my friends / what little I have of a family

---

January 21, 2017

## Dawn of a Dark Age

today many protests  
scientists copied data files to Europe  
in case we have another Alexandria Library thing  
how far should such fear go  
do we need to safeguard public art  
will books be confiscated  
will there be in actuality  
again dark ages

---

January 22, 2017

## Of Stories

the two of them cutting trees to make a new house  
one driving the homemade tractor / the other manning the scoop  
to dig foundation / digging a well by hand  
putting in a small road deep into our woods  
tending the cows chicken all of it  
maybe something like a love / or worship  
gratitude of one for the other  
all that in my altering memory  
my mind is made up

January 23, 2017

## Poems One Day

remember Australia 2010  
my mental breakdown  
I am entering one again  
I want to pull out of it  
feel like I can't  
for one thing  
I can't stay in front of a computer  
because my main one is not working  
why is it always like this

January 24, 2017

## Some Aren't

on my walk  
the little stream under the hill road  
was flowing clear / fast  
little streams here / there  
one after three weeks of heavy rain  
maybe eight inches  
some things are efficient

January 25, 2017

## Scared of My Country

I drift along roads near places  
that would hate me if they knew  
I can pretend to be a hater myself  
many have lived in countries ruled by hate  
I hope to be a survivor

---

January 26, 2017

## Remember This

I was never a great student  
nor thinker  
I drifted in rare streams though  
met important people  
lots of them  
made friends by I'm not sure what  
now my name is known  
not many know why  
now if only I could walk tremendous  
down my old farm road  
I'd earn a place in my own esteem



January 27, 2017

## Lifting Out

a week of sadness  
more soon  
limited to reading  
tired and contemplative  
I am like the river at rest  
between tides

January 28, 2017

## Beavers Better Us

we can imagine beavers  
in their den on cold nights  
in Merrimac / repairing their dams  
by night / keeping warm by gathering  
they need not face insanity  
as we do / their countryside is not  
lost to morality

January 29, 2017

**Trump's Version**

"Keep your tired, your stinking poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Keep these, the homeless, tempest-tost, from me,  
I hide my lamp behind the golden door!"

January 30, 2017

## Still Can't

I will learn to adapt  
I suppose  
from the insanity of government  
to my own small problems  
on way to adapt  
is to stop

---

January 31, 2017

## Russian Dream

soon the world might fold up  
one thing I won't do is rhyme in couplets  
frozen drizzle under streetlights watching  
over the town all night  
a long night  
when all folds up little pockets of people  
might find their ways into gaps  
maybe the world will form there  
in pockets  
once more

February 1, 2017

## Wander Mind

many ways to travel  
through the desert maybe  
the heat / the cold  
that military kind of green  
hard animals under brush and overhangs  
they say good writers can do anything  
with language / I know some who say no

February 2, 2017

## So It's Figured

some days rattle too loud  
sharp blue sky  
blades green of grass  
feels like lighter fluid today  
tonight the ink blue rattle

---

February 3, 2017

## Ink Well Knows Nothing Like Nobody Else

wrote a program to assign emotions  
to words / ejaculation is joy  
so is to gargle / waking up is angry  
technophobia disgust  
brownout is a sort of sadness  
it can't be right all the time  
so I cried with relief when  
a breach of trust with fraudulent intent  
showed trust / but the one that showed  
that computers know what's right  
was when 0 meant anticipation



February 4, 2017

## Lots to Live

long for a sweet dose of wet  
I will write even on the day I die  
I hope  
interesting to live while my country dies  
asylum maybe is in the cards  
now who has the crazy leader

February 5, 2017

## Go Pats

my team won  
I am happy for that  
sad for everything else

---

February 6, 2017

## Tom Lux RIP

Tom Lux died yesterday  
my long-time poetry teacher  
he stayed close with many students  
not with me  
no one does  
he tried his best  
but nothing doing I guess  
he said I write a mighty fine prose sentence  
the best he could do  
the best I could do  
feels empty now

February 7, 2017

**JMC**

McCarthy cried when he had no friends  
no one to share his successes with  
he died not knowing who he had been  
if he had it like that  
why would my fate be better

February 8, 2017

## Libroscope

the libroscope swapping disk  
as tall as a short woman  
many platters / it suffered  
a head crash on one of the disks  
we used that disk as a coffee table

February 9, 2017

## Sail Away

pix of the lab  
none of me  
perhaps forgotten  
never noticed  
unimportant  
negligible

February 10, 2017

## Incohesive

days slip  
I see only one scene  
the river  
the bridge  
cold flows  
warm days  
if the scene were a street  
women in backward high heels  
would wheel past beggars  
they would point to my camera  
then wrong colored streetlights

February 11, 2017

## A Goddess Told Me

they say cemeteries eat the living  
some already just dead  
but some still living  
the meal is small  
a chomp clearing a couple days of your life  
off / if you feel drawn to a stone  
run or get bit



February 12, 2017

**Baz**

bugs / lots of them  
too much to do  
unraveling

---

February 13, 2017

## Stonewall Rock

I have a rock on my desk  
from where I used to climb around  
the apple tree / the old apple  
that had only small apples then  
a rock from the stonewall  
with a little culvert under it  
for waste / one start of Cobbler's Brook  
now it's by my side as no part  
of that life still is  
no more they say  
old men cry for things like this

February 14, 2017

## Merrimac High School

connection with an old teacher  
sixth grade  
Mr Shaw  
his daughter-in-law says  
he remembers me well  
odd

---

February 15, 2017

## Ceia and Brine

in a coastal town restaurants  
open and diners wander in  
what once was a town of poor food  
now is gourmet though I'm sure that's the wrong word  
fancy women sit at tables not  
realizing they have disturbed reality  
they eat shucked oysters  
men pretend it's normal  
they admire the mercantile style of the bar and chairs  
then I walk in

February 16, 2017

## Laing in Sawyer Hill Burying Grounds

reserved a place not far from the river  
from the ocean  
from his hometown  
from his library  
buried him under a slate stone fresh and sharp carved  
a special favor  
to a man of history  
narrowly construed

February 17, 2017

## Warren Wilson Frustration

I tried to learn to write  
several teachers tried hard to teach me  
they couldn't understand why I couldn't understand  
they heard I was smart / but how stupid I seemed  
they passed me I think  
because I could pay the tuition on time  
or even a little early

February 18, 2017

## Deep Noticing

when you are a certain type of blind  
other types leak in  
because I can't see well  
I don't notice so good

February 19, 2017

## On The Coast

today at Pigeon Point  
Mt Washington-like winds  
a very hard driven but light rain  
I wanted to walk to the overlook to the ocean  
but couldn't / a person has wants  
nature says no



February 20, 2017

## Hillbilly

I tell them to listen harder  
they often in response  
sneeze as if allergic  
I'm sitting in a corner with a book on the floor  
my abilities slowly drain out  
some new innovation is percolating  
in my blood

---

February 21, 2017

## For Fear

do you remember the fear  
each night alone on the farm  
when everyone but you was away  
for the weekend  
those Clutter murders on your mind  
the long distance between farms  
between houses / phone lines easily cut  
house made from hemlock creaking all night  
lights on downstairs / afraid to go out  
into the garage / every door locked  
the sharpest knife on your bedside table  
you were / you are  
a coward

February 22, 2017

## An Old Fear

many days sitting by the river  
the river is never the same  
did my mother come here  
who has watched me here  
I love it  
I fear it

February 23, 2017

## Stop at Lunch

is regret just sad + angry  
a simple interpolation  
are there only five emotions  
all derived from them  
with simple arithmetic  
is mathematics that dogmatic

February 24, 2017

## Sorry

I fear traveling anywhere  
because the insane in my country  
elected a hateful spiteful twerp  
every night I pray that I won't pray  
for his demise

February 25, 2017

## Still Do

even as a kid

I would sometimes shape myself into a ball  
on a bed and play out all the bad angles  
then sleep for hours in afternoon until twilight  
where the rising dark of ambiguous time  
would play its part in my forgetting

February 26, 2017

## How Sweet

heard of great restaurants back near home  
some places are loud I've heard  
places hard to find parking for so  
I plan to park across the river  
and like a dedicated mermaid  
swim part underwater part above  
to a meal of Eastern seafood

---

February 27, 2017

## Jimmy M

Jimmy was my first friend  
retarded maybe / deaf instead  
he didn't speak like any of us  
I translated him to his mother  
everyone beat him  
boys had sex with him  
things were wrong for him / with him  
he died fleeing cops  
I was not a good friend



---

February 28, 2017

## Deep in Love

a clever style  
the padding of clawed feet on packed pine needles  
wet leaves gripping the forest floor after rain  
birches their bark softened a little by that rain  
I made a small camp by a smaller stream  
started a fire under a bough canopy  
I intend to eat warmly  
I am far from here but close to home  
tomorrow I will find that boulder and climb it  
feel a sun on my face

March 1, 2017

## Field Works

an old garbage pile  
way back of the back field  
in the woods by a little  
cans / jars / an old car / tires  
it took effort to get it that far  
I looked / never thought

March 2, 2017

## Told Over

part of someone's story  
a small part  
watched perhaps in secret  
the story wandering further from fact  
each telling / each year  
decades later I am magnificent  
or in jail where I deserve  
as long as I am in there  
I am here

March 3, 2017

## I Remember the Blue

one time the snow  
was almost up to the roofline  
I was just home from the hospital  
eye operation so I wore shades  
1960 / I remember being sad  
to not be able to play in the snow  
I was ten and the path of my life  
never crossed

March 4, 2017

## Lost In Piece

the farm slowly cut apart  
I was too lazy to notice  
later when I was alive  
I cried over loss  
reminds me of the rock whose most  
is below ground  
and seems like a good place  
for a woodchuck burrow

March 5, 2017

## Wayne Melville

kids from my school  
grew up knowing how to live  
for example how to find good restaurants  
in the area where they live  
I just go to the same ones  
over and over  
exploration I guess  
they all think I'm brilliant  
I learned to laugh good though

March 6, 2017

## **Fear Then Fear**

the world watches in fear  
as the most powerful country in the world  
is led by nuts  
I grew up taught our country was great  
for great freedoms and how we worked together  
it was not great because of money

March 7, 2017

## William Pierce

soon we will come to a place of ending  
a difficult visit for distance and place  
Cousin William never to bother us again  
you can see the problem right there  
a hard drive and uncertain interactions  
we will stand by his grave  
and listen to a reluctant prayer



March 8, 2017

## Avast

where are the sweet treats  
which we find next trails  
we're lost on  
no where else to be found  
like us / non treats

March 9, 2017

## Walter Pierce

we learned today  
that even the cruelest heart  
can once or maybe more  
feel tenderness

March 10, 2017

## William Pierce

some details always escape  
a bedroom for example  
he was robbed silly  
year by year  
said he wanted to die year after year  
then one year he stopped saying that  
and asked her to take care of him  
when he couldn't

March 11, 2017

## City of Lights

streetlights / office lights  
cars down streets / windows dark  
but diners looking with love at each other  
if it's a little rainy all the better  
steady lights / blinking lights  
flashing lights / we hurry down the sidewalk  
on our way to something to remember  
and talk about into the long nights  
years on

March 12, 2017

## This Land Is Your Land

the writers have all stopped  
the artists are resting their materials  
we are all surprised that a place that loves us  
can turn to hate so quick

---

March 13, 2017

## Until Dawn

they say big snow tonight back home  
couple of feet / 50mph winds  
might happen / forecasts are like lies  
if I were there I'd get out my pup tent  
and heavy sleeping bag / the thin air mattress  
set them up under a tall pine digging down  
to needles / I'd build a fire just outside  
and cook a meal of heavy meat and stew  
then fall asleep as the heavy snow  
whispers down on my tent's fly

---

March 14, 2017

## Be Alone

the big snow came  
high winds  
poles down on Plum Island Turnpike  
which is just a two lane  
my pup tent would have lashed all night  
sleeping would be hard  
electricity out all around  
would mean nothing to my tent  
I'd make hot cocoa  
a meal of cream of wheat  
or maybe sofkee if I had some meat  
the whispers would shout all night

March 15, 2017

## **I Can Never Win**

roads narrowed by snow piled up by plows  
only webwork bridges stay wide  
sunny and blue snow  
memory or real who knows  
there is no place to stop  
so I drive / maybe to the coast



March 16, 2017

## All The Way

my young ideas of love  
girls / they were girls  
I remember not noticing  
believing them full women  
I tried to lure them  
poor ideas impoverish

---

March 17, 2017

## Frozen Time

some of the best days  
in the fields  
by blueberries  
walking down narrow roads  
I talked and listened  
some thought me weak minded  
maybe so  
the air was different  
maybe smokey  
the sky was smaller  
and lower  
I remember half drowsing  
for hours  
for years

March 18, 2017

## Fear of Flying

I begin the fear  
I feel always of traveling  
especially now that the country  
has gone authoritarian  
will I get back  
will I end up jailed

---

March 19, 2017

## Down Merrimack

no one feels the nostalgia  
while it's happening  
only when reasons for it are past  
who really cares about roads  
broken and breaking  
when rivers flow  
and water is fresh  
the riverbed is not far down  
it's rocks mostly and when the tide is out  
it seems you could walk across on them  
without moisture gathering on your soles  
this is your road you see  
beautiful and evil by turns

March 20, 2017

## Wrap Around Your Dreams

1975

driving up Arastradero to the Lab  
September listening to Stevie Nicks  
dreaming / the eucalyptus so tall  
so over the top of the road  
their smell / the tarweed  
the dust of California  
I became a new  
never left

March 21, 2017

## Time Dilation

everything that wants to live  
is gathering for their big entrance  
to them all at once  
to us it's Spring

March 22, 2017

## Fill Her Up

I will sit under a tree  
watch the woods line on the far  
side of the field  
eat a burger  
eat Suzie Qs  
then drive to the river for a nap  
or to Hodgie's for ice cream  
or around the loop to the farm  
my memory repacking

March 23, 2017

## Raining

they all watch me fade  
wither / move slowly away  
I reluctantly keep working  
I need help letting go



March 24, 2017

## Lineman

from the hands of my friend  
one of my first friends  
we abandoned each other over a love spat  
then regrouped after twenty years  
to have lost so much / so much memory  
I want to explain to me  
where I was wrong

March 25, 2017

## Alice Says

he was a strong man and  
he was a strong man and  
he chose to be strong  
three years and  
three years have been  
taken care of  
the mascot was always healed  
he was a good man and  
he always wanted to take a good  
look at all the angles

March 26, 2017

## Alice Says Some More

the love of them was a hat  
to not be considered  
both of them were too good and  
they were no longer  
it was a difficult time that  
I couldn't make it but  
I couldn't make it but  
I couldn't make it feel  
like I couldn't make it

March 27, 2017

## Potsdam For One

statues in tall boxes all over  
Parc Sanssouci / fish in indoor  
keeping ponds / statues hung from eaves  
chiseled off for repair  
the opposite of lively is deadly  
the trains move in strange new ways

March 28, 2017

## Trains

need to pack for a tough trip  
train to somewhere on the Baltic  
might be fun there but no net  
tired too

March 29, 2017

## Got It

berm or dike  
levee we sleep in dark rooms  
by the sea or see of zee or sea  
will it come for me  
like Skull Island / Kong  
what is over there  
will it come for me  
Baltic you see

March 30, 2017

## Chris Says

he told us all  
that for the women  
he did them a favor  
by getting t-shirts  
one size bigger

---

March 31, 2017

## The Beautiful Girl

the beautiful girl says  
all men are young enough  
she lifts her shoes to the sky  
the beautiful girl admits  
her boyfriend's a hipster  
shows us his photo  
man bun and all  
the beautiful girl one day  
will not be either  
instead a dry place  
telling her tales



April 1, 2017

## Passed

we are here and we  
are beautiful  
we kiss the shore  
walking past and toward beasts  
cold and sparrows  
we linger on a path  
or many paths  
I see the future standing  
right in front of me  
it stares past

---

April 2, 2017

## A Bird On The Ground

birds here are like  
birds everywhere  
fly / hop / nest  
all that / diagonal-like  
I wrote a song and sang it  
to them and they hop-hopped away  
soon I found a swallow's nest  
under an eave and thought  
someone who can't imagine  
is right here imagining  
the future

April 3, 2017

## Aspirin?

fatigue / it is killing me  
legs / back / arms / neck  
all hurt / I need sleep  
something

April 4, 2017

## Today on Train

girl nervous on the train  
picking at her nails  
brushing debris away

April 5, 2017

## Near St. Catherine

my back aches  
my shoulders  
my hips  
why  
my bed is stiff and I sleep heavy  
there is a light across the way

April 6, 2017

## Across the Way

feeling alone looking out  
the Ibis window  
old facades across the way  
about to pack but the fear is strong  
things will go astray  
through a window I see a picture  
framed on the wall with a big white  
border / curtains drawn  
who will walk past

April 7, 2017

## Fear of Flying

I hope to be home soon  
today by the calendar  
I always fill with fear  
before such strips  
sleep then weep  
sleep all weekend

April 8, 2017

## Interacto

home and resting  
I confessed a fetish  
regretting it  
I am slowing  
catching up  
slowing down



April 9, 2017

## A Terrible Woman

so being tired  
eyes not focusing well  
pictures boring as usual  
looking for good spelling lists  
always can't find any good ones  
meanwhile a song plays that makes  
me want to stop

April 10, 2017

## Broken Down

me career ends on a low note  
failures throughout  
I think my mother was right  
about being feeble  
in the mind

April 11, 2017

## Broken Up

humiliation  
shame  
yet they ask for more  
I need to look forward  
to writing all day  
finally  
hard as it might be  
I need those words  
pretty in a train  
one by one

April 12, 2017

## Killing the Beast

I am so wrong most of the time  
I don't appreciate enough  
I won't be able to afford things  
I will rot here  
I wanted to go home this year  
maybe never again

April 13, 2017

## Quit

in disgrace  
I leave the field  
of battle

April 14, 2017

## Alone with Words

soon I will be writing all the time  
I won't participate in much outside  
it is time to be no one  
to be alone  
to concentrate on myself and my stories and poems  
no one will call  
no one will bother me  
I will snub all snubbers

April 15, 2017

## Lossage

trying to find a way  
to accept defeat  
I did well with small beginnings  
I will one day feel ok

April 16, 2017

## Staying Out

well it's so much crying time  
being alone  
people to call / I hate it  
I want to run away  
run awry  
when I doze by the river next time  
I'll be recalling failure  
I hope they issue from distraction  
and not laziness  
but who shall judge



April 17, 2017

## By A Flow

sitting  
I hear the water whisper past  
flowing fast but not lapping  
I notice twigs and leaves  
coming from springtime  
upriver  
probably from NH  
it's a long way to go  
one end to the other  
like a metaphor  
broken in half

---

April 18, 2017

## Report

all of a sudden. . .  
I've decided to marry her  
the same company as the same company  
I've been so happy that I've had a very happy time  
to tell the people that I've ever met  
we will take a wedding at the altar of coming soon  
if you would like to take a look at the spring for the spring  
I'm sorry to inform you  
that you haven't been able to contact me directly.  
thank you for your long life  
ladies and gentlemen

April 19, 2017

## If You Want to Hang Out

the great cooks gather  
in great cities  
maximizing something I suppose  
they strive to outdo  
to put together the never put  
I find them  
usually on a rainy night  
I order the most common  
unless there is duck  
I read a book while waiting  
read a book before dessert  
always alone except for all the words  
stories made up make up my evening  
and pomegranate sauce with morels

---

April 20, 2017

## Waiting For You

what I don't notice  
is that in restaurants  
when eating alone  
I watch others incessantly  
I read a bit  
but the movements and eye scans of others  
capture me over words  
no one though  
seems intent the other way  
it's like the times I walk cemeteries  
no eyes are on me there  
though a lady I know says  
they all feed on me  
there

April 21, 2017

## Sleepy Peace

the pines / the maples  
the wind / light rain  
a bit of sleep and worry  
white snow / black dog  
depression and sublimity  
long ago in another era

April 22, 2017

## Healthy Bird

I wish one day to no  
longer resent the companies  
that fired me / I really  
made my career outside  
my employers / my  
most important contribution  
was to be the bright  
tail feathers on the corporate  
peacock

April 23, 2017

## **Strays**

my life is a need  
I weep at times under beech  
trees / I rent space here  
on earth / I fear quick thaws  
today I learned a friend's mother  
died / she is devastated  
I wish I could be more

April 24, 2017

## So I Age

some days rub me wrong  
I wince over long layovers  
when we age we drop dead  
even though the river can  
never be the same it  
sure looks like it  
is



April 25, 2017

## Up and Away

filled with crazy sadness  
I get ready to board another plane  
to Vancouver  
I have no enthusiasm for it  
I will hunker down to it  
language is no good

April 26, 2017

## In Vancouver

they wear flared coats  
they wear dark leggings or pants  
they flow black hair  
I got to walk behind one for three blocks  
I got to see movement and expression  
I flare black longing

April 27, 2017

## Read Aloud

I wrote words and now  
I'll shout them  
along streets in foreign cities  
I am ready for hard work  
and sore throats  
I hope some ears will hurt  
some ears will liquify their  
associated brains

April 28, 2017

## I Love More

my little place is shrinking  
water draining out  
I start the shutdown  
the rest of my life  
will be spent with Kalyna

April 29, 2017

## Washing Woman

waking before full dawn  
walking through the village of huts  
by the Baltic / mist or fog  
rising from the ground  
each roof made of grass and weeds  
heavy board and batten construction  
aged to grey / over the levee  
the Baltic roars / illuminated by the shape of the land  
the six inch waves crash from south to north  
in a nearby cabin the woman who was too  
shy to ask to be photo-ed with me  
is washing her hair for the day ahead

April 30, 2017

## Living with Translation Dementia

I'm listening to the talk  
of the way you talk to me

there is a great man in Nara  
at the end of the last year of the last year  
he said that he had heard from him  
in the metropolitan area  
(in the metropolitan area)  
if that's what you're gonna do you'll have to  
I would have been convinced of that

we'll be in touch soon  
the first time we've met / January  
the usual / the end of the story  
(is the end of the story)  
when I heard a story  
I had more interest in your activities  
and then I had to take a month

and a month

I was planted this year  
the cleaner came out at last

---

May 1, 2017

## Living with Translation Dementia Some More

in the first half of the new society  
to the new social people who had just become a new social man:  
welcome to the new society

in the latter half of the 13<sup>th</sup> year  
of the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the 13<sup>th</sup> century  
the science of the children's science and  
the future of the children's science and the future  
(at present)  
science of the child in the release of the child science may  
be able to play an artificial intelligence program  
and you can play with the artificial intelligence program  
too

May 2, 2017

## This Beauty Across the River

the small piano room  
in winter as cold as anything  
I'd start the little furnace  
play while it all warmed  
a phone hanging off the wall  
next to the step-down door

before Christmas I watched  
Chanel commercials / believed what  
a great gift  
never bought any / high school  
too young / fear  
I'd decide to call her

I'd light the furnace  
play piano  
turn to the phone / turn back  
to the keys  
turn off the furnace  
go up to bed  
year after year



May 3, 2017

## How We Walk It

we'd walk the mile and a half or so  
to Peter Walls'  
small store with ice cream  
maybe four aisles  
just essentials  
modest cost  
the walking for exercise  
my father and I  
half a dozen times  
a year

May 4, 2017

## Hatred of Them

it thrills to see how fast  
a great country can be brought down  
Paul Ryan / go to hell

May 5, 2017

## Wind Amen

tonight the wind is nuts  
things can't be as bad as they seem  
the house rattles from the wind  
turbulence around walls and chimneys  
I need focus for a few days  
soon I will relax

---

May 6, 2017

## All Day

sleeping late in a misty morning  
near the Baltic / early Spring  
in a cabin rough board and batten made  
thin mattress and not much pillow  
cold / so cold / I awaited breakfast  
nearby in another cabin the beautiful woman  
has already washed her hair and is preparing  
for the day / for the meals ahead  
when I've made myself up and opened my door  
she is waiting and watching / hoping  
to hear something intelligent  
then we laugh

---

May 7, 2017

## Watching Movies

on a small hill golden of dry straw  
with the sun starting to set enriching  
the colors / behind  
green leaves resistant to the dry  
a great woman lies looking up to  
the whitening blue / she is waiting  
for a man / someone like me  
to interrupt this life and propose  
another / how wonderful / how fabulous  
nothing like this has ever happened  
to me

May 8, 2017

**RVB**

an extremely important  
an extremely bizarre bridge  
nearly / every span is a unique form of truss bridge  
spans built three different dates  
unique and striking appearance  
west to east  
riveted Pennsylvania through truss / 1895  
riveted, double-intersection Warren pony truss / 1883  
a through truss swing span / 1883  
riveted Pratt pony truss / 1914  
riveted Pennsylvania through truss / 1914  
riveted Pratt pony truss / 1914  
five unique spans / only the riveted Pratt pony spans  
are the same

---

May 9, 2017

## Didn't

Tuesdays I'd ride to West Newbury  
leave around 10am / maybe six miles  
up and down some small hills  
across that bridge  
I'd ride no hands the whole way  
summers I mean / any weather  
I'd want to see her but rarely would  
her brothers / Kurkjian / whiffle ball  
rode home when it was time for them to eat  
my mother and my father didn't much care  
looking back / I don't either

May 10, 2017

## Recall

my mother born over  
100 years ago  
she'd be 101 now  
I know little of her  
less of my father  
I still wander  
my mind ill focused  
a dark and winding road



---

May 11, 2017

## Guns Oh My

we got the gun at JM Fields  
ten bucks  
6.5 X 52mm Carcano Model 91/38 infantry rifle  
same as Oswald  
we set up a barrier / five feet of wood  
mostly oak logs  
we put a saw horse 25 feet away  
the target ammo went through it all  
I once went hunting pheasants with it  
thank God not a one appeared

May 12, 2017

## Will to Live

I heard the cries  
and thought  
I feel those too  
I was watching the Next Generation  
Sarek episode / cries of feeling  
from the aging Vulcan voiced through Picard  
I was there  
with those feelings

May 13, 2017

## So Long

I wish I wasn't in constant fear  
I wonder how my father felt near  
his end / did he fear  
I have no ambition but to read and write  
I will plead for those

May 14, 2017

## Happening?

people crossing the street illegally  
a webcam catches them  
the sodium lights are orange in the feed  
I am watching thousands of miles away  
is it happening  
is anything happening

May 15, 2017

## Cam on Me

today I am on clear liquids  
each encounter with medicals  
gives me the bad news of aging  
I sometimes tear up with fear  
is this what happened  
to my mother fourteen years ago

May 16, 2017

## Free World

I am ready to begin  
being no one  
perhaps not for long  
perhaps for writing time

May 17, 2017

## Up Helly Aa Bill

from the edge of the world  
to your head and heart  
I listen to the woman who has just kissed me  
there are many ways to keep warm  
she said / you know where I sleep

May 18, 2017

## Merrimac

a warm day  
a slow river  
a light breeze  
lobster roll  
maple walnut ice cream  
suzie qs  
driving all around



May 19, 2017

## All The Oyotsu and Sensei

I was really in Kobe  
I was in the middle of a mystery  
holiday celebrates music

May 20, 2017

## Helen

what made my mother tick  
is way beyond  
most still alive don't feel bad  
about telling me how much  
they disliked her  
I know only I disappointed  
was I that little  
did she expect that much

May 21, 2017

## The Day's Last Light Reddens the Leaves of the Copper Beech

the beech was small when my mother bought the plot  
I remember touring alternatives with her  
age 14 or 15  
not tiny but its fate were not yet settled  
one on a small rise and she had me go down  
stand by her parents' small headstone two hundred yards away  
so she could see whether she could see it  
when it was her turn  
I remember it was expensive / headstones near  
were large and distinct / nothing like the small wedge  
her father had and now her mother too  
the leaves were red and I didn't know its name  
a copper beech / it would take more than fifty years  
for me to know what the setting sun  
would do to the color of its leaves

May 22, 2017

## More About It

the rain blurs the cams  
viewing wet street deep into the night  
by the ocean / by the river  
near roads that lead near where I grew up  
that's the place where all my confusion  
and bad thinking began  
where it will end

May 23, 2017

## I'm On Fire

at night I'd read one of my  
Tom Corbett books  
lying on my side in bed with the window cranked open  
rain on the roof / in the maples  
beyond the yard  
at night a cool wind slowly coming in  
reading those books was all I was  
all I could be / dream

May 24, 2017

## Simple Fear

simple things / that's the past  
now I fear every thing  
big or little / thunderous fear  
like when the sky turns green  
the bottom of clouds you know  
like when tornados pick up green stuff

May 25, 2017

## Rate This Translation

the summer of Tokyo is hot  
no no / it's hot!  
4096 times more interesting  
than the interns / this program  
the future makes myself  
seriously  
come on

May 26, 2017

## I Yi Yi

I sit and fidget  
legs hurt sometimes  
I have read many book this Spring  
I feel like I'm in a strange loop  
I have been programming some  
just around the corner  
are my current fears



---

May 27, 2017

## In Somerville

they attend a wedding  
the families are tight  
together for the day  
their own marriage like a fairy tale to me  
mine / you see  
after a tuneful beginning decades ago  
the many roads they chose among  
their walk turning to run  
I was stuck at the starting line  
they envy the start  
I the end

May 28, 2017

## What's It For?

I spend an hour every day  
planning the music for my funeral  
what poems people will read  
who will speak and who listen  
I can never remember vividly enough  
that no one will be there  
for it

---

May 29, 2017

## Encounter

she was in the distance  
on the other side of the street  
nearing the intersection  
I thought I knew her  
her hair / how she walked  
when I caught up to her  
she stopped when I called her name  
when she turned she was strange  
I was too

May 30, 2017

## River Street

we have switched  
from making things better  
to looking out for ourselves  
ourselves doesn't mean all of us  
just some / and of those some  
none we know ourselves

---

May 31, 2017

## Small Shed

they make a sweet fudge in Massachusetts  
Essex County of course  
takes a bit to drive there  
I never know how much to buy  
less each year  
to the north I eat some parked by pine needles  
near the beavermade pond  
trips there perhaps more rare in the future  
saving money / all that goes with stopping it all  
tears to be shed

---

June 1, 2017

## To Death

parents away for the weekend  
alone in the house on the old farm  
every light on most of the night  
fear coming like heat off my head and skin  
I carried a sharp knife with me throughout  
I locked every door before dark  
I would not go to the basement  
I was afraid to tears  
I was scared of what could happen  
who could do it  
I never went out at night  
I slept with the knife under my pillow  
all the lights on downstairs  
I listened very

---

June 2, 2017

## How To Win In The End

what is there is  
an afterlife  
and I'm asked to justify the lesser  
what if I am required to remember  
all those / maybe others  
what if I'm asked to tell my story  
in real time / years on years  
minute by minute  
if this is what is asked  
who gave the warning

June 3, 2017

## Whimsy

he called them squirkles  
really squirrels  
now I learn  
squirkle = square + circle  
is this what he meant



---

June 4, 2017

## Years

our anniversary  
eight years married  
twenty-five together  
does it seem like it  
was it easy  
is life really something worth living  
alone / does our fear  
prevent us from being solitary  
can anyone said to be living  
who lives completely  
alone

June 5, 2017

## Bye Bye

memorial today for Danny  
had the career I wished for  
but worked on things I would have passed up  
more a company man  
didn't like to write  
liked science / technology  
appreciated some culture and art  
still / pretty close

---

June 6, 2017

## In No Hurry

we found the road  
accident really  
followed it long by ditches and cottonwoods  
past streams and ponds  
it led to a wheat field  
we paused there to reflect  
then to mourn  
a fresh pile of dirt  
a recently covered grave  
we didn't leave

June 7, 2017

## All Over

we fit three  
cars in a two  
car garage  
angling two of them  
the third was a buick  
two Vdubs  
I didn't think much  
of it then  
now seems  
like daddy

---

June 8, 2017

## Hopi

we stood round the car  
three dogs circling us  
and everything  
in Hopi  
I asked do  
these dogs have names  
wind picked up  
we watched the gravel  
we looked up at the mesa to the West  
three dogs circling  
yes they do

June 9, 2017

## Losing is Easy

evidence of declining skill  
I worry and weep  
each though is a wrong reliance  
I can fix it I think  
help

June 10, 2017

## Plants

the Steeles planted geraniums  
today at their grave  
she would be 101  
I am slowly getting ready to write  
retire / relax  
they did for many years with less  
I have hope

---

June 11, 2017

## Though

the streets are dark  
only headlights sting the silence  
street lamps are cautious  
nearby the river sneaks to the ocean  
past bank rocks and small islands  
if the cam had a mic  
I might hear a dog  
a woman laughing  
they teach us young that women are proper  
I look at them



June 12, 2017

## Frame Up

a door winks open  
making no sense  
I lift my head from the couch  
now it does

June 13, 2017

## Down to the River

I traced the river  
from Franklin to Newburyport  
on the screen map  
dams / bridges / falls  
old factories relying once  
on water power  
some structures beneath  
places to sit on banks  
lies remind me

June 14, 2017

## Wonder

fabric of sorrow  
heavy as royal drapes  
like the lid of a coffin  
placed over me / over my line of sight  
the river might seem deep  
but the rocks skim the surface  
from space you can see the wander of it  
like avoidance of a heaving sorrow

June 15, 2017

## Home From Work

the worst thing  
being the killer  
of another's dreams  
by pursuing your own  
then a whole life of disillusion  
because you wanted what you wanted  
and skipped all else

June 16, 2017

## And Brain

a rude translation  
of sacred thoughts  
are mind and memory the same  
how can I recall sadness  
while happy  
perhaps I can't  
perhaps I won't  
perhaps the memory is out of its mind  
perhaps the mind forgets

June 17, 2017

## Those Losers

hm I am ready to give up  
a mental model no one can get  
I'll have to fix it with documentation

June 18, 2017

## Tolstoy

he read to her in bed  
she was dying slowly  
he started War and Peace  
she died near the end  
is this story true  
is the world without her  
gloom and darkness

June 19, 2017

## Writer Again

people still tweet about me  
I am off to write and ruminare  
too many have forgotten though  
but they will wonder about some smiles  
I put out / not many  
just sit here  
keep typing  
keep saving



June 20, 2017

## Rain Duck

it's a heavy rain  
some of the rain is so innocent  
it's like a human being

June 21, 2017

**Lerwick**

foggy night  
far to the north  
still light a bit at 3  
I need a shade or mask  
to sleep  
to not rise to read  
sea birds still don't get it  
that it's night  
a boat with a tall mast  
that mast sways a smidge  
reminding me of moving water  
though notice else is

June 22, 2017

## I Was Thinking

it's really nice to meet you  
I recommend it

June 23, 2017

## Hope Is A Good Thing

soon I hope all reminders  
will drop off  
I am kind of tired  
of counting down  
I worked as hard as I could stomach  
for most of my time  
now I hope all will remember

June 24, 2017

## Time When

a good wind / a gentle one  
smell of the sea is on us  
a little wetness to the wind  
all around the sound of it  
with luck it will be a day  
like this / a good day  
a gentle day

June 25, 2017

## Downstream

so we say goodbye  
long time pass  
river just a place  
mountain just a place  
am I just a place

---

June 26, 2017

## Teacher Looks Fun ~!!

no  
I was in Houston for a week  
it's a handful of people  
as long as my old friend is already old  
I would like to do so  
so let's go and eat the prime rib  
at the taste of Texas  
enjoying a moment in Texas  
for the first time  
he was forced to put a red Nell  
Texas too!  
so for a while  
the black-Lacquered Jaguar XJ 8L Driver  
for a while  
this is also Texas  
and running

June 27, 2017

## Lingeringable

eating small along the river  
my hope is to perish by it  
I want something foolishly simple  
something with tomatoes  
simple like a bread  
perhaps the sky will turn green  
such a storm  
my life was lived backward



June 28, 2017

## Upon Arrival

I will wander as usual  
trying not to panic  
I will eat my fill  
slurp up memories  
all sorts of idioms come to mind  
near the water though  
will be important  
I will doze  
I will write

---

June 29, 2017

## On This

heavy fog over the ridge hills  
the ocean dropped its temperature  
last night / this morning it's a carpet  
of white rolling and descending  
in a small room a woman wakes  
she draws up her prickly blanket  
decides to sleep until she feels  
the warmth return and the fog  
flies up and away  
she and the birds agree

June 30, 2017

## In Between

my strengths are someone else's  
weakness / I am not expert  
at many things / being lazy  
does that / my mother being right  
knew this / tried to shield me  
sometimes I heard her laughing  
when I walked into the room  
she would look somber  
sometimes say never mind

July 1, 2017

## Beauty as Shame

I don't like the process of big change  
thinking too far ahead or deep  
traces in sand / what my mind is thinking  
what it's doing / new thoughts fly by  
a little fog / displays of falling asleep  
I hate change / filling new things up  
fixing the broken / shame

July 2, 2017

## Destinations

nothing happens  
the light not up  
the water in the reach moves little  
some gold in the sky  
some grey blue smeared clouds  
the curtain in the bedroom window is dark  
someone is having a dream  
of a sister and brother exchanging by mouth  
the brother becomes a dog and the sister pets him  
pulling back though  
nothing happens  
the ferry is hours away  
ferry from  
ferry to

---

July 3, 2017

## We See

seagulls flying here to there  
harbor is flat / no wind  
5:30 in the morning  
not much happens  
that bedroom window  
shame behind it  
then beauty  
it's biology makes it run  
we expect shadows  
little clouds  
stone houses but pavement  
Shetland you see

July 4, 2017

## Fourth From Japan

today's night  
was a future word  
for the wrong  
of the community  
a very nice future statue  
and a word

July 5, 2017

## Nothing Much

sweet cakes line the counter  
people point to them  
one by one  
a slice here  
a pie there  
by noon they're gone  
coffee is brewed  
milk poured and sugar  
sweetness on the counter  
a long line  
out the door



July 6, 2017

## How Does Anything Arrive?

pictures of old stores  
sprinkled in forlorn spots  
the stores I mean  
old guys with white handlebars  
small candies in bins  
cans of corn / peas / tomatoes  
sardines in tins  
flour in sealed bags  
a glass case with better candy sealed within  
everyone walked there  
from houses not seeable  
how do the supplies arrive

---

July 7, 2017

## Near Cimarron

so driving west on 50  
I spot a tall coffee pot in the sky  
maybe 10 / 20 miles ahead  
shimmering in the lowering sun  
on both sides wheat and grains  
elevators in the rearview  
there's a bed waiting  
I hope I say to myself  
a steak and the local news

July 8, 2017

## I Like There Corn Dogs

Richie's Cafe has the best  
chicken fried steak I have ever had  
I was traveling through from Texas  
have been staying nearby for a job install  
we're so glad we stopped in  
the chicken fried steak is hand-battered  
and fried / it is so well cooked / all  
you need is a fork to cut it apart  
the meal comes with a side salad, green beans  
Texas toast / french fries / mashed potatoes / tatar tots  
all home-made / all delicious  
recommend this hole-in the wall

if you don't want to cook  
order from here  
it will stop your stomach from growling  
and it's decent / would be better  
if the staff gave a crap

the donuts is delicious

July 9, 2017

## A Charger Is Generally Common

I've been saying  
that it's hard to say  
it's a lot of money  
but I've been in a whisper  
but I've been trying to give you a charger  
but I think it's been a long time  
but it's just a couple of weeks later  
you wanted to die

July 10, 2017

## Pier / Peer

the cam flutters  
scene to scene  
spends effort focusing  
many windows in the night  
no one up  
water is calm / sky stormed  
the harbor / the pier  
the yellow lights  
who else watches

July 11, 2017

## Biblical Texture

...rebuked the unclean spirit and he cried unto the children  
of the day and he took the blood of the covenant that he made  
with you and that ye shall not go up unto them upon the altar  
of gold and of precious...

...were diseased and them that had escaped out of thine hand  
in the cave and went on their way by the which the lord thy wife  
shall have a place of their own way and the lord answered  
the man of thine whom...

...place where he talked with them and a great multitude  
of cattle and carried away all the fat thereof and the borders thereof  
round about and the captains of hundreds and brought it out of all the holy things  
until he have destroyed...

...these did the priests and of all things that god had sworn  
with all their transgressions but i will lie with him that he may cause  
the weary to drink and anointed them with the sword he shall not come  
into thy righteousness...

...for they shall not see the death of his father  
or the nakedness of the land that the waters of judah which come to you in egypt  
and thou shalt put it in a fruitful field and the man asked us straitly...

July 12, 2017

## Begin (Living)

an embarrassing question  
hope someone asks it  
it would show how poor thinking goes  
at companies / but I don't really care  
I am free to live out my life

July 13, 2017

## Plum Island

sand bar new from winter storms  
a small lagoon formed with no currents within  
we can put our sand chairs into the shallows  
read our books / drink our coffee  
grand summer out of the grim winter



July 14, 2017

## Lovely Lonely

when the cold comes after a hot day  
the skin cleans and dries  
water flows slower  
dark peels from the sky  
if there is love somewhere  
it throws itself into the ring  
cold after hot

July 15, 2017

## Twilight And A Half

tonight past an old fence  
behind some trees and bushes  
a grey green sky  
pink porcelain cloud  
right above  
the sort I'd picture  
when picturing youthful love  
and a long ride home

July 16, 2017

## Because I Could Not

Emily what was she like  
our image is of silence  
through poetry  
but she must have been more  
they decided to bury her  
in a green cemetery because  
her real one now too dry  
her headstone now is not the first  
she was alone I think

July 17, 2017

## Nervousness

lovely cool evening  
wind moving through the house  
I am nervous for life  
running out of place to sleep

July 18, 2017

## Emily's Woes

the little car came by today  
stopped to ask was I ok  
I should joyful ring to tell him  
it was not death  
for who is

July 19, 2017

## Fixer Downer

always something more to fix  
but slowly I do it  
how many are good  
how many care

July 20, 2017

## Top Sadness

hard to keep up a solid front  
I am ready to toss it in  
I have to figure out too many things  
I am done

---

July 21, 2017

## Mr Ayube

finding people from college  
some I can some I can't  
some of them faded  
Kenneth J. Ayube became a physics professor at Northeastern  
so says a story about his handball championships  
Ken Ayube / he didn't win all the time  
but was one of the northeast's best  
Frank Becker / found him once  
why look



July 22, 2017

## Allerton

the mansion / the pond  
the hill / the statues  
the gardens / the porcelains  
the books for color / the southern grand staircase  
the dining room / the stalls  
the fu dogs / the chinese musicians  
all a comfortable past

July 23, 2017

## Chewing Scenery

I plan to zone / to chill  
become no one big time  
learn to be invisible  
with my upside down career  
what else could be

July 24, 2017

## All's Fair

many people these days  
hating / turns out  
I hate them

July 25, 2017

## Old Sparky

what life that's left  
half this / half that  
not much it feels like  
maybe something will  
spark later

---

July 26, 2017

## Kansas Probably

sitting on a poor stonewall  
looking over a field of wheat  
near me and behind me the heat / the wet  
far away and in front dark clouds  
with shards / deep throat clearing  
suddenly the clouds are green  
fingers dangling down  
I think it's cold over there  
on the other side

July 27, 2017

## Thank You Mr President

wealth and wisdom  
I watch my country slide from great  
to who? in the space of six months  
like the dream of my life  
the dream of this country  
is down the drain

---

July 28, 2017

## Stone Words

the book is on our shelves now  
we used to find books this way  
now in virtual places  
what we imagined in 1968  
some true some gubbish  
words though like old worn stones  
at the bottom of mountain streams  
are what we imagined  
what they imagined

---

July 29, 2017

## Pink House

by an old river near Plum Island  
mosquitos abundant and buzzing  
a high wind sometimes  
or cold and dry  
runs them off  
hard to see when the sea fume blows  
across into your eyes  
someone told me of the pink house  
how a divorced man ordered to replicate  
his married home built it in the salt marsh  
near the old river



---

July 30, 2017

## Reunion 50

fudge Kurkjian said to buy  
something that doesn't wither for chilling  
not lose taste for time  
I expect to be welcomed  
then ignored as what I have in common  
dwindles in their estimates  
we will stare at each other  
and wonder what the hell happened  
I will leave sadder than when I arrived

July 31, 2017

## Flipped Sight

sometimes you look at the negative space  
in a city landscape  
pretend it's in black and white  
and a beauty pops out  
no matter how hard the developers  
tried to save money  
they made their part without  
the rest with

August 1, 2017

## Like a Fear

now fully alone  
no safety net  
need to conserve  
I am filled with fear  
poor sleep  
cautious eating  
so to spend little  
how did my parents do it  
for thirty years

August 2, 2017

## Sad Girl Gone

sad girl is gone  
white washed by the Dairy  
Queen / no doubt cowed  
by the comparison  
I one day will walk past her old  
place and down jagged street joints  
to one of the quais  
or the rushing water  
where I'll find I'm sure  
another

---

August 3, 2017

## Soon and Warm

soon the warm New England air  
the sentimental thoughts and drives  
the bad for you food and ice cream  
beach pizza / Skip's suzie Qs  
I expect to doze by the river  
watch for beaver  
hike up and down hills  
walk the night fabulous  
I am what I was meant to be

August 4, 2017

## First Day

many roads under repair  
unexpected delays  
humid and almost hot  
the smell a familiar home  
had all my favorites  
tomorrow the reunion  
of people less than thrilled  
I wait for courage

August 5, 2017

## Reunion Too

a calm day at the reunion  
some people remembered me  
they talked to me  
large house but humid  
not much food  
all that was missing  
was a pink to blue sky near sunset  
with storm clouds backing the frame

August 6, 2017

## Why We Are Not Great

a mother hopes  
whose daughter was gunned  
down by Constitutional exercise  
after the final sermon  
to hear two things one day  
well done faithful servant  
hi mom



August 7, 2017

## A Day

teaching all day  
hot chinese for dinner  
toilet not bolted  
for years now  
dream songs down

August 8, 2017

## Storm At Sunset

the water surfs downstream  
the pink behind the blueback cloud  
reveals intentions for dark  
soon the downpour covers everything

I saw a woman under an umbrella  
tight patterned skirt stretched  
across her backside  
could the world have been different

August 9, 2017

## Amesbury at Night

Norman and Richard  
eating good and telling stories  
rich Italian at Molise's  
we were friends only in Elementary School  
now we speak warmly every twenty years

August 10, 2017

## Stone White

in Linwood Cemetery  
they cleaned many old headstones  
especially those of white stone  
all the writing clearly revealed  
and the white stone has blue streaks  
how they looked in early 1800s  
when stones like this were trendy  
and death was the habit of youth

August 11, 2017

## C Major C Minor

completely pure  
its character is  
innocence simplicity naïvety children's talk  
declaration of love  
and at the same time  
the lament of unhappy love  
all languishing longing sighing  
of the love-sick soul lies  
in this key

August 12, 2017

## The Ds

a leering key  
degenerating into grief  
and rapture / it cannot laugh but  
it can smile / it cannot howl but  
it can at least grimace its crying  
consequently only unusual characters  
and feelings can be brought out in  
this key

the key of triumph / of hallejuahs  
of war-cries / of victory-rejoicing  
thus the inviting symphonies  
the marches / holiday songs  
heaven-rejoicing choruses are set  
in this key

melancholy womanliness  
the spleen and humors brood

feelings of the anxiety  
of the soul's deepest distress  
of brooding despair  
of blackest depression  
of the most gloomy condition of the soul  
every fear / every hesitation of the shuddering heart  
breathes out of this horrible key  
if ghosts could speak  
their speech would approximate  
this key

August 13, 2017

## The Es

the key of love  
of devotion  
of intimate conversation  
with God / noisy shouts of joy  
laughing pleasure  
not yet complete  
full delight lies in  
this key

---

August 14, 2017

## The Fs

complaisance and calm  
deep depression / funereal lament  
groans of misery and longing  
for the grave

triumph over difficulty  
free sigh of relief uttered  
when hurdles are surmounted  
echo of a soul which has fiercely struggled  
and finally conquered lies  
in all uses of this key.

a gloomy key  
it tugs at passion as a dog  
biting a dress  
resentment and discontent  
are its language



---

August 15, 2017

## The Gs

everything rustic  
idyllic and lyrical  
every calm and satisfied passion  
every tender gratitude  
for true friendship  
and faithful love  
in a word every gentle  
and peaceful emotion of the heart  
is correctly expressed  
by this key

discontent / uneasiness / worry  
about a failed scheme  
bad-tempered gnashing of teeth  
in a word  
resentment and dislike

August 16, 2017

## The As

key of the grave  
death / grave / putrefaction / judgment / eternity  
lie in its radius

grumbler / heart squeezed  
until it suffocates  
wailing lament / difficult struggle  
in a word  
the color of this key  
is everything  
struggling with difficulty

this key includes declarations  
of innocent love / satisfaction  
with one's state of affairs  
hope of seeing one's beloved  
again when parting  
youthful cheerfulness  
trust in God

pious womanliness  
tenderness of character

August 17, 2017

## The Bs

cheerful love / clear conscience  
hope aspiration for a better world

a quaint creature  
often dressed in the garment  
of night  
it is somewhat surly  
and very seldom takes on  
a pleasant countenance  
mocking God and the world  
discontented with itself  
and with everything  
preparation for suicide sounds  
in this key

strongly colored  
announcing wild passions  
composed from the most glaring colors  
anger / rage / jealousy / fury / despair  
and every burden of the heart  
lies in its sphere

this is as it were  
the key of patience  
of calm awaiting one's fate  
and of submission  
to divine dispensation

August 18, 2017

## Included Self

the smell / the sounds  
the wind even feels different  
sitting by the river  
reading / dozing  
something I could do  
every day until

August 19, 2017

## Cobbler Brook

a quiet place  
in the woods  
a trail leads there  
one lower dam  
enabling the higher one  
a large pond with deep water  
and deep bullfrog grunts  
a large lodge in the center  
covered in green as life grows  
both on top and inside  
this little planet  
could be cozy

August 20, 2017

## Linwood Cleaned

they cleaned the headstones  
old ones  
what once was just white  
now white and blue  
what and brown  
a fitting start  
for an end

August 21, 2017

## Beaver Mansion

the pond is huge  
beavers needed two dams to make it  
their lodge is a mansion  
covered in green  
upstream are more  
it is alive  
many are alive there  
trees in the middle though  
killed from too much root water  
hawk nests / bullfrogs / insects  
mink / martin  
it is an affair  
lily pads / algae  
bases of tree trunks  
truncated as if on potters' wheels  
it is there right now  
I am not

August 22, 2017

## Carmel Routine

sitting / waiting  
for the ladies to finish  
browsing in odd stores  
role of the passive man  
people watching  
man in waiting



August 23, 2017

## Almost Almost

what is an approximation  
a guess / a flakey calculation  
like putting a glass down  
approximately on a table  
maybe a little not really over it  
good enough / the definition  
depends

August 24, 2017

## Lost

I lost my will to live  
nothing makes me happy  
I still work hard  
but get paid nothing  
I am ready to just  
pass

August 25, 2017

## Away We Go

we can approach the shore  
big waves keep us alert  
we can lay out a picnic blanket  
but keep away from the waves  
we are lucky nothing's gone rogue  
yet  
we realized the waves contained  
a special pattern of heights  
these heights spell doom  
sometimes

August 26, 2017

## Clash

there is no one I want to see  
reunion with the rest of the class  
it was hard enough with the ones  
who wanted to reunite  
I doubt it would improve  
I worked hard to get a paper  
into a symposium that ends  
the day of the reunion  
too much everything

August 27, 2017

## Rivering

the water in a beautiful rush  
to cycle and circle  
heat breathes down my neck  
it's a long ride there  
and sometimes they don't come back  
they will find me  
after I have finished  
sleeping

August 28, 2017

## Facetiously

we make of it what we can  
the songs / the silly stories  
why do we hear them  
how do we make them  
is there a way to make so many of them  
that the great musicians and writers  
give up and go back to sleep

August 29, 2017

## Delusion In All Sizes

the real news  
is in crazy books  
in crazy stories  
fake news is science  
facts / things in front of us  
truth is revealed by a greater  
power / don't you know that  
or at least believe it

August 30, 2017

## Against Me

here's a thing I mean  
when there is no power left  
critiques and pouts feel better  
for less restraint  
it's time to take advantage  
of the patience to not speak  
say something  
shut up



August 31, 2017

## Never Notice

there are few places  
I still wish to visit  
my life a leaky bucket  
I have to learn how  
a far away island group  
a cold flock of waves  
breaking far out  
seagulls everywhere  
but we never notice

---

September 1, 2017

## Cotton Batting

I find the road tiring  
but I drive without stop  
full tank drained  
I eat only pancakes and butter  
drink only a harsh coffee  
brewed in percolator pots  
served by big women  
I don't stop many places  
but diners with giant coffee pots on stilts  
win my brakes  
at night its a cotton batting sleeping bag  
I found in an attic  
on a tarp on the ground off an off-off highway road  
I prefer fields  
I find it all tiring  
this is life's metaphor

September 2, 2017

## Hot Heat

the heat stains my shirts  
sweat drain down and gathers  
I really have come to the end of my line  
I am ready to cave  
I must decide what shape it will take

September 3, 2017

## Read It Over

too many small typos  
sometimes it's the spelling corrector  
sometimes it's changes I don't make thoroughly  
I fear for my mind  
I worry and I worry

---

September 4, 2017

## Farm Roads

our farm had several roads  
most ended in the middle of a stand of pine  
were there buildings once  
did they lead between fields  
were they part of the town  
I wandered them though they were all short  
overgrown in places  
but with deep ruts in most  
imagine / a farm big enough for roads  
small enough for a boy

September 5, 2017

## Another Baz

cool and dark  
a long day  
always some bad news  
and then trololo

---

September 6, 2017

## Bus Ride

I sat on the bus  
one late afternoon  
heading for a jazz bar  
on the lower side  
a woman ahead of me wearing  
red lipstick in thick swaths  
was reading a difficult book  
carrying a loaded bag  
of groceries / I liked her  
immediately / so when  
she got off the bus I  
did too / we walked staggered  
then beside each other  
today I buried her  
next to my mother  
with space left over  
for our children

---

September 7, 2017

## Sad Girl Again

vexed and lying on a rough couch  
fan on high cooling as it might  
watching a video of Pink Floyd in Gdansk  
I was paying no  
attention to the woman waiting in the next room  
waiting for me to love her  
I don't mean that  
I mean only the feeling  
to have it / but the real gal  
with the red sad lips painted  
on the side of a brick building  
she's gone / so they all are



September 8, 2017

## Loser With The Broken Heart

one of the ways to lose  
is to run into the loss  
run hard / emerge as if from a lavender bath  
goop like grease and failure  
dripping from every hilarious orifice

September 9, 2017

## Eke a Mouse

the barn / the loft  
we sat on bales of hay  
jumped into piles of it  
we one day would  
forget all this  
think only of our sustenance  
of how many years we can eke out  
living you see  
but just barely

September 10, 2017

## Goner

my team a goner  
a hot day again  
I fear for lots / for everything  
I work hard for not much  
I want something  
but what is it

---

September 11, 2017

## Down on the Merrimack

pretty boats up and down the river  
a woman on a paddle board  
standing up in her bikini  
one paddle / going down river  
I was parked at a pull-out  
I watched her come toward me  
nearly across from me she turned around  
the tide turned too  
upriver floating and paddling  
what a sight

September 12, 2017

## Alost

scared as usual  
ready to duck under anything  
I am treated like a child  
I want to be something more  
but I have nothing to offer  
really not even good writing

---

September 13, 2017

## Solemn Day

I live in a top floor flat  
in a city that doesn't glow  
at night / it's a somber simmer instead  
when streets are quiet I can hear  
laughter and clinking glasses  
a window creaking open  
bed springs / all the things a glowing  
city keeps to itself

---

September 14, 2017

## Remarkable

I sometimes write beautifully  
remarkably eloquent some have said  
what they don't know  
is I write well only in blue light  
supplied however  
or after dark has just settled  
but not yet settled in  
mornings never work  
I sleep and oh those dreams  
like candlelight at the bottom  
of a deep well

---

September 15, 2017

## iWonder

the deluge of news  
always bad  
liars in power telling us to quake  
or buy the new iphone  
one day someone reading this poem  
will wonder what sort of misspelling that is  
iphone / just think if I spelled it the right way  
iPhone



September 16, 2017

## Everything Sucks

gift for Takashi lost  
I will need to find something else  
unless the delivery people find it tomorrow  
don't feel like writing anything great  
tonight

September 17, 2017

## Last Words

unexpected deadline  
short deadline / one day tops  
can be hours  
unalterable deadline  
short piece of writing  
must be totally accurate  
must paint a wonderful picture  
important topics sometimes unfamiliar

---

September 18, 2017

## Bad Movies

consider love  
in the form of sexual congress  
consider two animals  
not close in biological terms  
but able to present on one hand  
and take advantage of what's presented on the other  
can it work  
reproduction cannot but love  
can it work

---

September 19, 2017

## E. Lilly Lost

photo of her is just dark on light  
little detail anywhere in her hair  
her clothes / it's clear  
she's sitting perhaps at a beach  
her clothes too  
are just a black / no contrast to show substance  
but she has a half smile that reveals  
only her upper teeth  
puts creases just before her cheek bones  
her eyes / you can't see them  
but everything about that smile says  
your life has value / live it / I will help

September 20, 2017

## Lineman

I listen over and over  
prairie gothic someone told me  
that blue collar man working a hard job under the sun  
he is not a poet / his thoughts  
are extraordinary / the days repeat  
over and over

September 21, 2017

## Essential

a recluse on an island  
but it's Maui  
he reclaims forests and writes poems  
he is a great man they say  
many people say  
well at least  
he says so

September 22, 2017

I

travel is not my friend  
I like being places  
I hate getting there  
even driving  
alone and relying only on my smarts and experience  
I pause / I tremble  
I slowly move on

September 23, 2017

## Joe

how to answer a son  
whose mail is confusing  
states as facts things  
you've never heard  
he asks nothing  
implies a lot but  
you can't figure it  
can he



---

September 24, 2017

## Around Here

travel fear grips me  
feels like anxiety and sadness  
I want to stop everything like this  
if only the farm were still around  
I could walk the farm roads we had  
visit the streams / the little ponds  
and big puddles / but no  
nothing like that

September 25, 2017

## Shrine Prayer

in Kamakura the ladies walk fine  
down the laden street to the shrine  
where we washed our hands and mouths  
ceremoniously before entering where  
we tossed small yen coins into a receptacle  
and made our wish that Trump would cease

September 26, 2017

## Worker

today it was the white cashmere mini skirt  
on a woman whose black hair was dyed red  
with a slut lace top that made me think  
how she makes a living in a dull part  
of a dull Japanese city like this one

---

September 27, 2017

## Atmosphere

in a rural Japanese university  
cool wind blowing into the classroom  
smell of dope being smoked below  
our second story window  
strange words / ideas floating  
a hippie kind of school  
odd bird sounds / light smoke filled  
I am wishing for a quiet passage

September 28, 2017

## Word-Life

we find our way with words  
the way is a line  
a line that wandering  
fills a page  
fill a book  
fills maybe many  
with words  
our lives

September 29, 2017

## Unfolding Process

the light dampened by the wet  
the ways we find our way through  
from top to ground surprise  
the dickens out of us  
the shape of our legs  
the range of our thinking  
the light that falls on us  
or not

September 30, 2017

## In An Office Building In Tokyo

a woman on orange stilts  
it seemed like  
black short flaring skirt  
dark very dark blouse  
but they were stilettos  
and I followed her  
I thought except  
she was leading

October 1, 2017

## Plato's Heaven

in Hakone women honeymoon with their men  
the women are dressed carefully  
have an appeal and a shimmy  
the men are dorks like computer  
nerds and programmers  
is this the best they can do  
or are they wiser than Socrates



---

October 2, 2017

## Smoothed

the violinist started up  
on the first floor of the Venetian Glass Museum  
I went upstairs and down some corridors to a turret  
shaped display room  
his violin reverted softly but with force  
a quiet onslaught  
so much better than his locally amplified  
over vibrato

---

October 3, 2017

## All J

tonight the restaurant was all Japan  
not a word of English anywhere  
I used google translate to try to get it  
but it told me funny things like random  
pickles of the day  
but the waitresses / what a word / all  
wanted a google translate too

October 4, 2017

## Today's Work

the world is becoming  
hollowed out  
the strong eat the weak  
the stronger weak taste better  
the strong make rules  
that making ok eating the weak  
the strong like to laugh about this  
the weakest weak are just skin  
and what's left of their bones

October 5, 2017

## Road Well Taken

at the end of life you take  
a right hand turn  
the past is not left behind  
but left alone  
one of these paths is a siding  
one is the road well taken

October 6, 2017

## Blyth

we walked past the tomb  
of the great haiku translator  
and didn't know it  
a great man introducing  
one art to another world  
we might have loved him  
had we known

October 7, 2017

## Shokozan Tokei-ji

the beautiful path  
simple gardens in a steep narrow valley  
leads to a cemetery clustered in groves  
simple and covered in moss  
the shrines are perfectly  
quiet / at the temple  
of Shokozan Tokei-ji

October 8, 2017

## Toksuda Blues

I walk as carefully as I can  
yet I mis-step frequently  
the death of me will be  
the death of me

October 9, 2017

## Leonardo

a genius died long ago  
we haven't been able  
to make another one since



October 10, 2017

## They Laughed

a woman stole my bag  
in Yokohama Station  
ran away with it  
I told the police  
short / female / black hair  
shoulder length

October 11, 2017

## Duende

back from Japan  
tired as hell  
facing the difficult  
I sleep poorly now and work  
like hell to catch up  
irregular in every way  
I must re-learn duende

---

October 12, 2017

## Duende V2

things slowly getting back  
to normal but I sleep like  
someone not used to sleeping  
work is work / I need surgery  
life is a chaos / death and  
before life is order  
somewhere near the boundaries  
is where the heat of living  
lives

---

October 13, 2017

## Remains

in the garden  
stone shrines to individuals  
some famous  
who rest in the green canopy  
of maples and bamboo  
the moss on all sides  
the small rectangles  
just right for ashes  
we are not far from tracks  
but the sound is cupped  
by the narrow deep valley  
the reds and yellows are just  
popping a bit / there is nothing  
here but peace

October 14, 2017

## On The Line

I of course responded  
with sighs  
the question is how to balance  
working on projects  
with the loss of esteem  
soon the forgetting will be  
too powerful for all  
I'll be on the other side

---

October 15, 2017

## Muse Boat

trying to live with new I hate  
the paths that line the river  
little walkways lead down to docks  
to the water  
I was thinking of my muse  
you think she was a lover  
she was just a place to send poems  
I wrote outside her language  
I thought she had a boat near her home  
that she had a walkway that led to a dock  
where her boat was tied  
to the water which was the river  
that didn't connect us  
that connection was the web  
a jealous spider abandoned

---

October 16, 2017

## Untango

the picture  
two of them in tango  
his back to the lens  
a broad back  
some white in his short hair  
but she  
her eyes are closed or  
she's looking down  
her head on his cheek  
the edge of a soft slow smile  
just past his collar  
her hand / her five fingers resting  
on his back

somewhere there once  
was a woman like this waiting  
for me / my roads went elsewhere  
I went elsewhere  
she went elsewhere  
she is perfect

---

October 17, 2017

## She Somewhere

somewhere a woman who was perfect  
for me lives differently from fate  
but her place was not mine  
her time was her own  
the food of her life was unfamiliar to me  
I think of her when certain pictures  
are brought up or when I'm by the river  
waiting for the tide to turn  
I think of her when I roll over  
wide awake in the night



---

October 18, 2017

## Fiftieth

our reunion is soon  
and so it begins  
remembering the insults and angst  
being fed it as if time were null  
one in five gone already  
for good and noble  
for bad and criminal reasons  
I was so unaware  
my memories are clear

October 19, 2017

## Broken Some More

silly or stupid  
hard to tell which  
my abilities of repair  
fail / fault  
the little bits  
fall apart

October 20, 2017

## Psalm 139

off a road on Maui  
not far from many poems  
a man is buried who made a name  
but loved the warm sea  
it's down a path made of dust  
is not beautiful and not ugly  
it is before both  
after both

---

October 21, 2017

## Dinner Natch

Hawksworth hotel and restaurant  
refined and pricey  
filled to the ceiling with spectacular  
women dressed for the coming cold  
on Georgia Street in Vancouver  
north / sure  
west / sure  
our food was small but exquisite  
flavors all nouveau and odd ingredients  
from far from here  
on the way to the hotel  
the cathedral was dripping wet

---

October 22, 2017

**crap**

tonight was low on the hog  
all they had were hamburgers  
and a thousand different beers  
I found out later the specification was  
lots of beer / it was far away  
loud / stinky / unpleasant  
even with the woman playing the uke  
I taxied back to the hotel  
rest / rest

October 23, 2017

## Vancouver

cool with mist  
long walks to coffee / food  
I watch all the women sway and go  
long strides / ready for winter  
they are cool in every way  
they have designs on many  
of us sidling by

October 24, 2017

**Ay?**

a clear day  
to see far and away  
mountains and bays  
now some sleep / hooray

October 25, 2017

## Downstairs

the passion of thought  
takes a back seat to passion  
reflecting taste errant  
I could have said hello  
instead I chose the yawn



October 26, 2017

## In The Lobby

a complicated bun  
hair blonde white on the outside  
black inside  
long tight black leggings  
I found her  
for a few seconds  
then life reasserted

---

October 27, 2017

## Still On The Line

after the war we began  
we've come the long way  
as with all trips ours has seen loss  
how we slouch forward depends on our haste  
sometimes we wait for rain / sometimes for strain  
the last time we saw each other  
we were departing in all directions  
like the fish of legend we are returning  
to seek our final and small limits

---

October 28, 2017

## Mirror Merchant

S. R. once said:  
fifty years passed  
and all of their seasons changed  
with their overtones of death  
and their explosions of life  
but on that winter's night  
with the frosted stillness outside  
and the warmth of his life within  
he looked into the small mirror  
on the wall of his room  
a face stared back  
a warm face yet distant  
sculpted by time  
and the artistry of both  
happiness and sorrow

October 29, 2017

## Mirror

fifty years passed and all their seasons changed with their overtones of death and their explosions of life but on t

October 30, 2017

## On The Line

tonight I am selecting  
my funeral music  
the list is short  
so far only lineman  
because it refers  
to loneliness  
which the only emotion  
I've had and it means  
no hope

---

October 31, 2017

## Prune Face

I was born 68 years ago  
as of the very minute I am writing this  
a long labor / forceps birth  
cold and drizzly as the paper reported  
I was not the only one  
prune face my mother called her  
Halloween / what a day  
I had a quiet day today  
looking forward in small ways  
looking backward all ways

---

November 1, 2017

## Skip's

if it were summer right now  
and I was back in Merrimac  
I would be sitting at an outside picnic  
table looking north across the wide field  
where cruise nights are held  
watching clouds slip by  
eating the suzie Qs first  
then the double meat burger  
some sparrows would stop by for a snack  
it would be warm but approaching dark  
I would have no worries  
because I'd be close to home  
the only home I ever had

---

November 2, 2017

## System or Tunnel

the sound my amp makes  
when the strings are bent  
when they scrape on the frets  
on the way up / when the up and down  
of a strong but slow vibrato take  
hold of women's hearts while they  
dance like caricatures of natives  
is the meaning of life  
but all the academics insist  
it should be the formalization of love  
in a first-order system



---

November 3, 2017

## Walk Away

thinking of nights on the farm  
clouds low / sun long gone  
to the west the sun lit the sky pink  
pewter / then black  
my nights were small  
I read / I listened to a single  
song obsessively while looking at yearbook pictures  
play a bit the piano  
then the books / a sweet snack  
outside the cold became a damp cold  
my world was small  
it should have stayed that way

---

November 4, 2017

## 1936

Rocks Village now just a clump  
of suburb but a century ago  
it was a town / a village  
with a hotel and shops  
homes up the hill behind / now  
the trees are tall / thick  
in old fields / the ladies  
who live there are fashionable  
but down to earth / all  
very sparse and strung out  
once the river had flooded it all  
1936

---

November 5, 2017

## Hadley Road

in the dark night I  
walked up and down our road  
the one in the middle  
of our farm  
narrow / rain wet  
I suppose I should have been afraid  
walking alone  
the dark shallow woods on either side  
the pond / where did it come from  
we skated there  
nothing about all that  
seems fair now

---

November 6, 2017

## Twilightning

dark comes early  
I sit quietly by the window  
the line of trees across the field  
black against distant red  
the field in shadow  
I imagine woodchucks and porcupines there  
or pretend I do  
our bookshelf is small  
I flip through the books over and over  
rarely read / hardly see words  
I believe I'm educated after  
the trees across the field know the truth  
they try to hide the red sky

---

November 7, 2017

## We Feed The Planet Japan

thanks to all of your support  
for your support  
the wftp has successfully finished  
when we get ready  
we have made efforts to manage  
this program for 4 days

to be honest  
it was more fun than I imagined

a young food player in Asia  
is not supposed to gather in Kobe  
but it's fun when we get together

we all think about the future of bright food  
each of them has the ability to share and share it  
with everyone  
each one goes home to his homeland  
yeah / definitely an impact

I didn't see the workshop at the base  
but I can't forget the last time I'm happy

(I'm sorry to have stopped working)

---

November 8, 2017

## When It's Dark

when it's dark  
all things seem possible  
walking worn down sidewalks  
crossing streets  
unseeable city  
it seems like  
when it's dark  
all things seem impossible  
outcomes reverse  
down each side alley a beast  
of many fangs waits  
for people like me to stumble  
by

---

November 9, 2017

## Tripping

are we ready for the trip  
will I be kept from my wandering  
will I eat my favorites  
should I take many photos  
who should I visit  
I must prepare  
by reading up on people  
reunion remember  
it will be a sad trip

---

November 10, 2017

## 50

the past hurts  
our memories lag behind  
I found my way through folly  
what did people say / think  
when I was walking away  
the beautiful and merely pretty  
Pam / Jill / Joyce / Meredith  
they all are on the scrap pile  
it's best the day be dark and cold  
when we meet again  
who would ever want to meet again



November 11, 2017

## Cold Union

cold / it will be cold  
reunion / Haverhill  
mistakes in my gift  
people ask  
why / they hate you  
you hate them  
it will be cold / cold

November 12, 2017

## Each Other

today a cold day  
we ate with my son  
then worked with him on  
my parents' grave  
his grandparents' grave  
we told some stories  
it was a cold day  
but we warmed

November 13, 2017

## Baz on Reunions

so we all met  
some were not all there  
speaking with them was  
well hard speaking  
nonsense and repeats  
no one could recognize me  
thank you  
the one man band was one man  
too many  
booklet a letdown

November 14, 2017

## Cobbler Brook

the beaver dam  
the princess pines  
the woodpecker  
the small hawk  
cold walk  
big pond  
thin ice

November 15, 2017

## Kings

we are all who are left  
our greatest lame or gone  
we walk limping toward a quiet  
place to lie down  
to give all up  
we are only those left  
the diminished  
the no ones  
nobody but  
us

November 16, 2017

## Fabeets

tonight / only  
a concert of early 1960s dance music  
by Joe Fabeets  
featuring his fabulous guitar  
and the virtuosity visited upon it  
by Joe Fabeets  
also tonight  
the Pentucket Class of 1967  
reunion

---

November 17, 2017

## The Captain

woman on a beach  
lying on her side  
her hips / her shoulders level  
behind her the gray brown sky  
over the reflecting water  
aims its wrath at me  
if I could see under her hair  
dripping to the sand  
I'd drop to my knees and pray  
for the hard beauty to never  
repeat

November 18, 2017

## Too Long Ago

the girl of my dreams slid  
by one day years ago I suspect  
today she would be stroking my head  
as the light in me dims  
she doesn't know what she did  
but the twilight those days  
filled us both with lapses  
of vision / I mourn us



November 19, 2017

## How We Lived Once

our farm / our land  
not long before fields but now  
young scrub trees and swamps  
a couple of pine stands / no underbrush  
fields irregularly placed  
the occasional boulder / large granite chunks  
meteorites in the stone walls  
a cranberry bog / a milk cooling well  
an orchard of pears  
some apple trees scattered  
grapevines rising wild into trees  
a grove of cherry trees  
shagbark hickories / we could live here  
for years / cows / pigs / chickens  
turkeys / a few horses  
barns and coops scattered around  
places to store hay  
strange farm equipment designed for horses  
adapted to a we—made-it tractor  
everything here designed for self-sufficiency  
I could have lived there birth to death  
the only home I ever knew

---

November 20, 2017

## Another Day to Wait

what if we saw only the light and the dark  
what if our senses were shut off from the quick  
what if there were only language and no things  
nothing that could be something else the way  
“water” can be water and not the way  
we ask for water / what if Cormac McCarthy  
were not the best writer but someone never  
heard from before or after were  
what if even light was suspicious  
and our unconscious went on strike  
what would we make of this  
“the Merrimack River in Merrimac Massachusetts”  
and the bridge above it

---

November 21, 2017

## Warm Blood

the family said the book glorified the killers  
that the Clutters were cardboard  
I say the family wanted them painted as pure  
as whiter than the whitest clouds  
in the brightest sunlight / cardboard  
when I read the book all  
I see are the Clutters / real and human  
loving and loved / slicing their ways  
through the cold white night that divides  
the before from the after  
I go to them / to no one else

November 22, 2017

## The Elm Lane

the Chinese elms have passed away  
the lane is no longer tremendous  
the corridor is a plain  
the wind never stops before the lane  
maybe ten remain  
the years have chopped them up  
the way no one ever forgets

November 23, 2017

## Drive On

hot day before thanksgiving  
talking and reflecting  
the drive here was crazy  
the traffic / tomorrow the return  
oh crap

November 24, 2017

## Heart

too far into a sadness  
the sky behind is a set  
of shades of blue  
with clouds making some gray  
I am sinking / help me sink

---

November 25, 2017

## High School

the high school faced the street  
the cemetery a ways back behind it  
I think / it's not on any map I can find  
the kids are facing north  
all from the smallest evidence  
looking at the photos / the drawings  
I weep and relish what it must have been like

November 26, 2017

## Tried So Hard To Keep

love always starts strong  
excitement all 'round  
love always ends at some point  
the hollowed out self  
unceremoniously revealed  
that's why / I cry



November 27, 2017

## Cra-ku 1

a winter fountain  
I inhale  
winter bright and clear

my mother's back  
an egg's warmth  
someone's voice

---

November 28, 2017

## Self As Fiction

suppose I wrote a long history  
of self and found out it was fiction  
perhaps a magazine would unearth facts  
that show I'm not me / never was  
kind of like the dream I had last  
night about being questioned by authorities  
who were certain I was someone else  
while all my friends watched  
waiting for it all to be over so  
they could have lunch

November 29, 2017

## Cra-Ku 2

shadowless  
shrine maiden  
so voluptuous!

departing spring  
half-closed eyes, mountains and rivers,  
a water pillow

birds migrating,  
an old man  
the floating waterfowl

a religious dispute—  
an inchworm  
with pupils like stars

---

November 30, 2017

## A Small Vacation

I wonder how often I'll  
sit by the river as the sun  
gets low / the slight salt smell  
of the river being pushed uphill  
how many more times  
a sweet taste / a new photo  
perhaps they will find me there at dawn  
they will wonder who then why  
then / I really hope  
why not

---

December 1, 2017

## Lifting

a heavy day  
tried and sweating while pruning trees  
cool outside but not used to that sort  
of effort I flagged a bit  
the trees though will thrive  
next year for this / a good day  
for them / a not so good one  
for me

---

December 2, 2017

## Sad Goodbyes

many of the beauties languish  
while waiting for the rights  
sitting in cafes  
walking along famous rivers  
seen from the back in silhouette  
they are like time slipping away  
or like a train that's just left the station  
and on the rails it wiggles  
just a bit

December 3, 2017

## Chanel No 5

near Christmas I'd watch the ads  
what to give a girl I loved  
who didn't love back

a rose and jasmine base of Rallet No 1  
but cleaner / more daring / pristine polar freshness

chocolates / jewelry  
private clothing  
a fur / a hat  
but small

Rose E. B. and notes derived from  
a new jasmine source / commercial Jasophore  
ramped up quantities of orris-iris-root  
natural musks

Ali McGraw / her wide-eyed  
It-Girl beauty brought the fragrance  
to the youth  
no rich aunts now nor never

aldehydes / organic  
compounds / carbon / oxygen / hydrogen  
manipulated at crucial stages  
the process arrests / isolates the scent  
aldehydes are seasonings / aroma boosters  
a clean note of the arctic  
a melting winter note

knowing nothing  
it seemed perfect  
but how  
to get / to send  
knowing nothing  
no plan

legend has it that this wondrous concoction  
was the inadvertent result  
of a laboratory mishap

Coco chose concoction number five  
everything for her = number five  
the girl / number zero



---

December 4, 2017

## Her Heart

the beaver pond  
can be reached only  
by the lost  
mostly the hopelessly lost  
around it the trees are so dense  
it takes a week to see past the first one  
in the trees dead left standing  
raptor nests abandoned abound  
something we all need resides there  
in the den perhaps  
what I need is a tree cut pretty down  
by a buck beaver intent on damming  
I found the pond once  
perhaps I left

December 5, 2017

## Couple

it goes without saying  
someone was just saying

December 6, 2017

## Tragedy Befalls You

like leaves moving haphazardly  
down the road my memories  
switchbacked away down the high  
bank road down to the river  
and over the green bridge that separates  
the past from the remote past

---

December 7, 2017

## To Your Heart

the door to hell's motel  
opened to my knock  
I went to the sink perched  
in the corner attached on two sides  
in the mirror I saw her on her fours  
and was more striking the broad  
butterfly on her chest below her blueblack hair  
or her dark nipples pointing the direction  
my soul would take  
must take

---

December 8, 2017

## Open Doors

when the world is made well  
we don't tear it down  
it ages before us  
the heavy beams / the falling  
off stucco / yellows you see  
light browns and underneath concrete  
colored bricks / damaged red  
window frames / old glass windows  
tile roofs / inside a vestibule  
a creche of mother and child  
as if believing this is why those old  
parts of the city still live

---

December 9, 2017

## Mother's Stories

the big flood of '36  
twenty feet up above flood stage  
people rowing down Merrimack Street  
90 years later some floors still damp  
the city then was like a city  
now a big village / all the grand buildings  
torn down to make way for new ones / good ones  
except there are none  
my mother remembered that flood  
then her father killed the next year  
what did it mean / nothing / it meant nothing  
it's just history you know

December 10, 2017

## Boxcar Life

we broke down outside town  
flat plain type place  
past midnight but we could see grain  
elevators miles away  
beside us tracks and on them  
a train at rest  
boxcar doors open as if waiting  
as if welcoming  
on a siding I thought  
dim light inside one  
it took a while but we smelled smoke  
a meal cooking then  
we saw a small fire and men sitting 'round it  
a woman or two too  
we looked off to the side  
and the town rose up as much as that town  
could rise up with lights some neon  
everything around us broken one  
way or another even our dreams  
that night reclining in the boxcar

---

December 11, 2017

## Those Smells

on my veranda late  
drizzle and some fog  
my tea still warm almost  
hot / footsteps down the street  
it's a small town  
no more than three houses a block  
maples and oaks / hemlock there used  
to be and hickory  
then a pair of voices  
him and her  
their words important for them  
for me just a drizzle in sound  
footsteps behind me in the house



---

December 12, 2017

## Snow Capes

out my window tonight  
every flat place under inches of snow  
mailbox / branches / crossbeams on poles  
on fences / if it were dark the streetlights  
would show these as yellow tufts like dried wheat  
in fields / or maybe it's all memory  
and what I see is long ago  
perhaps the wind won't stop blowing  
what if the one I loved then  
loved me now / how deep would the snow  
capes be

---

December 13, 2017

## Unsolved Love

in 1967 I had an unsolved love  
something that happens to the unloveds  
others maybe resolved to unsolve them  
unresolved is how I feel  
I remember visiting her in Hartford once  
I think she might have noticed me  
I walked ten feet behind her talking to her brother  
who later was my best man / unrelated

---

December 14, 2017

## November in DDR

in DDR in 1985 the colors  
were all off / cobbled streets  
cars made of tar paper  
piles of half-made charcoal piled  
at the dead ends of streets  
a haze or smoke over it all  
buildings still broken from the old war  
people not realizing life is still broken  
churches empty but not forgotten  
people carrying charcoal back to their homes  
with ceramic stoves in the middle of them  
I know people who grew up there  
they don't smile much

---

December 15, 2017

## Less Is More

at the workshop on the Baltic  
I sat in a comfy chair reading  
late afternoon / spring  
near Dahme on an east coast of Germany  
then I heard the waves crashing  
on the other side of a berm  
huge waves it sounded  
like a storm in the Baltic / how strange  
eventually I wanted to know how  
large they were  
I walked across the road and over  
the berm to see them crashing  
six inches / maybe less

December 16, 2017

## Slow

tonight some random hacking  
on the messy rhyme code  
still not right and will never be  
too many special cases of words  
from random texts  
people believe it can be learned  
fast

---

December 17, 2017

## The Receptivity of the Female

the appeal of well-wrapped  
worthless gifts is universal  
even beyond Homo sapiens  
some male spiders  
Paratrechalea ornata to arachnologists  
“fuzzy brown ones” to the rest of us  
give food gifts to prospective mates  
gifts that are nutritionally worthless  
but wrapped ornately in the silk produced by their bodies

imagine giving your beloved a chicken  
nugget meticulously wrapped in beautiful fabric

for spiders and humans  
it's the wrapping that counts  
because the worthlessness of the gift  
inside does not affect  
the receptivity of the female

December 18, 2017

## Everest

a man dies high on a cold mountain  
his body freezes and mummifies  
lots of money can bring him back  
I mean bring his body home  
they might say he died doing what he loved  
I say he died

---

December 19, 2017

## Euro Chick

when I was on the Baltic  
the woman in the next cabin over  
dropped all night and in the morning  
she would look at me over her shoulder  
over the berm the waves crashed  
a slight murmur  
the roofs of our cabins were natural plots  
grass and some weeds  
sleeping with the window open  
the Baltic air moved inside  
she dropped still



December 20, 2017

## LIX

the question of roman numerals arises  
is it reasonable to pronounce a word  
that looks like a roman numeral  
as a roman numeral  
I imagine ancient romans laugh

---

December 21, 2017

## To My Heart

I drive by it every year  
many times  
the stone wall along the road  
has been poached  
the gracious brown grass in winter  
has been flattened  
where Snooks was buried is now not  
in a hidden far back field  
but in an open meadow someone made  
with chainsaws  
where is the old tractor  
the side delivery / the old mower  
the old plow / what cure is  
left to us shuddering off

December 22, 2017

## My Road

narrow road to the lab  
large very large eucalyptus trees lining it  
smell of gum trees and tar weed  
summer near the lab  
I thought I was not much  
but squeezing by  
I was not much  
I squeezed by

December 23, 2017

## Happy Anniversary

every now and then  
I learn more about  
the ways people dislike me  
even ones I'm married to

December 24, 2017

## Christmas Eve for Many Years

I was a sap for Christmas  
I think I didn't think  
there was a Santa but maybe I did  
I knew there would be more presents  
under the tree the next morning than tonight  
our tree we got it in Merrimac Town Forest  
a spruce of some sort carried back  
on our toboggan down the Town Forest Road  
to Sam's woods then over to our swampy area  
near the big boulder then home into our backyard  
no one could see us though the tracks  
were a giveaway / I never can remember  
decorating the tree but I must have seen it  
or even helped / we were not rich  
I usually didn't get much

---

December 25, 2017

## Our Holiday

we come in fresh and cold from the winter woods  
there are informal roads all through them  
they are our woods and our roads  
they seem to lead nowhere just an interesting spot  
blueberry patch down one branch  
a swampy blueberry patch down another  
on the other side of the town road the branches just go  
to small fields some sandy or to groves to cut down  
for building and framing we are poor  
the fire we have going is in a cellar wood stove  
it heats the whole house two stories  
heating oil too expensive and Christmas today

---

December 26, 2017

## Admiration

winter / claim your thoughts or lose them  
when you feel the cold drill through  
when the dark leaps onto your lids  
when the songs all sound in minor keys  
then you will wake and interpret the words ringing down the hall  
so find a bridge that terrifies you  
climb on it / walk to the part that terrifies you  
if you are true to winter the trains upriver will halt  
sound their halt horns / you will over-admire  
the words others say / others write  
look / an open road

December 27, 2017

## To My Head

so the year ends  
I am tired and work slowly  
cold outside and all over they say  
my brain must be going slowly they say  
I knew the bug was in the parallel part  
but it took hours to find  
I needed a four leaf clover but had only a three



December 28, 2017

Oy

the ocean of course does  
not care who stands  
on its shores  
to say hello  
it just waves

December 29, 2017

## She Is On The Line

stories of love or movies of love  
move in strange directions  
there is always the tearing off scene  
the tearing up scene  
the teeing off scene  
none expects the scene where the laconic cowboy  
on his high horse in the mountains near Taos  
answers his mobile

December 30, 2017

## Ploughgate

a young lady meets  
an old farm  
and cows love her milking them  
making european style cultured butter  
fresh from moo to you

December 31, 2017

## Tonight Tonight

tonight a last night  
cold tonight and full moon I think  
all over people celebrate  
I plug along and welcome the long nights  
the books and words I love  
next year might be my last  
what a way to think  
fear and love / those two things

**The Day's Last Light Reddens the Leaves  
of the Copper Beech**

Richard P. Gabriel

December 31, 2019

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January 1, 2018

**First Night**

tonight a strange taste haunts my mouth  
perhaps a touch of poison lingering  
I have a deadly weariness to untangle  
InkWell is working again but producing poorly  
to talk about it I must invent

January 2, 2018

## While

coding again  
finding bugs and fixing some  
others seem like bugs but aren't  
I was fiercely gentle  
I aggressively passive



January 3, 2018

## Day Late

back home tomorrow  
there will be a horrible storm  
flooding / high surge  
then cold  
welcome home

January 4, 2018

## Slight Dawn

if I were home  
I'd be warming by the woodstove  
reading a book before turning a log  
the stove would be warm with food  
I would be sitting with someone hot  
afterward I'd take a walk down to the pond  
maybe someone would have a fire going

January 5, 2018

## To Keep You Down

I once was a force  
many would defer to me  
they took it for wisdom or knowledge  
most keep growing but I stopped short  
to look back and see it all laid out  
like the future only backward  
like complete darkness only light

January 6, 2018

## Cold Nets

there are reasons the cold frightens us  
it's in the direction death heads  
when it heads home  
it's like below too low in a game of highs  
it's like the river draining out the lakes  
of the north to the sea  
responds by wiggling its toes  
the cold frightens us  
because it's always in our way

January 7, 2018

## Wintering

a storm hit  
trees didn't like it  
birds hunkered down in bushes  
winter in a non-winter type place  
cold but not  
the rain was a killer  
I was worried about the gutters  
the birds had seed nearby  
I always wondered about the hummers  
then it got dark

January 8, 2018

## Ho Hum

the travel again in two days  
scared as usual  
prepared though  
fixing bugs

January 9, 2018

## Lousy One

stupid bug fixed  
seems like programming is really  
all I am able to do well  
enough to make some happiness  
it's like typing which my fingers enjoy  
and like writing which I enjoy  
but it is less forgiving than anything  
I like the dreams lately  
the ones with strange houses  
I can't find my way through  
or out of  
like programming

January 10, 2018

**Worker**

I am lonely from working  
even with no one to employ me  
it doesn't feel different  
so I must have been a lousy  
employee / in fact I know it



January 11, 2018

## On A Short Hop

looking down from the plane from DC  
to Pittsburgh the warm upflow  
from a small town bit through some sporadic  
low clouds / each streetlight and houselight  
swirling a rough mist around itself in the haze  
the lights in the airplane cabin were off  
but the long red haired flight attendant  
still stood out even with her too light  
pink lipstick / she needed a temporary friend  
so I spent a night with her downtown though  
my friends sat wondering in a dark Scottish themed  
restaurant / I was in feathers

January 12, 2018

## Locality

some of the ideas make little sense  
we are afraid of them  
the warm air turned cold  
sunny skies turned to rain  
rain to ice / ice to snow  
and this adds to the nonsense  
who am I to say otherwise  
I am afraid

January 13, 2018

## Not Much

slippery sidewalks  
decent walk to the restaurant  
she said I had changed  
from brash bold to gentle  
what might it mean  
I have sleep coming on hard

January 14, 2018

## Program Like This

with a loud voice  
I shouted my ideas  
against the old ways  
but the old ways are such good  
friends / even when they're  
mean ugly and horrible

January 15, 2018

## Huh?

I follow the cold wind down to the river  
it doesn't like the tail  
the river is a simple river  
it goes only one way  
hm / what next  
all around people are wearing  
stocking caps  
what

January 16, 2018

## Fields

trying to make it up the hill  
away from creeks and valleys  
high as I can go  
to see all those who left before  
drift into the lowers  
the way seems up and rocks abound  
I find my place / sit / write

January 17, 2018

**Inku**

transferable behind  
then obtuse  
seeing pecker angling

green display pop  
just enough to carry the rear  
on a square skate

when the heads slacken  
there's nothing to show  
but vegetables

a controller pimps a herring  
it's living  
that style is spotting

observable rain  
a little crocodile  
surfaces to my left

I ain't after  
the red-berried elder it comes from  
that free fall

January 18, 2018

## Inku Two

that slow slowness—  
yellow-green algae slowness  
in the form blueberries

an exhibition game  
by myself  
lighting a contractable brownie

dawn  
comes to the bird's visual systems  
and the eagles begin crying

that he-survivor  
out victorious  
of soul and succotash

don't re-create me  
it's as low-beam  
as the two fifty percents a Northern Spy

when I saw the wall -  
the small purple-fringed orchid  
was growing

when I heard the LP  
the well-heeled jack-o-lantern  
bursting forth

prime mother-of-pearl  
raining down  
on the half-bought the farm Greater New Orleans Bridge



the ivory-nut palm  
not ho-hum  
coral-wood Dutch case-knife beans

January 19, 2018

## Inku Three

when the catch crops crush  
there's nothing to recognize  
but cash crops

it'd continue  
along my pinky  
the attendance quintessence

beautiful snow  
a small crab  
lifts up my shoulder

the measure of octopus  
company objects  
in the summer moon

least five-spot grows  
used-cars are double-parking past  
a pool is pro-life

not this English ambition  
English sparrow  
but your darling challenge

a black hole looks blue now  
our motives are motives  
soon motive is all

as for the ear  
on the tape recording  
my chum killed it

this street  
no one goes to it  
Christmas hospitalization

when I looked at the wall  
the sexual death angel  
was blooming

January 20, 2018

## Wash-and-Wear Autumn

the pick-status figures  
big on large's bush kingdom  
fifth of all big fives

basic low-carbon steel  
giving out  
on the half-phased fore-and-aft sail

don't triple-tongue me  
it's as hard-and-fast  
as the two halves of pet-food

a darkness yesterday  
by myself  
drugging dark mulligan

p-n-p transistor power  
cannot take The Virgin Islands  
the same

mass / mass the mass one  
the pedigree moo-cow's ma  
is my pedigree bloodline

I ain't after  
the cast-iron plant it comes from  
that X-linked recessive inheritance

blue irresponsibleness  
to dream and cream

original B-complex vitamin  
shadowing  
on the half-numbered step-up transformer

reddish-lavender,  
but somehow the daughter cell  
is falling apart

not this locker-room brotherhood  
glass snake  
but your ex vivo program

of conclusions  
the wine lover is commercializing  
but minor conclusions establish a pattern

first cosmic microwave background of Saints Peter and Paul  
I keep re-creating

parenthetical  
but for some reason the fern ally  
is channel-surfing

the slit flip-flopping  
the purplish crow-bait's blah  
is pro-choice glint

as for the Johnny-jump-up  
off the tv  
my kid avoided it

not this home thing  
false saber-toothed tiger  
but your twenty-ninth movie

the royal's walls  
have gotten browner  
no round greenhouse effect

when cliff-brakes consort  
there's nothing to foster  
but mountain heaths

bright sun  
rounds out the slave-maker's brain-stems  
and the honey guides begin speaking up

January 21, 2018

## The Woman Was Jazzing His Lip

not this lung-like surprise  
poll parrot  
but your goody-goody doo-wop

a police matron cries Boston lettuce  
it's panic-struck  
my marrow squash is guying

life-sized sex object?  
the hay-scented fern  
even when it's known best

we need to be  
with the now ready-to-eat boys-and-girls  
and god-cock-and-bull story

the staff vine acquires  
research laboratories are foundering past  
the swimming hole is twelve-sided

dusk  
bounds the quack-quack's eyelashes  
and the knife-handles start countering

the English toy spaniel's upper respiratory tracts  
have gotten jet-blacker  
among the biological clock visible radiation

pine-tar rags are cha-chaing past  
your moon is quick

January 22, 2018

## No Nonsense Boo Boo Roly Poly Pudding

hospitalization!  
a fucking holler  
beyond the thunderbolt

the silky dogwood sharpens  
hula-hoops folk are dancing past  
a coral reef is flea-bitten

not this Greek joie de vivre  
Asian wild ox  
but your armour-clad F clef

cookie-cutter  
but somehow the Brazilian pepper tree  
is stirring fry

the garden balm unfolds  
aerial ladder trucks are tooling past  
their lunar crater is fully fledged

when I noticed the diesel-hydraulic locomotive  
the spindle-shanked Caucasian walnut  
was channel-surfing

twilight  
hurts the polar hare's bile ducts  
and the deer mice begin hen-pecking

not this scientific ambition  
whistling swan  
but your cost-efficient honorary degree



initiatory transparent quartz  
brightening  
on the half-brought down off-axis reflector

I take to not heart  
the charred pancake cup it comes from  
that secondary sex characteristic

the technological revolution of technological revolution

I don't toilet-train  
the Dutch case-knife bean it comes from  
that stiff upper lip

bright sun  
reins the Canada jay's cunts  
and the nags start plea-bargaining

January 23, 2018

## A Lasting Visit

the fear of it  
death creeping forward  
no place to back into  
my days are few  
one more walk maybe across the bridge  
to the beaver pond made of Cobbler Brook  
burger place and the spot by the river  
how can I fight for it  
fight back the tears

January 24, 2018

## Pity They Say

when my highschool classmates speak of the old days  
I am lost because I paid no attention to the old days  
I lived an isolated life / I was inward looking  
I learned little of life / they learned much  
for that I have lived my life poorly / been a poor friend  
I don't know how to fix it / and time is running out  
to have lived a long life the wrong way  
what a waste

January 25, 2018

## Shouldn't Have Lied

collapsing around  
water racing seaward  
code that works but is hard  
now it's time to hole up  
for the end of games

January 26, 2018

## Big Field Country

big open fields  
small rows of bush between  
a ditch every few miles  
a high big porcelain sky  
with pink roughs to the west  
in the house a woman has cooked  
the food waits on a table near a window  
outside a man watches that sky  
scans the fields / he had a dream once

January 27, 2018

## OK Church

an old Kansas church  
I see it every trip  
little by little falling apart  
white and broken  
which good moments were had there  
which bad / maybe it's a barn

January 28, 2018

## No One Else's

some lonely night I spent  
writing long paragraphs about a past  
I couldn't recall / I made up  
for it by using something nearby  
a story that could be mine  
and because I could imagine it  
better than it happened  
it is mine

January 29, 2018

## Tony Hoagland

he once called my work  
accomplished / I wondered what it meant  
perhaps finished / perhaps done  
he meant it as a gift but I only took it  
he is sick now but teaches in a back room  
at a church in Santa Fe / there is chaos there



January 30, 2018

## Back Woods

who of course is ready  
deep woods of pine and birch  
animals burrowed or hiding  
birds hunkered / it's night  
you need to tall pine to hear  
the wind up there / wants you  
is that a brook down there  
time for sleep

January 31, 2018

## Lying in Wait

the last labor is just a comment  
something written or spoken to yourself  
we assume our lives are in cocoons  
but battlefields are more like it  
how to attack while feeling soft  
we just sit / we lie back  
we watch under hooded lids  
last labor you see

February 1, 2018

## With Snow

I wanted to write full  
write strong as Hoagland asked  
instead I pecked at it  
lots of words fell out  
maybe a sentence every then  
it reminded me of a steep hill  
with a road lined with stones  
buried up to their tops  
with snow

February 2, 2018

## Snowfall

the city abandoned  
heavy snowfall / brisk winds  
people behind closed curtains  
in warm poses / I'm down on the street  
walking uptown as the street disappears  
a cab drives by and two dark lines  
form behind it / pointing the way  
to the beginning of time

February 3, 2018

## Open The Door

with time dropping away  
how can I learn to live  
in the time left  
I need to be able to notice  
I need something that is like happy  
to be out and not in  
or maybe it's just to write as if

February 4, 2018

## Losers All

we pin our hopes on outsides  
when they don't we don't  
don't is easier  
all the time / over eager  
sometimes almost

February 5, 2018

## Wheat Lands

some of the roads I've been on  
are worn down to gravel almost  
the towns once thrived when living was local  
these days we shop in stores too large  
for our grandparents to imagine  
we know no one up our street  
a bird alighting a branch is a surprise  
a mystery / the grain elevators are rusting to death  
someone called the lineman to check  
but even after all that labor no one calls  
the wind wanders past while I sit by my car by the road  
that leads past wheatfields tended by machines  
watered by machines / harvested by machines  
I should worry about the sun who has seen it all  
the book we're supposed to read has no answers  
it was written for a different desert from the one  
that stretches from river to mountain  
to where you used to be

February 6, 2018

## Not Much

I plan to stay home forever  
I will let time kill me  
I want to be reading when I go  
I want the sun to set



February 7, 2018

## Slow Music

near the water a pier  
heads out to sea  
behind a wall of rocks  
that the waves try  
to leap over the sea vaults  
walking out in the time  
of dark when no one is awake  
I hear a slow song I used  
to hear as a kid / in cars  
the waves are not visible  
they don't make this song  
the sea is not visible  
it doesn't make this song  
no cars drive by  
only my head is here with me  
singing my sadness

February 8, 2018

## Eyes

one thing fills me with fear  
today I will face it  
when I return to writing  
if I return  
I will be changed by technology  
twice before I faced it  
total fear both times

February 9, 2018

## One Last One

getting ready to sleep  
maybe / for the rest before surgery  
I am starting to panic  
just a bit / the memories  
from 57 years ago and 62 years ago  
coming back / I wish I could  
zen it out

February 10, 2018

## Surgery

surgery over  
not as bad as before  
some eyelash-in-eye type discomfort  
can see better in weak eye  
some strangeness my brain needs to learn about  
eye drops so many times a day it starts to hurt  
eye patch on each night for a while  
sunglasses / I wonder what it will all cost  
white is white again

February 11, 2018

## Meredith

what feels like home  
is a whisper and some sobs  
how I used to sit by the phone  
and hope I could call her  
instead I waited another day  
decades  
she had her ideas about a future  
none of them worked I think  
she is lost now in a dream she forgot to have  
I am typing this in

February 12, 2018

## Cold Intimacy

sitting in a cold room  
paging through yearbooks  
listening to the same song again  
and again  
the one or two pictures  
I always return to  
I still have them  
still turn to them  
I feel it even now the fear  
of calling her / I never beat it  
I cannot even ask to see her picture  
her brother a close friend  
I can't ask him  
I can't ask anyone to be intimate

February 13, 2018

## Outside Town

the hard grit of the story  
of death but sometimes love  
swirls like dust in a devil of sorts  
the side of the hill tiered for mining  
the hump of a hill burdened by trees  
hardwoods / sometimes a pine  
someone buried not long ago  
can almost remember the warm days near here  
but too many people have wept since then

February 14, 2018

## Cobbler's Ravine

close to sunset  
sun up near the top of a small rise  
we are down in its valley  
in a pine woods with some birch and elm  
late in November / cold with a streak of cloud  
we've stopped walking / the crunch swallowed  
by princess pine and needles and leaves  
the brook slowly flowing  
the sun a glow just above the ridge line  
me / the woman  
she is bundled warm and her breath comes out like a cloud  
later we will eat in a hot side room  
stew and cooked meat  
the red scene locked in our hearts



February 15, 2018

## Old Dust / Oldest

in the part of town we have forgotten  
an old warehouse staggers in place  
windows stoned out / water rotting it all  
debris and garbage gracing the floor  
when hot sunlight slices in large motes  
reflect time and fate  
I've sat outside this place and reminding  
it of me or me of it  
if there were music about  
it would be old music

February 16, 2018

## My Love

they walk away  
they don't wave bye  
don't say bye  
I want to find a way  
nothing no nothing  
I hum the sad parts

---

February 17, 2018

## Etherized

I have explained it all  
laid it all out on a table  
shown how I thought of it  
described what happened  
some require magic  
and think science can create it  
some just hope  
some just pray

---

February 18, 2018

## Boston Nana

the one Thanksgiving we walked  
by the fort to the parking lot by the docks  
and watched American Press head  
out to Boston Harbor on its way  
that one day was the last day  
I remember our South Boston Thanksgivings  
American Press  
heading out

February 19, 2018

## Gibson Guitars

I've seen this news  
I have to buy a model  
with my finger in my mouth  
do you want to be a bonus or not  
there was a store of Gibson in Nashville  
I've been there  
I was thinking about going home  
and I was going home  
about 10 years ago  
I have time to go  
and I think the shop is still there  
it's spectacular

February 20, 2018

## In A Map

something about the past  
is more real than now  
perhaps the stains of tears  
polished tabletops to a shine  
maybe it's the air that was more smoke filled  
or the sky that opened to the galaxies  
sometimes I wonder about vastness  
is it stranger that there's so much that's big  
than it is there so much small

---

February 21, 2018

## Shetland

I'm needing a lie down  
after all this hilarity  
old stone buildings around  
when the new sheep arrive  
baaa they say  
a bit of rain as they say  
drearling to the lime kilns  
beautiful in a far away way

---

February 22, 2018

## Hoswick Road

half-melted snow  
in the one-lane track  
swerving past a white stone home  
on the downside of the hill  
two black ruts going up the way  
toward a setting sun  
and a warmed up companion



---

February 23, 2018

## Hack Attack

lots of hacking for no good purpose  
to set up a schedule with silly heuristics  
like the old AI lab  
into the night

February 24, 2018

## Terrible Sounds

the wonder of it  
lightning  
a heavy storm scolds the tops of trees  
green grass rains down  
where was the wind I wonder  
where am I

February 25, 2018

## Kalaupapa

where I live is isolated as I  
have been for sixty years living  
with disease / a disease that puts others  
ill at ease / sent here to live  
I have been sent here too  
to die / away from eyes  
away from thoughts and mostly  
prayers / it is green  
it is warm / my headstone waits  
by the sea

---

February 26, 2018

## UnSelfish

regardless of the reasons  
history has a way of disappearing  
it told me it likes the shadows  
and behind bushes stances  
I cannot accept that the way it stands  
history is always  
verbose and chatty and grandiose

February 27, 2018

## Take A Load

evenings get me sick  
congested / lungs full  
days no problems  
I suspect everything  
is broken

February 28, 2018

## First Dark

night time / Shetland  
first snow I've seen  
no one out / maybe about six inches  
the cams are confused  
some of them  
focusing on raindrops  
the sky a wax paper mess  
it's a long winter  
mild maritime

March 1, 2018

## War Gaming

many ways to see it all fail  
words and all that  
some numbers too  
inconsistencies to work out  
balance issues  
no one tested it  
no one played it

---

March 2, 2018

## **B the K**

the stories are that  
hounded to death  
a reason / perhaps  
we can make up things  
make things up  
I've been to all the places  
usually when cold



March 3, 2018

## Understanding Nods

the riverfront streets are flooded  
by rising waters from the mountains  
and a disquieting storm surge  
watching the alley between the trendy  
restaurant and the B&B  
it's swirling between freshness and salt  
going up the long shallow rise  
that many hope protects the town  
it's one of many disasters the town  
has suffered / I could say more but  
I have dropped my fountain pen

---

March 4, 2018

## Up River

the high water  
many loonies deny it  
they say it's a coincidence  
funny  
they also believe that their riches  
are not  
a coincidence

March 5, 2018

## Lerwick or Unst

the appeal of Shetland  
is the distance  
the loneliness  
the unlikelihood of anyone stopping  
where did he go  
has anyone seen him  
nobody is my target

March 6, 2018

## Far and Wide

the lack of scholarship  
is a badge of arrogance  
not telling all the facts  
not bothering to look into things  
I am great am I  
not / not on my watch  
when I see I laugh it out loud  
I laugh it out wide

March 7, 2018

## Programmable Programming Language

some mistake acknowledging heritage  
and crediting people for ideas  
where though should be lecture  
be held / or should it not

March 8, 2018

## Categories

trying to relearn  
hard stuff from the past  
takes a time of thought  
and many cups of  
some things remembered  
others hard to learn again  
and what for  
why not quit

March 9, 2018

## Ice Clogs

a sort of hanging breeze  
or maybe a winter storm that chokes off the power  
the river is confused again tonight  
ice is clogged under the bridge  
cars refuse to start and when  
they do they refuse to go  
wheels spin / thoughts spin  
I creep back into bed  
for all time

March 10, 2018

## Monads

not getting anywhere  
too hard to figure out  
some explanations are really bad  
I just don't get it



March 11, 2018

## Monads Doodads

turning the corner on monads  
a little  
getting code to work so I can get it  
I cringe

---

March 12, 2018

## Lag Pit

sometimes the country  
pretends to be a pit  
we flee we flog  
little hints fly across my path  
stain my sight  
I lag behind and laugh

March 13, 2018

## In A City

in a charming little city  
by the river by the sea  
snow falls on cars / they sit  
there and take it on  
people wrapped walk along the river  
trampling paths before shovels arrive  
in warm homes people wait for the  
end in which work begins to make things right  
but all wonder what snow means  
when it covers everything like this

March 14, 2018

## Laugh

even where it's cold  
snow melts with the sun  
what was plowed is barren  
the ocean just laughs  
the river just laughs

March 15, 2018

## Street Snow

an abandoned mil-base  
from WW2 and the Cold War  
much asbestos and mould  
paint in flakes on floors  
doors like scarecrows  
then all the snow on it  
as the sun goes down  
it's like a town of cakes  
with marshmallow frosting  
the birch aligned with the color  
everything a little blue  
the woman in town by her window weeps

---

March 16, 2018

## Bird City

in a country not near  
the birds are likely to not  
get what you're saying  
so whistle and click your cheeks  
the universal language of bird  
and silly people  
whistle and click like  
you mean it

---

March 17, 2018

## Understandumb

understanding comes slowly  
I am not quite getting it firmly  
I try to write a larger program  
to fill out details  
wow am I that dumb?

---

March 18, 2018

## Silly Me

now that some code works  
I need to figure out why  
I will need to map it all out  
to the different spaces  
the different mappings  
the natural transformations  
to get what every part does  
so there



---

March 19, 2018

## Monads Killing Me

I can make it work  
but I can't say exactly how  
at anything but the deepest implementation level  
I got closer today  
maybe tomorrow

---

March 20, 2018

## Curse of Water

some days are longer than others  
this one for instance is short  
summer back home has the longest  
they make me sleepy and weepy  
I live for those days  
where I grew up / I didn't know  
what I left behind

---

March 21, 2018

## Every Where

every place everywhere  
something is there  
there is there  
when there is life what we could see  
fills our minds with lust and liberty  
just imagine if something like a tree  
and a rose sunset were somewhere not here  
how much would we sing?

March 22, 2018

## Why Not Me

she wore herself at her burial  
no one thought to think I wanted  
to be there / to see the headstones  
all around grow wet then black  
people not good at it carved  
the small faces / the small clusters  
I held her hands once / one time really  
I kissed her once / a couple I think  
times fled / no one thought of me  
she didn't either once the car door closed  
and I drove far

March 23, 2018

## Mere Suspicion Risen Up Is Come

what more remains these days says the married woman  
I crave the worthiness which is rotten as ever  
silver treads upon this viperous slander  
monsters should be under the blossoms  
heart gentlemen / the green mantle  
her wanton spirits in their own straps  
riotous madness and most serious

March 24, 2018

## Enticing Aromas Remain Agnostic

theoretical separation / to create a relationship  
sophisticated criminal / has direct implications  
phosphorescent animals / happens in the classroom  
estranged relationship / alongside their parents  
theoretical transmissions / lessen stomach irritations  
metaphysical interest / a sympathetic listener  
to issue proclamations / composition as a result  
posterior enhancement / in more than one respect  
duration relationships / her natural disposition  
scientific foundation / a sufficient condition  
the silent woman / how sentimental

March 25, 2018

## Leafless In False Lines

hard outside / has dried out  
lulled as / all duels  
sins of the / stone fish  
see falling / angel flies  
legal media / alleged aim  
tea gardens / great danes  
nicknamed for / force mankind  
for lightness / english forts  
these oracles / the casserole  
truth is about / its author but  
editor begins / being so tired

March 26, 2018

## Nights Wondering & The Snow Grinding

a peculiar bar girl had / a graphic durable liar  
dreams like last night's / all dark things it seems  
the agreement is no longer in / the green neon motel sign air  
had graphical lurid bear / I had a large bad rural chip  
dimensions of the / emotion she finds  
caught in the storm / a night cut me short  
harrowing depths / the sharp wording  
a drink otherwise / it is dark nowhere  
hearted rain comes / send her to america  
that downstream of / matter and how soft  
pressed against my / gaps and mysteries



March 27, 2018

## Guessless

the code to guess  
is hard to guess  
like which road to take  
to get to a place you  
don't know

March 28, 2018

## Radio Shetland

guessing code guessed  
constant time  
turns out to be a quadratic  
to solve / now the other mysteries  
on the radio some old songs  
making life a little more  
working hard is hard to explain  
to people who know what retirement is  
who would have guessed

March 29, 2018

## Filming

where they filmed  
the beauty was recuperating  
resting but there with just some blemishes  
thunderheads / she had turned  
father turned after thunder  
signposts and stop signs  
there is always a little boat  
on saw horses waiting  
for paint / for barnacle work  
do I persist / spirit does

---

March 30, 2018

## Reality Tunnel

she asked how to spread the ashes  
I need to think about this if I want  
something else / my friends are all great  
friends / they socialize without stop  
I like to sit and type / to keep it all inside  
sometimes I dream

March 31, 2018

## Retirement Down The Drain

we are so fucked  
worst fears

---

April 1, 2018

## Crap

I crawl into a hole and wait  
we will live day by day fearfully  
I am already canceling in my mind  
every expenditure for years to come

April 2, 2018

## One of These Nights

bad sleeping and drifting dreams  
now alone will I make it  
what turns on at night  
is the nonchalance of the melancholy  
backup singer / she sways while the others step  
the least showy the most precise  
when I write this I wonder  
where she could be  
where is she

April 3, 2018

## Better Man

watching her sing I plan  
to write a life history  
that melds with hers even  
though there is nothing more than  
the sound of her voice / the way  
she turns toward the feeling  
she sings of the world that should seem more real  
parts falling down / filling with dust  
I would be behind her  
in the crowd / a helper / she would be  
my alpha / I would tag along  
my hope only is her noticing eyes



April 4, 2018

## You Can't Say That

a bar in Wyoming  
she's on stage  
the drunks and drinkers  
sometimes pay attention  
her band is quiet  
small amps / country sound  
she wears lots of makeup  
part of the persona  
of a country wife  
out on the town  
her voice is simple and muted  
I'm behind the small stage area  
watching her backside  
no matter what we say or do  
before she starts / her mood  
is the mood of the song  
fantasy forces reality

April 5, 2018

## Your Terms

a cicada crimson crumbled  
emerging from the ground  
its memories pale green  
the crimson of autumn like night shadows  
my brain filled with white wind  
cicadas plummeting  
a spring evening  
the comings and goings of raw silk  
an autumn night mistrustful of silk  
becomes a bridge

April 6, 2018

**Inku**

producing shits  
being produced  
death to Alabama

one year a baby  
fails to find nineteen bitches  
in a tree

representation whiteout  
cannot plan America  
clear

shining whites  
against the line  
of Mount America

not this pre-Christian surprise  
pole horse  
but your hail-fellow-well-met ad

April 7, 2018

## Fear and Thinking

sometimes the program works  
sometimes I do  
I am swirling in details  
one day I will find the courage  
to walk from one side of the river  
to the other / it is that shallow

April 8, 2018

## Watching Her

to watch her sing  
was to watch her make love  
to the words  
to the song  
to the listeners  
to the watchers  
she would scan the bar front to back  
side to side  
all music is melancholy  
she never smiles

April 9, 2018

## A Week on the Wrong River

Thoreau said the Merrimack ended  
at a sand bar off Plum Island  
that this made the river poor  
for commerce / and above Haverhill  
even then the river was a waste dump  
not much fish / steam craft up to Haverhill  
the famous Chain Bridge / famous in 1849  
he turned left where the Concord  
met the Merrimack and left behind  
the part I still love

April 10, 2018

## Back Down

in winter she'd strip  
in the Tamworth camp  
and leap out the front door  
into the snow drifts  
at night

if only things were just  
this much different  
she could have been the one

as it is  
sad to say  
maybe no  
one is

April 11, 2018

## Kalyna

back into the novel  
transformed to Tex so  
no company can mess me up  
making maps / diagrams  
trying to recall the feelings  
of writing it  
waited a long time



April 12, 2018

## Repeats

rest / down time  
the use of well-set type  
the careful word one after another  
now the time is short  
I wish I could do it over

April 13, 2018

## Up We Go

the pull toward  
irrelevancy is rough  
and grabby  
I need to remember  
I am on the sidelines  
like smoke from a BBQ smoker

April 14, 2018

## Train Stop

traveling through night  
by train from the south  
to north in a darkened continent  
in my sleeping room  
my wife in her own small bed  
the train stops bent lovingly  
around a curve in the valley  
we grab robes and step to the end of the car  
out onto the space between cars and lean out  
the train wrapped ahead of us behind trees  
behind us around a small pond  
the air cold / the night flush  
with stars because we are getting north  
and the valley is deep  
we wait until the train lifts forward  
and we drift back and drift back

April 15, 2018

## Please Use It

you can write a great explanation in the comments section  
it's a long time  
picking a pig  
I wonder if it's going to be a few seconds in the conveyer belt  
I wrote a remarkable comment in the comment column so I will add it  
inside the nuclear plant site  
put a yellow drum and manage it as radioactive waste

if you are interested  
please use it  
yeah

April 16, 2018

## Shady Dell

I stayed in a big trailer  
in a vintage trailer park  
in Bisbee Arizona for two nights  
it was cold as hell every night  
daytime we'd hit the cafes in town  
old bookstore and antique shops  
when Trump was elected we headed  
for the border / the safest place  
from that clown

April 17, 2018

## Cruel Today

sometimes the truth likes  
to be cruel / today  
while looking for the document  
that labeled my father's father  
a helper I found the line above  
my father's in the book of Boston  
births / his read  
John double quote 1923  
the one above  
Grinkaitis (Male Stillborn) Boston 1921  
the infant buried fourteen years before  
my grandfather and with him  
in someone else's grave  
was an uncle I never knew of

April 18, 2018

## In A Coastal Town

down a street  
lamps in windows the only light  
brick and old  
no one near  
each window brings hope  
for successful commerce  
small things each made  
with an idea someone will want it  
when things are right  
I see myself on the surface  
of those hopes  
on the edge of glass that's on my side  
behind me the street of bigger things  
lies empty

April 19, 2018

**Anna**

behind me footsteps  
a woman in heels  
rain in the night  
my face on a window pane  
something made in front of me  
someone making behind me  
I can think only me  
she can think only her  
theories draw / there is a word



April 20, 2018

## Having It Out

I am still  
unmoving  
the sad facts are bright lights  
around me  
my friend is sad  
he is worried for his life  
I want to help  
I need his help

April 21, 2018

## All At Once

chicken

egg

which is first

how did it happen

here comes everybody

April 22, 2018

## Shetland

planning a trip  
with a different woman  
to some islands no one visits  
staying in a croft  
and cooking our own  
what would it mean  
to see her there  
with so little time left

April 23, 2018

## Shetland Croft

a nice croft  
looking over the sea  
we sit in chairs reading  
fire burning  
later we'll sit outside  
still light  
watching the sea  
fold toward us  
my dream always  
to be unfound  
before being unfindable

April 24, 2018

## The Illusion is Real

the express of longing  
the sea birds don't know it  
which creatures here but us  
feel the agony as men do

April 25, 2018

## Sad News

I sat before a piano  
years ago and  
played only poorly  
I sat before a keyboard  
years ago and sit now  
writing only poorly  
I hold a guitar  
and play only poorly  
I aim my camera at beautiful things  
what comes out is not  
I did better than many  
worse than more than a few

April 26, 2018

## Puffins

it's the best place to be  
nowhere / not found  
not findable  
I want to be a legitimate  
nothing / nobody / nowhere  
I picture crowded cities  
far towns / crofts near  
the tops of hills  
places where the sun rises  
and sets at strange hours  
  
that and a tiny love

April 27, 2018

## Small Waters

why me  
why do they ask me to write it  
and then don't like it  
because it's not the formalism  
they hoped for / they want  
mainstream  
I am Cobbler's Brook



April 28, 2018

## Shetland

I look out the west window  
behind me she reads  
the peat is burning in the stove  
the room is hot in waves  
outside sea birds spiral  
only with a clever camera will I be seen  
she stirs / ready for bed  
I wait for her hair to unfold

April 29, 2018

## Shetland

they are old and stone  
the land surrounding is harsh  
but soft  
there are some beauties here  
some beauty  
this is the last place clouds visit  
circling the world below  
it's funny how we cry

April 30, 2018

## All Deception Above

afraid to act / do

I cower

it's not pretty / not exaggerated

I want the complex simple

the simple gone

me in an open field

May 1, 2018

## Questions I Asked

I asked her  
when did I first see this  
the brown field light with light snow  
a stonewall with green and white lichen  
woods / hard woods / fractal arms and fingers  
reaching up  
egg blue sky blemished by gray clouds  
air cold and unmoving  
she was unmoving  
she was cold  
she was mother

May 2, 2018

## Shetland

sheep / grass / bushes  
sky / sea and razorbills  
and kittiwakes  
what more do you want?

May 3, 2018

## Shetland

solid shoes and a good rain slicker  
what will we find  
my imagination runs to peat and heath  
ocean smell everywhere  
people speaking but no words coming through  
the heavy earth / heavy stones  
a gift

May 4, 2018

## River Storm

the rain is a hue we can understand  
it's a sometimes curtain  
a strong wind makes a brilliant difference  
I fear the water running to the sea  
but under by only a foot are rocks  
and slabs / depth is ignorance

May 5, 2018

## Kurkjian on Shetland

big ship pointing toward sea  
kittiwakes plunging then rising  
puddles on cliff ledges  
a few nests yet unfilled  
people up now are desperate or hard-  
working  
I am up writing / later snapping  
but really photographing  
the woman who comes  
with me is slippery  
some say



May 6, 2018

## Uplift

we climbed with force  
up the rock parts of Chocorua  
later watched ourselves doing it  
on grainy movies / music  
supplied by Dvořák  
we all were spry  
the first time up in mist  
we hugged the rock  
in the film we soared

May 7, 2018

## Steps and Process

the language of poetry takes  
things out of order and un-near  
themselves / they scatter like dust  
on a drumhead and sometimes a pattern  
stops and stares  
when the vibes go solid  
it's time to write  
when they scatter it's time  
to revise

May 8, 2018

## All Look Same

silhouette on the grey / let you see her tonight  
graphic durable liar / uphill bard carriage  
pig dual barrel chair / rebuild racial graph  
dreams like last night's / it's dark all things seem  
passion reflecting / perfection signals  
caught in the storm / me a night cut short  
richard p gabriel / graph a bird relic

May 9, 2018

## Rain On

rain puddled on the streets  
cars splashing it to the sides  
more rain / how many things are going on  
so many a galaxy awaits

May 10, 2018

## Mighty Man

I drive past the turnout on the river  
u-turn back and park  
the windows go down before I get out  
and walk to the steep short path  
down to the river which is out  
meaning the tide is out and the headwaters weak  
a mighty swath of mud / you'd think it'd wash  
away / I still fear it so stop short

May 11, 2018

## Wind Stop

we lower our heads  
face into the wind to walk  
the ways to the clifftop  
overlooking the sullen sea  
molten above ice  
below birds abound  
and below them seven herrings  
feed a salmon and seven salmon  
a seal / my eyes water  
beside me / who is there  
what will she say  
when the wind stops

May 12, 2018

## Ending

sun near down  
I am in my usual spot  
by the river  
near the bridge  
close to home  
my old one  
some lights coming on  
on the bridge  
across the river  
the river is at turning  
smooth and wide  
I hear a fish splash  
a bird flies low  
over the river  
I am asleep

May 13, 2018

## Yell

if I found a place  
there with enough room to read  
and write / and with  
a woman who wanted the same  
I'd stay / I let no  
one find me / I would escape  
myself and instead of history  
I'd use invention



May 14, 2018

## No Where

the list of places  
I'll never go again  
lengthens as times  
cuts my legs out  
from under me

May 15, 2018

## End Titles

every great song  
is a sad song  
played on instruments  
that don't hold notes  
for you / you hold them  
the waver / the frailty of perfection  
held in and near the human hand  
the guesses fixed by bending  
those are the sadnesses  
all from the north

May 16, 2018

## Not Her Here

after crossing the tracks  
the train departs  
some going / coming  
a kiss in one direction or the other  
in this country trains rule  
roads sure / airplanes sure  
trains pass through the backs of towns  
they take what's ahead  
and throw them behind

May 17, 2018

## Place or Quality

Whiteness / not the quality  
of a blanketing color  
but the description of a headland  
near something white  
white ness  
in Shetland

---

May 18, 2018

## Unst Maybe

at a certain age  
we must disappear  
not from the world  
but from our world  
those who love us should wonder  
where we are  
they should sit up fast  
when they receive what we made  
while away for our endings

May 19, 2018

## Just Speculation

nothing is like love  
and loving her is nothing  
she's so different / so strange  
older and too smart  
wise beyond  
old little bit of it  
will be walking and eating  
talking and thinking  
meditating / reflecting  
it will be cold  
colder / it smarts  
what would it have been like  
a love like her

May 20, 2018

## Merrimack

the river ends not  
mightily but in confusion  
the ocean does not welcome it  
it pushes back  
it's made channels  
not a proper ending  
sand bars  
small side rivers  
islands / as they say  
a whimper

May 21, 2018

## Losing

being old

I am scared of everything

everything going wrong

being unable to pay total attention

I shiver with it



---

May 22, 2018

## Morning Comes Early

some of how we find it  
fixes our sight downward  
inward / contrary to poetic choice  
we should look up and out  
over at least  
can it be terrible  
can what we hate be so strong  
we fly into a pile of end

May 23, 2018

**all the time to sing / a little something**

my wife grinds unto another / that's renewing of your mind  
the increase of corn / a chief corner stone  
their mouths against / that man is righteous  
desert of the nations / for she intends to eat  
their throats are open / there is no other apart  
law for the priests and / swifter than leopards  
offering against the / feast of ingathering  
neighbors stay far / a ray of brightness

shame nor / horseman  
shatters / the stars

what of all sights and / shadows at nightfall  
for those hardening to / the hordes of ignorant

---

May 24, 2018

## No

real life dips in and says no  
no conference for you  
too expensive  
the other trip has overtaken  
I hope I'm able  
to stay far from the cliff edges  
to puzzle down hard  
would be a dazzle

May 25, 2018

## Expect

attraction is more than youth  
the head attracts by thought  
the body might not make it  
we will wander the low hills  
seeing the ocean all the time  
we will talk and think  
maybe mingle just a little

May 26, 2018

**No Dark**

heavy boots and a waterproof  
we will walk the cliffs  
feel salt spray brush us  
eat local / drink local  
low clouds all day  
but all day includes all night  
in the simmer dim

May 27, 2018

## Aging

the next thing I knew  
they had all turned away  
toward something more promising  
toward people more alive  
I watched them walk away  
slowly at first then they were gone  
all that was left was a small piece  
of paper and a little ink

---

May 28, 2018

## If It Fogs

if the illusion is real  
the fog will lift and life  
with re-assert  
the complex story remains that way always  
no plotting fixes that  
the characters are blunt and hated  
we will burn dirt

May 29, 2018

## Let Me Introduce To You

a wind will blow us  
off the earth  
later / onto the ground  
we will fly where men  
and women often do but shouldn't  
the feather quilts will welcome  
us back to the croft  
the tea will be cozy  
we will exchange words  
and a hope for a long future  
meanwhile the sheep will continue  
waiting for the shears



May 30, 2018

## Those Who Go Down To The Sea

some who left the islands  
for sea never came back  
their graves / dug years later  
are filled with papers and mementos  
stories and things they held each night  
books they read over and over  
pillows they hugged when terrified  
when alone  
enough things to be them  
enough to fill the arms  
of those who carried their coffins  
each with the weight of the man lost  
and you can hear the waves  
pounding the cliffs all day  
all night / all year

---

May 31, 2018

## Glue

when all you have are stones  
all your homes are stone  
cut to fit close together  
so no holdfast is needed  
if people are your stones  
how do they fit together  
without holdfast

June 1, 2018

## Communion

sitting down to eat  
sitting at angles  
we face the window  
that faces the short hill  
that runs down to the sea  
the wind is blowing up  
toward us / we raise our knives  
cut the shared flesh into bits  
that fit our mouths  
we spear them  
raise them  
break down what separates us  
from the building  
blocks we live to need

the wind rattles the window

June 2, 2018

## Montréal

I remember the Sad Girl  
Nancy in Kansas  
Kalyna Truss in my head  
I've described many  
all lonely from love  
or walking left out streets  
blues and yellows  
rain / low clouds  
piers and water  
meals and windows  
curtains pulled apart  
thrust shut  
there will always be a Sad Girl  
no matter how much whitewash  
they use

June 3, 2018

## Ahead

falling apart  
the dogs don't bark any more  
I am left uneasy at the tops of hills  
my shoes are too big

having expanded since childhood  
my memories of long ago are strongest  
sometimes writing words are stubborn  
three rows of people stare

June 4, 2018

## Goofs

pix of kids of long ago  
strange and humanless  
eyes pointed all which  
ways / hair styles aimed  
at keeping out the hair  
that they're now no more  
is strange and humanless

June 5, 2018

**Like a Fear**

at least there will be light  
all night  
blackout curtains might help  
but I can sleep anywhere  
good style and something to read  
someone with their hair down

June 6, 2018

## Ferals

slowly getting ready  
nervous as hell  
I can't figure or decide  
the night sky filled  
with low light calls  
test packing and all that  
I hope I hope



June 7, 2018

## Boulder in Merrimac

a large boulder on our farm  
part split off  
in the woods  
fifteen feet tall at least  
it didn't seem odd then  
it pulls now

June 8, 2018

## Peatish

always a seabird floating by  
low clouds and stiff wind  
blowing the Union Jack by the taxi rank  
Captain Flint's closed but earlier  
a white haired woman left with a younger  
outsider who talked fine and fancy  
the most he'll get is a peerie cake  
and a cup of tea

June 9, 2018

## Is Born

power out and quiet  
around and in our minds  
PGE said outage affecting one customer  
was it us or just our street  
we are the end of the line  
our neighbors were out too  
but it's back you see  
how else could I write this  
with pen and paper  
an idea

June 10, 2018

## Gone

the characters die  
we grieve but it's fiction  
our country and the world are ending  
lucky for me my  
time is short and only friends  
and children will suffer the future  
we are too connected to fail  
to notice the end creeping up

June 11, 2018

## Berlin Effect

a good thing we know  
is that when countries go authoritarian  
more and better art is produced  
as the tension of life and death  
life and shame increase past  
tolerance

June 12, 2018

## Happy DB

we went to our favorite destination the cream center  
we explored the delicious taste of ice creams  
I took some time and played with my pet rabbit for a while  
my husband told me he loves me this morning / true affection  
my oldest dog suffers from congestive heart failure  
she seemed to be feeling much better today  
I felt quite relieved  
I had a super good mail day yesterday  
and received lots of items I ordered off amazon

June 13, 2018

## Happy DB Some More

my two wheeler was not running  
I found there was an issue with front tyre  
I managed it myself  
this made me very happy / true achievement

I had really good carbonara chicken for dinner / true enjoy the moment  
I cleaned the bathroom tiles and now it looks nice and shiny in there  
I brought a new game system today  
I made dinner for my boyfriend and he complimented me on it  
I felt happy for the compliment  
and that I was able to make him happy

I measured my weight and found to be 1 pound lesser  
than the earlier day  
true achievement

June 14, 2018

## So It Was Perfect!

a shirt that I ordered came in the mail  
I saw an animated picture on Reddit of a small fuzzy animal  
in somebody's shirt pocket  
maybe a marsupial  
with gigantic eyes  
it was really cute  
I was happy when the shirt I bought fit  
and looked lovely  
I designed a shirt with a positive message on the front  
yesterday when I arrived home from work and received the mail  
there was an unexpected package from my sister in-law  
in the package was a shirt that had a saying and a hot dog  
she knows how much I love hot dogs



June 15, 2018

## Up Hill

the overall profit in my business is high during yesterday transaction  
that moment feels happy  
I was happy when I finished a big article  
because I worked hard on it and thought I did a good job.  
my younger child came and gave me a hug when I had a headache  
I made and then sipped a delicious mocha latte  
I made a really good pasta salad and had some delicious garlic bread with it  
I resolved a technical issue at work  
I tickled a couple of kids

June 16, 2018

## She

she will be the old wind  
passed though trees and over plains  
getting ready to drift into a sparse wood  
where only the smallest pine needles  
will stir one last time

June 17, 2018

## Fjara

the wind off shore  
the waves on shore  
the waves win always  
but the wind never stops  
the clouds and fog out to sea  
are the children  
of a higher imagination

June 18, 2018

## Late But Light

so what if the sky's red  
with clouds across blue  
and the water bobs just a bit  
a late night and thought-bound talk  
one of us will reach  
the other will gaze

June 19, 2018

## On Broadway

German women now  
look like German women to me  
I missed it before  
sterner / less relaxed  
a little hard but  
why not the variation  
why not something special  
in all

---

June 20, 2018

## Standards

so the night sneaks past  
the sky is a blur  
I am a wanderer  
some eat slowly on side streets  
the water flows  
here / there

June 21, 2018

## Captivity

I decided to leave  
a plastic bag with soiled clothes  
with my friend  
for the dogs

June 22, 2018

## Small Stone

in my den on my table  
I have a stone  
small from the stonewall  
that ran from our house  
to the barn  
where I'd hop from roadside  
to barnside / then through the orchard  
along the waste creek from the barn  
it's a stone from there  
from then



---

June 23, 2018

## Dogged

in Weesp  
pronounced Waspe  
our little house an island  
of Santa Fe  
I talk too much and need to feel more  
I await the outer

June 24, 2018

## Strindberg

the heart hopes  
the brain drags an anchor  
I am bonded to a place  
dictating self

June 25, 2018

## Berger

the words call out  
not to we who read  
to each other to form  
their own place of longing  
Van Gogh tagged along  
painted himself to death

June 26, 2018

## Sandness

on Shetland I found  
I was less / that the place  
was less / that she was more

June 27, 2018

## Eshanness

on Eshanness a gulf  
she gazes East over  
slim green hills  
crofts larded out  
the wind usually deadly  
just brushes her hair  
the gulf a deep rift  
and in it nesting seabirds  
she is unsure

June 28, 2018

## King

to paraphrase the king  
I am dead and this is hell

June 29, 2018

## Heavy Labor

croft of low doorways  
peats burning hellish smoke  
both up and in  
sleeping boxes even porn stars  
would find too intimate  
simple hanging salted mutton  
cow horns shaped as spoons  
the time missing for going inward

June 30, 2018

## Sugar Coated

she has no place for touch  
her days are gone  
we yack and ruminate  
the car is a weapon for breaking up  
the light is too light  
meaning the colors are too color  
we eat timidly / walk separate ways  
at the door



July 1, 2018

## Un We

we became you  
the shared plans became my plans  
she turned a bit to stone  
the food though was good  
all fish  
in two days we leave  
for a long time

July 2, 2018

## Shetland WTF

we stop for anyone  
to ask  
we are lost and each one  
we pass knows where  
the light is magic hour all day  
the people have not learned fear  
they tell us  
go anywhere / park anywhere

July 3, 2018

## And Finally Then

the spot  
sycamores and shade  
the only trees in Shetland  
chickens in stone pens  
cultivated cut yellow green hay  
she likes to walk off  
rub her hands together  
hectic / brisk  
she raves  
I can successfully park the car

July 4, 2018

**In All**

we left her behind  
we cried and watched her  
slip behind our plane  
my question  
the sincerity of the place  
small but we saw the large of her  
we traveled well together  
all talk / no contact  
in the second terminal  
she rested her head on my shoulder  
and she was old

July 5, 2018

## Old and Shetland

we left  
it's a hard place  
to get to  
to find restaurants in  
things cost  
conversation repeating over  
and over  
we formed no bond beyond  
talk / a relentless talk  
when we met before  
she turned from my hug  
when we parted  
she turned into it

July 6, 2018

## Disappointments

disappointments  
never a concession  
the holes by the windows  
bring in the cold air  
at least when I was away  
there were none  
if I were in a place  
where all there were were words  
to grab and shove around  
and no way to worry  
and even to have a little sweetness  
oh my / oh my

July 7, 2018

## Single Track

someone made the place of stone  
covered it in burnable earth  
they loaded it with seabirds and little else  
people speaking there are hard to hear  
there is no such thing as love  
there are only narrow roads  
and wide places to pass each  
other by

July 8, 2018

## Up In The Air

she was problematic on  
the other side of the room  
a low ceilinged room  
with a stone-back fire notch  
backing a peat fire smelling  
of burning coal oil  
her book plopped on her lap  
her eyes pointing out  
the window / the gale wind there  
though her body was wrong her  
mind was not / she fathomed things  
but it did not snap quick in place  
how many days would we have  
anyway / would the storms kick up  
boulders as in the days of the gods  
would she ask me to join her in  
the place you all imagine  
instead the book fell / her head tilted  
the peats kept living  
a song ran through my head  
it was on repeat one



July 9, 2018

## Grimister

at the window  
facing out to the voe  
one small croft down there  
from here she is melancholy  
but in her she is excited  
for the beauty and stark out there  
the light is insane  
we are trespassing  
it feels like  
though we have official keys  
in a minute she  
will start up the questions again  
and I will fess up

July 10, 2018

## North Unst

at the north end we found wind-blown-down buildings  
high above a big view of the sea  
in summer this would be a view  
in winter it would be a blanket of fog and clouds  
big winds / darkness / the most north  
of the most north island  
she would be there like a cozy woman  
she would be a prickly block  
maybe there is not time  
after all

July 11, 2018

## Before It All

down the spiral staircase  
she'd come every morning  
hair down and thinning  
dark here / light somewhere else  
in pjs / humming a tune or so  
making tea and lots  
a former kitten maybe  
now too beyond  
the maiden call stops  
the wind too strong

July 12, 2018

**Don't**

craving the near darkness  
autumn is my spring  
I live for urns and private symbols  
living / such a funny idea  
I imagined a trip so far away  
a setting so unclear  
a context unknowable  
I misread the meaning  
the light was wrong  
the sun went down  
on me

July 13, 2018

## To Wander Free

my beauty is not yours  
beauty is objective  
pretty is not  
desirable is not  
somewhere we think differently  
I withdraw to live

July 14, 2018

## Shetland

the place is twilight  
the time is north  
if you like stone walls

like a wood boat slapping rough water  
near a small brook running dry  
bad land for grazing  
the light low to the horizon  
flashes the hills yellow green  
the wind and the salt  
in her hair

July 15, 2018

## Jenny

when she asks questions  
relentlessly  
and I am driving a right-hand-drive car  
with a left-hand stick  
and foot pedals too close to each other  
with a pair of new wide shoes  
in a car designed for those munchkins  
sometimes I have to give her this choice  
live or the answers

July 16, 2018

## Shetland

sit on the ness  
by the burn  
near a voe  
spot the sheep staring  
the fulmars threatening  
the sky clouds skimming  
the sun preening the hill yellow and green  
the peat dark and wet  
I happened to ask a crofter  
a question and an hour later  
the period arrives



July 17, 2018

## Leaving

at Schipol we walked toward the shuttles  
the low sunset was just ahead pounding at us  
we could see only behind us  
it pulled up and I loaded my stuff  
for the first time she opened her arms  
and I was away / will she remember

July 18, 2018

## Alight

for only a few  
hours was the sun down  
never was the light absent  
when we watched I had my hands  
on her hips and she raved  
of the gloaming / of the washed  
out light / we never spoke  
of my hands / of her hips

July 19, 2018

## Shetland

after I finished the photos up the hill  
I followed where I believed she'd gone  
walking hand behind back down the two-track  
past a croft house where a woman was noisily  
doing laundry / ahead the track dipped  
to a sand beach and above that many sheep  
she was standing next to a broken down byre  
with stone walls around with rough grass and brush inside  
later I sat behind her / wrapped her  
the day's been forgotten

July 20, 2018

## In The Airport

later she asked me  
to rub the knots from her back  
she is small and old  
each hand covered more than half  
her width / she said I was a natural  
later it seemed she needed it more  
again my hands were on her / though she loved  
to talk no talk passed between that time  
and other times

July 21, 2018

## Window Tears

the old paths up hills and mountains  
now too hard for me though I could train  
one once ruined my toenails for wrong boots  
I remember one hike where she asked me to use  
my mind to bury our lost child  
near Wonalancet / next to a stream  
she asked me to find the right place  
do the right thing

July 22, 2018

## Gait

found a list of rules  
from an old expert system I wrote  
in 1978 to support wife number 1  
not number 1 as in best  
as in first  
it seemed like a foolish little program  
but it passed a real written test  
designed to test PT grad students at Stanford  
hm  
no machine ever learned such a thing

July 23, 2018

## Sweetwaters

the beauty of a place  
like the taste of an oyster  
it's eluded you for a decade  
then one day you taste the perfect one  
and you know the taste  
once you know it you can't unknow it  
even in the least perfect oyster  
from the starkest waters  
with the slimiest seabed  
if any of it's there  
you taste it hard  
strong / sweet / like sweetwater

July 24, 2018

## Sex Acts

in my dreams all my sex acts gather  
real / compulsive  
with known and unknown  
alone or with many  
these dreams are the only ones I take as real  
when they happen  
all the obsessive mistakes  
the wrong turns  
the getting lost  
the strange two or three houses I seem to live in  
I know these are dreams  
the sex is real  
the only place  
the only feeling



July 25, 2018

## She Is The Stranger

she is the stranger  
near stone crofts and byres  
the split of green and grey  
above the rim of blue and in the voe  
the cleft of blue  
yoals drifting by and men in caps in them  
she is the stranger who willed this all  
in place / made it for us to travel through  
a dream perhaps or the gulp of curiosity  
the longest poem started at one end  
and like broken liquids flowed throughout  
then flowed back out and all the while  
I watched for the times her hair  
came down / undone

July 26, 2018

## Mounthooly

she skimmed down a Lerwick lane  
from above to the sound  
in the dim of mid night  
in her and about her the promise  
of warmth and care  
instead her eyes watered from a separation  
I walked past her / going uphill  
after she passed I waited  
though we strode within inches  
we never met

July 27, 2018

## The Lovely Blonde

she disappeared  
smiling / her face came close to mine  
riding a jeep through the streets  
of a liberated town in the wilderness  
of France / she wanted to kiss me thinking  
I had liberated her / her family now  
all dead in rubble up the road I  
drove down / her sudden fleeting  
love was accurate / precise  
her eyes were in it too  
then all that faded / and she too  
was just a blip in the crowd  
dissipated bit by bit by the whirling dervish  
of time and memory / I think I dream of her

July 28, 2018

## Too Slow

looking to men  
she expected speed  
thoroughness / special look to their eyes  
she used sloth to get them  
not them *per se*  
but what's inside  
she'd give herself  
part of the deal  
I was not her rabbit

July 29, 2018

## Not

I feel off base  
maybe reading too much  
too into the stories  
so that real's not real  
I am delirious  
like two currents bumping  
she's asked for poems  
ones with her in them  
if I were a rabbit  
maybe

July 30, 2018

## Pikatude

the snare doesn't always snare  
the place / sometimes it can run too fast  
cut quick / ankle breaking cuts  
or down the sudden hole  
she likes rabbits / I'm the pika  
short and slow  
faster than a tortoise

July 31, 2018

## Dead Amalgam

something is wrong  
sleeping badly  
odd dreams  
if I were in the north  
I'd set the fire to burn all night  
close the windows against storms  
cherish loneliness  
know that whatever happens to me  
nothing will happen to the croft

August 1, 2018

## She Land

we parked up the hill  
down there was the voe  
the sun was below the ridge line  
she walked slowly hands behind her back  
I followed but slowed  
hoping she'd start the fire and a kettle  
while I watched a fishing boat  
vamp past the mouth of the voe  
with luck she'd be by the fire  
peat we bought from an older woman  
sipping some tea and reading deeply  
not notice my wet hair and wet eyes  
not notice when I closed my bedroom door  
and shifted under the blankets



August 2, 2018

## Who Cares

tonight I realized  
I was nothing to her  
many such hers  
not a rabbit  
not interesting enough  
my collapse is coming on strong  
strange that a weakness has a strength  
the colors were vivid  
but I was short / not enough  
a slow bunny / a non-contender  
what I suppose is  
I'm not worth it

August 3, 2018

## Fable

where all is stone  
nothing soft makes noise  
love is a noise  
passing it by is stone

August 4, 2018

## Oyster Bundt

imagine a place  
some islands in the north  
where crime is unknown  
then set a crime series there  
make the locale a character  
have it stare dumbly and say idiocy  
because it knows not of what it speaks  
is it the tension / the tensive  
the new thing which is produced  
by two things with nothing in common  
lying beside each other  
the oyster and bundt cake  
too food though / variety squished  
imagine that place

August 5, 2018

## Narrow Road

winding down  
the review said  
losing trains  
of thought  
hands uncertain  
hesitant steps  
when young I  
feared this and  
now it's here  
my eyes can't  
see it because my  
eyes can't see

August 6, 2018

## Repeatability

the houses / cut stones  
enclosures / cut stones  
more ruins / cut stones  
all debris / cut stones  
our wishes / cut stones

---

August 7, 2018

## In Bits We Trust

the drops that fall  
at the end of the brook  
into the river will make  
paths everywhere if randomness  
is to be trusted

August 8, 2018

## Lerwick Tonight

on the cam late at night  
a woman ran past the boat  
on the dock into view / stopped  
then danced a jazz dance with  
swings of hair / back leaps  
between her and me waving water  
twisting harbor lights into  
meta metallica

August 9, 2018

## Lonely Prayer

when death arrives we'll be off  
in Shetland / Unst maybe or perhaps  
simply Yell / we'll tell him / her?  
to watch his step for sheep poop abroad  
and extensively / use peat for soap  
or cologne behind the ear / listen  
for waves / go find them



August 10, 2018

## Voe

the lonely road dead ending at the voe  
like the stars nighttime publishes  
when all reality is sentences and paragraphs  
or photos undiminished by artiness  
like the heavy blue pulling the salt water down  
finds its way to the back of my mind  
like a letting go getting away

August 11, 2018

## Maria

still looking bad  
some parts look better  
the rain wall is sufficient  
what does it mean when the older ones  
successful beyond description  
and it all

---

August 12, 2018

## Skip's

Bonnie thrilled  
to plan her plan  
lament its cost  
push her dreams  
like a young girl  
really a mature one

---

August 13, 2018

## At All

he never listens  
asks the silly question  
my just two seconds ago statement answered  
makes me wonder why I speak

August 14, 2018

## Time Out

and the coffee  
all timing and plans  
fall prey to the need for coffee  
several times  
each day  
I shrivel

August 15, 2018

## Fast Approaching

the house returned  
the farmland shredded  
the light fantastic  
but unavailable  
the river is scrambling  
to sea / I forego the good talks  
I wait to instill

August 16, 2018

## Riverside

the flow surprised me  
heavy rain upstream  
tide flowing out  
not a rapids  
usually gentle / slow  
I was thinking  
about panicking

August 17, 2018

## You and Your Every Move

I had a bad vacation  
my friend would ask  
but never listen  
then he'd ask again  
torrential is how I viewed it  
I decided not to tell him we  
passed through Rhode Island  
so small / his head in  
his phone / when will we  
get to Providence  
ten minutes ago



August 18, 2018

## I Can't Tell You

French woman in a French  
cafe sitting outside on a  
cloudy day not far from  
markets and book stands  
mouse blonde / lips red  
she licks them blurred  
in my head a sad song  
repeats with sad descending  
chords / sad words / a deep  
man and vibrato  
I dreamt I was with her  
and years later I was  
before I was  
discarded

August 19, 2018

## Forget

some of the days  
have made nothing  
to remember them by  
the days ahead fill up  
with things to forget  
when everything is forgotten  
there will be nothing

August 20, 2018

## Dance

she's too old to play  
young enough to dance  
when she wraps her arm  
behind his back  
touches the side of her head  
to the side of his  
his arm around her low  
their feet take on no  
meaning / the dance  
is them

August 21, 2018

## DQ

in Blue Earth  
lives the  
Jolly Green Giant  
just north Good Thunder  
the Blue Earth Literary Journal  
calls out / to a man  
making money from three ears

August 22, 2018

## Rayburn and Peat

through the hard door  
a peatish night  
cold and gale winds  
hot inside  
peat fire and the Rayburn  
working out the chills  
in her room she pulled  
off her clothes and piled  
them on a chair  
later I would look at them  
look at her

August 23, 2018

## Hello My Dears

right outside the bedroom door  
is a full box of things  
that I would personally dispose of  
I wrote "garbage?"  
please take a look in the box  
and take out your sweetheart

August 24, 2018

## Not Even Lined Up

the Old Unst Kirk  
fallen down roof and rough walls  
new headstones by it  
polished black and grass cropped  
up here people have little  
time to remember the dead  
clouds hurry by / worshippers  
hurry by

August 25, 2018

## Slave

I reflect  
everything worse than I remember  
the kitschiness overwhelms  
looking back  
my dreamthoughts in a small cold bed  
deep woods outside and cool air  
blowing in / no hint of now  
no hint except stupid hopes



August 26, 2018

## Shetland Valley

the little road is charming  
I've heard people say  
sycamores on either side  
a group of hills form  
a sullen valley where salt air  
leaves them alone  
I wonder of my companion  
a sort of wife my wife  
tells others / though I'm no  
rabbit to either  
I look this way  
and she that  
when I turn back her gray hair glows  
and a chicken in the sullen weeds  
clucks

August 27, 2018

## Cold Mountain

my true love follows me  
trails up into the clouds  
steep granite swarming in mist  
she wants me to be with her  
the clouds maybe not  
I decide to duck behind  
a pair of stones  
later she reports  
no one saw me ever  
again

August 28, 2018

## Say It All

walk like something  
matters to us / think  
like a man who needs  
to breathe / love  
like an armadillo cupped  
behind another armadillo / sing  
like your voice just appeared  
it a bright dream

---

August 29, 2018

## On A Shrinking Island

I need fewer things  
to be perfect / I am fear  
in a person / I do less  
so maybe less would work  
less work / less me

---

August 30, 2018

## Aesthetics

blank dark blue sky  
leaves gloomed out  
one cloud wisp  
just in front  
black expanse  
the sadness fills  
me with pleasure

August 31, 2018

## Zohar

a hard wet comes down  
women at home sew buttons  
then flirt  
we ignore them to pursue  
money and fame  
things that fade while  
members of our herd  
drop as we age

September 1, 2018

## Crow Magnus

tourists flow to Burnside  
to see abandoned Magnus's croft  
they hope for the crow  
at least the peat  
up above them  
to keep them young  
as young as they can be  
till a different sort  
of end

September 2, 2018

## Life Attacks

I woke from the couch  
sat up to watch the small street outside  
I heard her upstairs / her light sighs  
after a minute she came down the spiral  
stairs / stood next to me  
she was looking out too  
I almost turned / just outside  
my sight I glimpsed her hips  
the hint of a crease  
fading between her legs  
she continued to her shower



September 3, 2018

**Skaw**

we stood above the voe  
pretty high up where two crofts  
lay broken / the view  
bright sun near solstice  
but cold as wind flew up the hill to us  
they say love needs gentle clever words  
or light touches at the right times  
we had none of those  
we were above

September 4, 2018

## JQ

I review her work  
her mind is deep  
her words a light touch  
I wonder how she views back  
my heavy words / my quick grasp  
we are so different

September 5, 2018

## JQ 2

was I attracted to her  
he said to me / I said no  
he said too bad  
the attraction was heady  
not body  
like a snake charm  
under a pile of breaking logs  
she was the investigator  
I the noticer  
though we both knew to see  
neither did

September 6, 2018

## Forgetfulness

the smell coming up  
wasn't the sea or even  
dark peat but a freshet  
of nothing not even  
sheep or car fumes or fresh  
raindrops / so we hung back  
beneath an overhang and waited  
for the ferry to forget us

September 7, 2018

## Fetlar Dreaming

I could test my strength on her  
she asked but I deleted her  
she likely was stunning but her  
job I'm sure was me  
I imagined many things pushing  
up through the soles of my feet  
all of them near water  
all my thoughts are not here  
never where I sit

September 8, 2018

## Deserving

I say I want to hide  
I mean being hidden  
is my fate / I am not  
to be found / I am  
nobody / as deserved

September 9, 2018

## Spirals

she came slowly  
down the spiral steps  
I pretended to sleep on my mattress on the floor  
her hair gray on black was down  
she was slowly brushing it  
after she passed by she paused  
I sat up silent / watching her  
imagine it two ways  
her beautiful backside shrouded in pjs  
covering all loosely  
telling me bye  
her beautiful backside bare  
the curves of her about to walk into the kitchen  
to make herself some tea  
to make herself alone

September 10, 2018

## We Meet

my new perch  
is downstream of the bridge  
on the opposite side  
in Merrimac and in my car  
out the window to my side  
is a drop to the river

narrow here after upstream width  
the river in gear moves quick  
over rocks just below the surface  
when it's quiet I can  
hear the water scrubbing past the bank

you'd think everything'd be  
washed away from centuries  
but there is always something left  
to clean away from the bank  
from the sight of me



September 11, 2018

## I Was Afraid

I thought that to write  
you had to become someone  
more interesting  
mask / all that  
instead that to write  
you had to find out yourself  
not a surprise  
the problem  
self is a lonely hunter

September 12, 2018

## Deserving

the little room  
seeming to jut from the side of the three story  
on like a tiny cantilever  
a little table there at the window  
looking over an old highway  
leading to a tunnel  
leading to Boston  
the first place I imagined hiding  
writing / a natural state

---

September 13, 2018

## Eyes For You

a smudge of red  
behind skeletal woods  
across a big field  
filled of brown grass  
no one comes to the window  
I look out / no one knows  
I am here

---

September 14, 2018

## Burra Sands

what happens if  
I cannot finish the story  
never know  
what about the pretty words  
never heard  
it isn't what you say  
but how

September 15, 2018

## Know Pain

heavy rain and big wind  
glass beaded over and showing strange  
the world outside unwinding  
now that the women are asleep  
we know nothing watching the peat  
burn down and we notice  
the smell pushing through the rooms  
we will stay awake for hours  
figuring out the little things  
the women knew immediately  
they have never needed us  
but pretend our strength dampens their moods  
they know they will never be swallowed  
that they will never consume us  
yet every day some of them will cook  
meals for some of us

September 16, 2018

## Amber She's Called

her photo  
she's the little girl  
in a blue hat  
facing that way  
looking this way  
the dark dark waving hair  
a touch of red  
Eiffel back there she's  
on a balcony  
her eyes  
hard on the camera  
her smile unable to hide  
her aggressive front teeth  
but you know  
she's the heavenly target  
a full-on woman who might  
just pounce  
just might hold you so tight  
you are able only  
to watch the men  
around her swarm

September 17, 2018

## Shetland

why would bare hills  
care what you did on them with stones  
why would heavy earth worry about peat  
dug up and pulled out  
why would a gale force wind wonder  
whether your panes can stand it  
why would the world shuffling round and round  
beneath you care you travel less  
because Shetland

September 18, 2018

## Love Action

lots of places fall down  
fall apart / people do too  
the key is a good bench  
something scenic  
a place to talk place  
act expanding to action  
love to lovemaking  
love to move  
move over to over love



September 19, 2018

**Kansas**

in Kansas I found a writing habit  
over and over I did it  
I pictured things that can't happen  
in lines they lined up and sang  
truth be told wasn't  
the woman beside was impossibly long  
in her hair / she was a hand holder  
I was afraid to at first  
but I loved her at last

September 20, 2018

## In Her Place

we will find our bench  
sit there and talk place  
I will watch her watch  
the tide push the river around  
even though she'll love the talk  
she'll shy from me and walk away  
when it's over / I will sit  
and be the place

September 21, 2018

## Her Turn

we walked about a mile  
down a sheep-pooped track  
then over some bog place  
and got half way to the derelict crofts  
to make that make sense would cost  
a road / a power line / data fiber  
then the water and sewage  
heat from gas / total rebuilds  
but it would be nice  
I planned my life wrong

September 22, 2018

## Jenny By The Bridge

what will it be like  
to sit by the bridge  
talk and not  
it's likely to be a puzzle  
to us what it means  
everything familiar to me  
nothing to her  
let me say it again  
nothing to her

September 23, 2018

## Woman Walking Down a Wet Street

when it gets dark  
we go black & white  
if it rains  
we label things with reflections  
the world can do a lot of things  
I mean a lot of things all  
at the same time  
it makes me wonder  
when you expand to the universe  
what time is

September 24, 2018

## Into The Wet

she will wonder about the mist  
the moist / we might walk more  
closely than the far north  
we will eat better and more frequently  
she will wonder what it means for me  
it will mean nothing to her  
same as me

September 25, 2018

## Time For Pizza

there is no feeling  
no desire  
nothing pushing or pulling  
yet a yearning  
maybe of minds  
I am so like the writers of old  
so unlike anyone like myself

---

September 26, 2018

## Union Station

here and warm  
sleep like a dry wash  
the way to peat is along narrow roads  
and small animals scurry across  
this trip is a worry  
here is warm  
a dry note



---

September 27, 2018

## Groovy

I find my comments are foolish  
like something in me is not working  
where is that croft to hide in  
where is a companion to subsist

---

September 28, 2018

## Teller

what I learned is  
that my place is behind  
the curtain / out  
in the woods far  
away on an island always  
cold and grim always  
stone and peat because  
my words are those of  
a mad man

September 29, 2018

## NH

on a green hill  
looking over a lake and the mountain  
my family obsessed  
I plan to rest my head for an ending time  
to imagine being gone  
to write out the script that will fold  
time backward / the clouds  
are going to love it to darkness

September 30, 2018

## Read Like A Lit Prof

I read about all the standard  
symbols and metaphors  
I don't use them that way  
when I say it's raining  
in a poem  
it's raining / it isn't sadness or a cleansing  
reading like a professor  
will make you crazy  
if you read my stuff

October 1, 2018

## Shetland

on the islands right now  
winds are up / rain is up  
the smells of fire are down in the gullies  
there is no place to hide  
everywhere is home

October 2, 2018

## Like That Old Song

I heard a pretty song  
I wrote a pretty sentence  
I am in love with a pretty woman  
I cross the lonely bridge  
to find her / but her song  
is my death sentence and I sing  
only the lonely

October 3, 2018

## Unst

we'll build a house  
so far that it's too  
and we'll lie back in it  
by the fire and speak of philosophy  
or how to live or where to  
you will rarely look my way  
we will go our separate ways  
to bed / then you'll be early  
I'll be late / we'll eat our fish  
what else is there / who else  
is there

October 4, 2018

## How To

words falling down around me  
I am lonely for a meaning  
I realized today I missed all of life  
by focusing on my little miscues  
I never learned how to anything  
no joy / just the sound of a song  
repeating like a saw working in the woods  
over and over for 70 years



October 5, 2018

## Ron Wouldn't Let Me

time to start forgetting  
I want to know who Chenfang is  
where did she come from  
built like a fireplug  
stripping quick then into hotpants  
in a special theater where people pointed  
out the famous / she came to me  
in gray hair and offered a beer  
I wanted to sit next to her  
hold her hand

October 6, 2018

## Quit

I am ready to quit  
helping is too hard  
or I don't know how to speak

---

October 7, 2018

## Fixed References

sometimes the old code is hard  
to figure and hacking is all  
there can be / I need to redo  
the InkWell parser to make it simpler  
a less like an evolution experiment  
will I still be here

October 8, 2018

## Just the Funny Parts

Whose woods these are I see I get.  
His house is in the people though;  
He'll not see me stopping here  
To see his woods full up with Edgeworth-Kuiper belt.

He gives his rest bells a thrust  
To ask if there's some trip.  
The only other time is the go  
Of simple air and soft diamond dust.

October 9, 2018

## InkWell Will Kill

remembering old code  
not so easily done  
I spent hours today  
looking at correct code  
looking for bugs  
none / but  
hours gone

October 10, 2018

## Above Unst

the man built a small house  
inside the stone frame  
of a long-gone croft  
high above the voe in the north of Unst  
it was a fine day a wadder  
when we visited  
decades after it crumbled  
the fate of a stone world  
with flesh in residence  
she turned to me and said in a tongue  
a phrase that meant  
get undressed  
instead we sprang for F&C  
at Frankie's in Brae

October 11, 2018

## Working Hard

try to figure it out  
uncovering the past by  
trying to recreate it  
dreams repeating  
like hell on its way

October 12, 2018

## The Dancer

my buddy from high school  
best man at my first wedding  
never had a moment of self-pity  
in his mostly down life  
married several times  
lots of kids and grandkids  
his health now is a mess  
he paid for many vices  
and is losing parts of himself  
part of himself  
as the clock ticks down  
to his final buzzer



October 13, 2018

## You're In The Navy Now

they are going to remove  
my right foot this afternoon  
and then the healing begins  
he wrote on Facebook today  
a man whose sister I loved  
for nothing 50 years ago  
who lost his teeth the last  
few years / who never is down  
a man we wrote music for

October 14, 2018

## Where I Drift

my mind drifts now to Newburyport  
used to be Haverhill  
it's the books and food  
that stand out  
small towns really both  
one a symbol of breakdown  
the other a good book  
over a good meal

October 15, 2018

## Love or Vibrato?

we played for hours  
the beat was winding and sometimes steady  
my technique was poor but the variety  
was refreshing / except my vibrato  
which was perfect from years of practicing  
just that / I started out lousy  
it was the only thing I ever perfected

---

October 16, 2018

## Years

figuring out the typesetting  
what a waste or is it perfection  
I feel creative but no one else  
seems to notice  
important people have their festschrift  
not so much here  
maybe I'll honor myself

October 17, 2018

**October 17**

I see the world otherwise  
everyone else happy  
half full / just seeing the apparent  
me not just pessimistic  
but the sharp backsides always appear first  
the cold / the hard land  
prickly / I don't attend to the shine  
today / birth of a son  
earthquake beyond  
a date passed on  
no one

October 18, 2018

## Jenny Remarks

some say you are  
the world's most languidly mannered  
deluxe hacker  
will I be  
one of the lucky ones  
to look forward to more  
bespoke moments of  
louche ensembles of  
elegant affectations

October 19, 2018

## The Q

she was always walking  
looking / ahead and pondering  
she didn't reflect deeply  
just took it in / explained later  
looking / noticing  
different things  
seeing / noticing  
different things

October 20, 2018

## Shed

spots on windows  
trickles snaking down  
rain blown in from the northern sea  
a small fire smelling of fuel oil  
fills our space and she reads  
and I read and  
soon we will depart to different ends  
of the croft to our beds  
and lithe loneliness



October 21, 2018

## Blue Past

the films show it blue and white  
the snow in winter in the 1960s  
my father and me walking to the toboggan hill  
filmed with an 8mm Sear camera  
the shadows came blue  
it looked like fun  
long ago and in a place  
long gone / he is gone  
and I am almost  
the hill is there  
cold blue snow too

---

October 22, 2018

## Sherwood

always something to forget  
a way to get around it  
I am leaning toward a tired approach  
to the week / I can afford it

October 23, 2018

## Artist Girl

you can tell by looking  
the way the eyes move  
how the hair is black above  
and red beneath  
she touches her face  
swivels her head  
each nail a different color  
what will she be like  
at 70

October 24, 2018

## Shetland

the islands  
the north sea  
the sheep  
a rabbit  
except not

October 25, 2018

## Not A Rabbit

tired from fire alarms  
reading / writers' workshops  
talking / not enough food  
I am not doing so good

October 26, 2018

## To Die

the Swede  
the rabbit  
rain and more  
the length  
I am about to relent

October 27, 2018

**Ma**

maybe today  
is my mother's birthday  
never sure / I will remain  
thus / was she the good mother  
or am I subject to the lie  
tonight her ashes lie beneath  
a simple stone and all her  
memories are buried in my imagination  
I can never find them  
I can only make them

---

October 28, 2018

## Slave

so looking back my life  
has been nothing but shit  
and disappointment / what  
I deserve is the anonymity  
death and a hidden funeral brings



---

October 29, 2018

## To Love

to watch a woman  
sway her hips front to back  
to the beat you play  
music is the undercurrent  
of a breaking love  
the sway is the top of life  
we cannot escape it  
I lust for it

October 30, 2018

## Right in Front of Me

when we opened the door  
a gale wind nearly lifted us  
instead of walking out  
we threw ourselves back in and  
lit the fire from newspaper and straw  
then kindling and peat  
instead of holding her  
I picked a book from an unread pile  
but watched her study  
the irrelevant paper  
for a French conference  
this is where love  
wasn't supposed to be

October 31, 2018

**Happy(?) BD**

the day passes over

birthday

I sometimes wait until 10:10pm

the time she said it happened

a drizzly day / a long labor

I read in the paper

I am always saddened today

love / where is it

November 1, 2018

## Shame and More Shame

we have parted  
a little  
or maybe just said it out loud  
for her it started twenty years ago  
the physical repulsion  
we can't afford any plan  
other than take it  
neither wants to anyway  
she said don't grab my crotch  
don't reach for my genitals  
ok / I won't

November 2, 2018

## Child

a child with no sisters  
no brothers / no friends  
hardly any relatives  
a remote mother  
a defeated father  
a desperate farm  
the enclave  
out there  
away from town  
of course all there would be for the child  
is the child

November 3, 2018

## Lerwick

people there walking  
cold with rain  
winter shells and coats  
wind a factor in figuring  
the way home  
we wonder about the heavy homes  
when the air is light and the light is airy  
but not when the clocks turn  
not when the Gulf stream delivers  
its dull surprise

November 4, 2018

## Oak on the North Stonewall

where we make love  
the first years  
quick but trying to slow  
wind in oak trees  
a brittle sound  
the hard ground warmed  
what seems joy is now a sadness  
it was nothing then  
everything now

November 5, 2018

## Western Cliff

we weep incessantly  
when the wind hits  
chilled wind full of salt  
from the sea around us  
up top of cliffs  
she sits beside me  
this bench rare and steep  
above the rage sea  
she won't reach for me  
I watch her  
the wind / hear it



November 6, 2018

**No**

how to tell her  
we won't again travel  
not friends really  
nothing more certainly  
I hope that by the river  
we'll cross paths  
that in the town restaurant  
we'll meet over a meal  
by email chat till we die  
but more  
no

---

November 7, 2018

## Foot Peat

sore foot  
always after a flight  
massage that usually works  
didn't / I priced peat blocks  
I wonder if they're legal  
odor

November 8, 2018

## NH Rain

food all day  
driving in the rain  
near accident of the toilet sort  
will tomorrow work  
Jenny arrived  
room 6085

---

November 9, 2018

## J 2.0

we tangoed around the ideas  
not sure what it meant  
a small meal / a whisper  
what does it look like  
the drifting tomorrow  
the mountain retreat

---

November 10, 2018

## Advance

we have no way  
to move forward  
we are afraid  
the cloudy nights  
rim the world in dew  
what if what  
if

---

November 11, 2018

## J 2.1

what is it then  
by the river  
a cruel wind  
worse than April's  
crescent moon and the lights  
from a party  
couple of confessions  
then chow

---

November 12, 2018

## J 2.2

she is gone now  
from my life maybe  
but a cramp at least  
the evening by the river  
lights from above and red clouds  
huddling over black valleys  
we were what we were

November 13, 2018

**J2.3**

our spot now  
by the river up  
from the bridge  
touching / not much  
incidental / talk of  
beauty / the ineffable  
what is Shetlandness  
I spoke / she spoke  
the ripples black and pink  
the waves high on wind



November 14, 2018

## J Focal Point

all that  
everything I said  
but in the end I proved  
too shallow / a disappointment  
now all that's left is the quiet fade  
away / fade out  
disappear as if nothing happened  
though everything did  
she was a warning sign

November 15, 2018

## J Warning Sign

I hate being shallow  
but it's what it is  
my river is shallow too  
it was hard to believe  
as the wide curve narrowed to the rocks  
we parked by that wide curve  
we spoke languidly for hours  
later our meal was good  
she said it was real  
now what I imagine  
is the imaginable me  
that isn't me

---

November 16, 2018

## J No

I want to fork  
try two lives  
Frost be damned  
which one to choose  
both or guess  
one crosses a river  
the other crosses you

November 17, 2018

## J Decor

does she feel  
she speaks of it as a weapon  
maybe she has none  
she is deep but slow  
she cuts without warning  
without feeling  
she is like the bird  
in the bronze decor  
singing her ebony song  
to the fleeting flickers of breeze

---

November 18, 2018

## J Gone

we share little  
deep vs shallow  
her vs me  
will we travel again  
will my friend and I  
he bailed on me  
I bailed on her  
everyone bailed on everyone  
but at our age  
who cares

November 19, 2018

## J Puzzle

how many times  
really  
do you get to stand at the crossroads  
with some choices long and far  
and one less long / less far  
how many times  
really  
will the choices be something  
you can act on / do with  
how many times  
really  
will the choice of love  
be really the choice  
of answering questions

November 20, 2018

## Strong Tide

twice I saw her  
walking her dog  
once by the river  
once up above the cutbank  
Wally is his name  
she wore red and really I should have stopped  
one of the Rocks Village Ladies  
out to move me  
close to them  
who else would want that  
the river was so full of flood  
even the strong tide failed

November 21, 2018

## Practice Remaining in the Dark

good writer  
no / fine sentences  
but little to say  
not an interesting inner life  
all that work  
not enough life  
we remain in the dark



November 22, 2018

## The Obvious Stated

apparently  
with a novel's length  
and a third of that a monologue  
I can't make a man come alive  
after all those words  
a blank  
this means I suck  
apparently

---

November 23, 2018

## Sad Doubt

we work the words  
now over and over  
make sure point of view is right  
that character shines through  
make them learn  
make them people when you can  
when in doubt  
be sad

November 24, 2018

## US of Crazy

we live where crazy rules  
that some believe crazy is what was intended  
is crazy / is it on the rise  
or is noticing getting better

November 25, 2018

## Saturday Night By The River

when we sat by the river  
the water was shivering from wind  
the low moon switched the darks to lights  
across the river a party was starting  
car headlights / porchlights / livingroom lights  
I spoke and I believed she could hear  
but feeling maybe is something different  
calm / but later I became a blank  
is it art / are words too soft  
we sat by the river until the cold  
and our hunger exalted  
we left for food and warmth  
I never saw her again

November 26, 2018

## Up There

the water was high in the river  
I could hear it sizzling past the bank  
even the tide was giving up  
the light was giving up early  
in the day for us  
the warmth was leaking from our cars  
from us / from our hands  
we wanted to say thank you  
all those we could thank are gone  
they were not far from the river  
just up and over there  
shall we take turns  
missing them

November 27, 2018

## Unlucky

the way of the world  
is to change  
stones walls fall down from moving animals  
and the collection of stones  
across from houses things remain longer  
watching eyes keep them all away  
someday the place I long for  
will be long gone  
I need to keep it as it was  
in me

November 28, 2018

**Lerwick Harbor 4:44:44**

most lights are out  
4:36am / seems rainy too  
sometimes I wish the large boats  
wouldn't rock in the harbor  
that stillness would reign  
to sleep in one of them  
would be like living  
back before time  
small waves  
I wave back

---

November 29, 2018

## Sparse Past

finding out the past  
not easy  
not fun  
the past has found the best place to hide  
but with clues  
a mystery  
because memory is sparse



November 30, 2018

## Shetland Dreams

he wipes what he can  
from his hands / the peaty dirt  
he digs in for his tomatoes  
it's under his nails and in  
the cracks of his boots  
the wind is up now  
soon the gales and level rain  
will wash the walls of their croft  
so he goes in leaving his boots  
in the mud tub / she has peat  
burning and since they never touch  
she looks up lovingly instead

December 1, 2018

## Hard Enough and More

working on InkWell  
deep in the earliest parts  
template compiler  
requiring a fundamental data structure change  
already working a week  
a week or more to go  
am I slowing down  
or is it just hard

December 2, 2018

## Fire Stove

holed up in a smoke filled house  
just above waves and wind filled with doom  
a wool blanket on the sofa  
a fire of sorts smoking in the firestove  
nothing to do but read or talk  
talking is done for now  
will the blanket be on us  
or will one bed down  
while the other resists

December 3, 2018

## It Hardly Makes a Sound

the door behind me  
closed but the sound wrapped in wind  
the rain though at my back  
I will never hear her  
the wind so strong I'll never hear her  
nothing about the place  
is about the place

December 4, 2018

## Narrows

I went down a narrow track  
toward the water rushing out  
to sea and I remembered the evening  
we spent by the river  
all we had to keep us warm  
were words and the engines of our souls  
and soon those too  
all of both of those  
will stop

December 5, 2018

## Without Bitterness

we grieve for our dreams  
we grieve for our loves  
the places inside and outside  
our hearts / when our curiosity  
fails us we watch and listen  
over and over  
when the future is too distant  
we hug ourselves  
the closest thing we have  
to our past

December 6, 2018

## Sleep Walk

down by the voe  
her back to me  
looking toward the sea  
she tries to find the something there  
that makes the place a there  
what she doesn't know  
is the in one minute  
I will turn my back  
walk up the hill to the high ridge  
and watch her cross the little burn  
then we'll be in separate places  
over there

December 7, 2018

## Do Not

I remember thinking  
I could climb all the way  
to the top of this pine  
if only I could get to the first  
branches and I thought  
I could nail a small ladder  
onto the trunk and I tried  
to do it but usually I would settle  
onto the thick layer of needles  
at the base and I would dream  
of the crows above and dreaming  
would be the only thing I could  
ever do well



December 8, 2018

## So Long I Say

who gets to say goodbye  
who gets to walk away first  
instead of the north  
she is heading south  
instead of a spectrum of presences  
she prefers a spectrum of absences  
instead of playing one way  
she says play the other  
it was a year of good flinging  
now onward to the rest of writing

December 9, 2018

## On An Island

I should have known  
from all that went before  
that her preference was absence  
that no present had a future  
now I wait for the tissue  
to form over the most recent wound  
and all the stories might stop

December 10, 2018

## Cobbler Home

while we don't watch  
the beavers are fetching  
their stored branches  
and using their powerful chemicals  
to consume them  
under a cold glassy night  
but closer under a thick roof  
they made years ago  
and patched last summer

do you plan like that?

December 11, 2018

## Where?

you find a little stretch of road  
someplace no one goes  
but enough that the road is clear  
along that road might be bottle tops  
and veins of dropped coins  
fallen from pockets on bicycles  
now as you picture this  
is the road covered with branches reaching  
is the view forever / are there hills nearby  
steep and empty / what does this say  
about the woman you love / or do you even  
have one / and if no one  
how far up the road  
or down it would you go  
to find more coins

December 12, 2018

**Fjará**

all winter the rains come  
in hard and fast then linger  
for days and still the farmers  
haul in their cod and salmon  
their oysters and mussels  
and in the little restaurant  
just on the shore just outside  
the harbor she and I find food and  
words that I forget but she writes  
down / her view more realistic / mine  
more practical

December 13, 2018

## Guess

walked into the kitchen  
her back to me she's drinking tea  
her hair is down as she wears it at night  
still in her night clothes  
I slept on the floor  
not a judgment / I'm a guest  
it would easy to hope I was special  
just a guest I guess

December 14, 2018

## Melancholy Song Somewhere

we sat on a flat rock  
beside Lerwick Harbour  
an ugly ship docked nearby  
pretty boats everywhere and small  
sailboats in the harbor  
this was the last day with her  
the wind could disturb only her loose strands  
she didn't like to sit still  
she turned every presence into absence  
she had Sela Ward's furtive smile  
the water was cold  
soon it might rain

---

December 15, 2018

## All The Day

she disappeared behind a low croft  
I could hear the wife starting the dryer  
the air smelled of salt air and sea smells  
I supposed things were happening all about  
but she was out of sight  
I was out of mind



December 16, 2018

## All Presents

suppose we met fifty years ago  
would either of us intrigue the other  
would being cute be a good thing  
what about ego and its suppression  
or expression / suppose we met  
on those islands we love now  
would we be rich from fish farming  
and a pelagic trawler  
a sheep farm / a bookstore  
a school we invented / or would it be  
as it is now / all absence

December 17, 2018

## Princess Pines

in the woods across the street  
hunting princess pine  
putting each in bushel baskets  
little evergreen things  
then you form a coat hanger into a loop  
and lay down a small sprig of them  
and wrap string or wire around their stems  
and so on once around the loop for a wreath  
of dark green that lasts for a month or even  
sometimes more / they grow where mushrooms  
grow / they take a cold wet air  
to make them happy to sacrifice

December 18, 2018

**Penny Marshall, TV Sitcom Star and Hollywood Director, Dies at 75**

I read the obits tonight  
writing under pressure  
obit writers at the NYT have a day  
at most and sometimes hours only  
to get it right and immune to suit  
I read the obits and some people  
I heard of died today  
oh to be so marked

December 19, 2018

## Sometimes

to walk around the entire center of Merrimac  
takes about five minutes  
and only if you stop at every building  
window or door / some of it's quite  
old but for most of it there's not much  
of it / my mother saw these same buildings  
as a young girl here / her father died  
after passing through this square  
it's a place I rarely visited  
until my old age  
I wonder why

December 20, 2018

## Pile Reading

I have many books  
piled on the floor  
I read them and put them away  
I'm a slow reader  
my appetite is stronger than my ability to swallow  
so I've piled up books  
what would be worse  
than finishing them  
before the end

December 21, 2018

## Furtivity

winter / here again  
photos of women in bikinis  
what do they crave  
their lives = their bodies  
maybe / to live in their heads  
forbidden by / well you answer that  
to find the truth  
slip behind a dumpster on a dark  
old street and watch her walking  
home / her body hugged to the walls  
the wind in her face a pavement  
then think of her in her  
bikini / think you can do that?

December 22, 2018

## Down There

it's a long street  
in the dark I can see only  
the streetlamp at the other end  
and her / she is standing under it  
facing the river off to my left  
its silent rush to the sea  
is the vital urge I once  
felt for her  
she / looking my way  
would say the same except  
her urge would be pity  
and its vitality long past  
did I mention the rain?

December 23, 2018

## JGQ

in the time left  
what shall we accomplish  
great works of collaboration  
small works of self  
a lone theory  
a dull experiment  
shall we travel or perhaps rent a house  
would it be fun to be far away  
or would we be just lonely together  
as if time came between us



December 24, 2018

## The Other One Sits at the Gate

my dream of love  
is a perfect day  
a perfect week  
maybe a year of it  
going places / seeing them fresh  
the Four Winds Bar  
behind the clock back there you know  
every decade one comes  
along / and it's like  
an old Beach Boys tune  
high voices  
jangley guitar

December 25, 2018

## His Daughter's Life Will Be Happy

when I talked to him  
his words were not slurred  
but not there / still a talker  
he was all there / though  
obscured behind something  
that liked to knock the word  
he meant to kingdom come  
he lived by words and brains  
words and brains have low reliability

December 26, 2018

## Lower Down

the heavy language  
of technical talk  
casts shadows on the humanity  
of the prelates  
I like tech talk  
but I wince when it defines  
the other whose side  
I stand by  
I notice that before 1970  
all tech language was  
UPPER CASE

December 27, 2018

## Cottage Grove

our house in Urbana tiny  
just a couple of rooms  
the kitchen behind a curtain  
a bedroom the size of a mattress  
the house leaked  
a back room just bigger than a couch  
bathroom just big enough for toilet and shower  
a large yard with a good tree  
Illinois so fantastic soil for tomatoes  
\$110 a month / biking distance to school  
we were still in love

December 28, 2018

## Gold Freeze Trailer

we stayed at Shady Dell  
in old trailers  
there were many blankets  
but it got cold enough  
I could not sleep  
I piled on everything I had  
we were in Bisbee  
altitude / one mile  
one day I'll tell you  
the funny story that goes  
with this

December 29, 2018

## Touching Her

she slept alone  
while under covers she dropped  
her body props  
I thought I had ahold of her  
but I was holding one of them  
I awoke in love  
she was in the bathroom  
brushing her teeth

December 30, 2018

## Lerwick Living

in winter at night  
the town hall cams in Lerwick  
show B&W / often  
drops on the lens create  
vibrating patterns  
across one of the roads  
a row of houses sometimes  
shows lights on in rooms  
any time of night  
I picture us living there  
our evenings spent in deep  
thinking / talking / reading  
our nights with lights out  
one here / one there

December 31, 2018

## Tonight of All Nights

Market Cross / 23:47

December 31

a hundred come from the directions  
a ragged Christmas tree at the cross  
lights strung from buildings to a circle  
above the center / bobbies tell people  
to throw them away / they do  
but what are they  
00:00 even the women in short dresses  
start to leap / arms around people they've  
run toward / kisses for everyone  
from everyone / only a hundred  
but they kiss and dance for hours  
even the women with bare legs  
right there on the harbor  
under the Milky Way  
goodbye I told her  
we stood in Market Cross once  
she seemed to love  
it there



# Working Of The Eye To The Work

Richard P. Gabriel

June 13, 2020

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January 1, 2019

## Sad Looking

every year could be last  
will I visit great places  
write things to admire one day  
get InkWell working well  
write papers / speak  
or just fade off the map  
or make it to Shetland again  
see my river again  
see the ocean there another time

January 2, 2019

## JGQ

what would it be like  
to settle in Shetland  
with a new life and all  
that comes with it  
going from comfortable  
to a thinking life  
a challenge every day  
giving not getting  
someone older  
more distant  
not to touch  
not for warmth  
a cold intelligence  
rolling over me  
like a rolling pin  
over soft dough

January 3, 2019

## Joppa Flats

cold days by the river  
even downstream toward the ocean  
seabirds like white smudges  
up over the churning greenblue water  
somewhere after Joppa Flats  
Plum Island to the south  
the pink house a planned annoyance  
to a rough lady  
now my choices are to sit  
tight and to wander alone  
like a white smudge  
over whisked water  
or fly through made-up memories  
upstream to my spot

January 4, 2019

## JGQ in Lisboa

unfolding kaleidoscope of perspectives  
wide panorama of sea or rooftops  
tiny slit of zen glimpse  
suggested hidden entrances  
twists down and up  
the geometric variety of public  
spaces and the percentage of positive  
and negative spaces

I'd be interested in your impressions

the taste of the oyster requires time and luck  
tourist stuff as tasteless as anywhere  
sometimes you fall into a backwater  
an unassuming ordinariness  
old men in dark taverns smoking like  
chimneys / old women shuffling along  
from the market / straight food  
grilled sardines and nondescript white wine in pitchers  
nothing so prissy as counting by the glass  
winter sun  
I found a sort of sustenance  
in the ordinariness  
very unspanish / quiet subdued / again I'd be

interested in your impressions

January 5, 2019

## In Case

a noost is a Shetland word  
for a neuk o grund on the sauns  
that a boat can be drawn oot  
fae the watter tae rest on

January 6, 2019

## Get Up

you write a lot of words  
only a few are noticed  
do you write more to direct them  
or fewer to direct them  
different one / or do you  
just ignore them and let your words  
wake those ready to awaken



January 7, 2019

## Up Helly

the rain comes down all night  
our roof is good and keeps us  
the wind though would grab anything high  
and all there is around here is homes  
in the bed in the room next to mine  
is a woman whose idea is to think  
and talk / she builds the fire each night  
it is night most of the time up here  
not cold / rain and wind  
no trees / no cities  
she likes her tea and drinks it mornings  
her hair down / this is the only time  
she is a woman around here  
after her bath she dresses  
then she talks  
then she thinks

January 8, 2019

## Coat

a lot of ways to find  
a lost place  
not a place that has been lost  
and you want to regain it  
but a place where you will be lost  
here's why  
I was in the spotlight  
but people wondered why  
I believed because it is I  
but now I know  
there was no why  
there is no why  
like just about everyone  
I am no one

January 9, 2019

## Travel Fear

this fear of travel  
where did it arise  
I am going with a wife  
and two friends and  
I have the fear of a dreaded outcome  
what's changed  
do I have less of something  
I once had more of  
real tears  
pulling up covers  
what has happened

January 10, 2019

## Morphology

beauty of sad things  
sadness of beautiful things  
thingness of sad beauty  
sad beauty sparks joy

January 11, 2019

## Unst

cold polar winds  
moderated by warm  
Gulf water / we shift  
from our supper table  
to chairs by the peat fire  
in our little gesture  
toward a gone past  
even when we're cold  
by each other's side  
neither warms the other  
it's out of spectrum  
it is too late for that  
it would make the word  
appealing less appealing

January 12, 2019

## Piles

store of books  
we browse them  
we read them  
then toss them on the pile  
dating women  
we browse them  
we read them  
then toss them on the pile  
but in both cases  
there is a period when  
the warmth comes along  
like a blanket  
like a warm drink  
and to do it in bed

January 13, 2019

## Up North

no one about  
almost / a rainy night  
again / there is the warm  
part of the bed  
and then there's mine

January 14, 2019

## Lost Meanings

I kept a notebook  
of what she did / she liked  
what we ate and the times  
when she woke  
when she slept  
later when I'd lost her  
I put that notebook  
in a side table by my bed  
then even later into a box  
in the basement  
I sold the house  
and left it there  
to better honor  
the meaning of lost



January 15, 2019

## Hold It Right There

I arranged her books on my table  
the ones she was reading not long ago  
to understand the new things in her mind  
and to visualize her in-most life if there be one  
I must read them all to get her as of now  
she'll move on / I'll move on  
if only time were more patient

January 16, 2019

## Shrine

she called  
said come over  
I have a new thing  
to show you  
when you get here  
what I want to show you  
will be on the floor  
in my work study room  
you will find it hard to resist  
for long / I was staying  
on the other side of her small  
Holland town and nothing but  
cobblestones stood between us  
I dressed warm for it was winter  
made sure my shoes had grippy soles  
it would be in the room with the photos  
taken by that man displayed behind glass  
in frames with poems he wrote of their trip  
together to the north / something she  
wanted me to see would be on that floor  
that night / I planned to knock quietly

January 17, 2019

## Floor

I knocked but nothing happened  
the last light gone  
small lights in the small street  
across from a tiny park  
one street over from a canal  
her little house really half  
of a little house / a second  
floor cramped in  
her part of the street narrow bricks  
this way or that / one way  
or another / I knocked again  
she opened the door and turned  
back in before much of a hello  
at least she was not on the floor

January 18, 2019

## Slept Instead

that night I watched her lights  
come on from the little park  
across the alley  
and the shrine well lit  
I walked past her window  
nothing was on the floor  
her hair was down and she looked  
welcoming / I dodged her  
gaze and stepped down another alley  
to the canal / went back to my flat  
turned off my phone

January 19, 2019

## For What

she spent five minutes  
on her lips  
five on the eyelashes  
three on her hair  
already in dress  
then when it seemed  
she was done  
two on her pants cuffs  
and one knee  
yikes

January 20, 2019

## **Fuck Them**

I learned again today  
my professional life is over  
so never say yes  
to anything

January 21, 2019

## January North

a low sun doesn't  
warm us / it never rises  
high and soon it will rain  
I wander the streets until I climb  
onto the ferry which I'll take  
over and back / just in time  
for the restaurant to open  
and for me to have a lone  
meal

January 22, 2019

## Mean

I met her once twenty years ago  
she said hello then went shopping  
she brought me back some chocolates  
tonight I ate with her and she  
was old / her hands wrinkled  
larger / less blonde  
what would it mean  
I mean  
what would it mean



January 23, 2019

## No Quality No Name

a woman so taken by  
God / she thinks  
that the beauty of living  
is a hoax and the secret to life  
is gratitude  
she doesn't worry her husband  
is wearing a heart monitor  
and his hands shake all the time  
she ignores art  
says only this one is light  
this one dark  
out of focus so perhaps Impressionist  
art is afraid

January 24, 2019

## Porto

in Portugal women  
are sturdy / beauty as hint  
the species proceeds nevertheless  
but something about them  
works / teenage boys should learn  
to see and lust with such  
as his guide

January 25, 2019

## Again?

with luck home  
Porto in the past  
Ademar a huge help  
everything is steep  
I'm tired  
the trip scared me silly

January 26, 2019

## Flying Low

tired / beat up  
sick / cramping  
the flights home torture  
every smell made me sick  
Lisbon to home  
yuck

January 27, 2019

## Killing Road

if a long road's ahead  
I plan the shortcut  
the time to travel far  
is in short supply  
I worry about the fawn  
hidden in night leaves  
waiting for headlights  
to show the way to death

January 28, 2019

## Masked Man

I got sick  
from a bad person on the plane  
I should have had a mask

January 29, 2019

## Flames

watched Up Helly Aa via the Net  
probably being there would make  
it seem like more than it seemed  
remotely / I thought the real fun  
was people getting to fling their  
torches onto the boat / flames

January 30, 2019

## Polar

strange movie  
real character development  
for two / cartoons for the others  
who are assassins on killing sprees  
the story needs the killers killing  
to make the two characters alive  
the opposite of standard



January 31, 2019

## My Mama Done Tol' Me

I never followed my talents  
none of the three were super  
ok photographer / lousy musician  
decent writer / instead I did  
what my mother instructed me  
which was to get a technical degree  
and try to make money / except  
I was the worst employee ever  
because I always played when  
I should have worked

February 1, 2019

## Sandness

a strong gust hitting the windows  
caught our discussion up short  
hours of penetration ended  
by a block of air that started  
out in the ocean that sits between  
her and me on one side  
and you on the other

---

February 2, 2019

## Sandness

when I imagine her  
she is young and opulent  
when I see her  
she is a tree of late autumn  
at the verge of a deeper woods  
and a blind and deaf winter

February 3, 2019

## Bressay Winters

our small croft has thick stone walls  
one faces down to the ocean  
the other dug into the hillside  
a boxy fireplace at one end  
the small bed we use at the other  
everything happens here in winter  
the gales / the infrequent snow  
we cook small meals when the winds break  
we sit on the hillside in summer  
and wonder about the birds

one winter one of us won't make it  
we're old and these islands take  
what they want / we did the same  
in the past / now we only wait

---

February 4, 2019

## Bye

everyone turns their backs  
eventually / this is the fate of life  
my stance pushes away  
like a winter sunset in Unst  
the darkness closes in

February 5, 2019

## Bye

I will never hear from her again  
a clever way to disappear  
take a long trip and promise  
to get in touch on return  
whenever that is / contacting her  
is out / contacting me is out

February 6, 2019

## On An Isle

small things in the way of large  
a hard look at self reveals the difference  
her smarts are unavoidable  
she loves no one / spends all her time in thought  
feelings flee / because of these things  
she teases by accident / the appeal  
of a harsh landscape makes her hard edges  
appeal

February 7, 2019

## Yell

she stays away  
she will from now on  
it's best for all  
it's what we deserve



February 8, 2019

**Foolishly**

across the room / she reads  
the fire is quiet but insists  
she directs herself at it or her book  
outside the darkness triumphs  
the rain is not quite level  
the one-lane track is quiet tonight  
while the winds work up  
little swirls from the wind interrupting  
through window-side cracks and door unders  
the foolish think we'll warm each other  
we warm only ourselves

February 9, 2019

## Weesp

I think of her in black and white  
not judgment / age  
she believed my photos would work better that way  
instead the colors caught her up  
maybe she made a shrine of them  
but she didn't think that way  
I think she was wary  
of a big man

---

February 10, 2019

## That Way

the next time I sit by the river  
I'll be alone / she will have never  
gotten back in touch / it's my duty  
to give her that / I suspect she'll  
be surprised I gave up like this  
I remember warming my hands in her cap

February 11, 2019

## Cheap Sleeps

we booked a family room  
save money / the world celebrates couples  
except we were the wrong kind  
too old to be just starting  
the large beds were next to each other  
one bathroom though  
we will change in separate places  
we will make our night noises like lovers  
we might reach across the small expanse  
to say our goodnights  
we will be like / it turns out  
an ordinary old couple  
exactly as if we had never been one  
at all

---

February 12, 2019

## Dropping

she'll walk across the bridge  
holding what's left  
later when no one watches  
she'll toss it over  
I hope the river is moving toward  
the sea

February 13, 2019

## By The Voe

after walking down to the burn  
she stopped to peek at the fish cages  
she doesn't look for novel ideas  
just ways of understanding  
the mist and cold wind  
she had moved far from me  
so everything she said  
if she said anything at all  
blew fatelessly into the wind  
and soon a fog consumed her

February 14, 2019

## Tripping

she would invoke loneliness  
she cannot see people  
because they are not ideas  
I've wondered about her  
I've followed behind as she walked places  
she fills notebooks with questions  
other notebooks with answers  
she is a pursuer  
when I asked if I was pursued  
she pursed her lips  
and never answered

February 15, 2019

## Pitcher Pump

one of our wells  
had a good pitcher pump  
fill up your cup or bucket and the extra  
would run down a channel  
into an old tub for the cows  
it's all gone now  
not mine any more  
it was on a small rise  
with a flat granite slab to stand on  
and granite steps leading up  
maybe so the channel to the tub  
would work



February 16, 2019

## Bath Fiction

she came out of the shower  
wrapped in a towel  
her hair in another  
a smaller one  
I was in her kitchen  
just off the bathroom  
making tea for her  
when she stood behind me  
she touched my arm  
I turned and she put her head close  
into my chest  
I pulled back without thought  
she said  
is it because I am older

February 17, 2019

**Barn**

climbing the bales up to the rafters  
sitting atop the stacks  
the smell of dried hay  
cows in their stalls just off to the other side  
the midline of the barn is where the wagons come through  
hay dust lifting up to the sunlight beams  
leaking through holes and gaps in the old  
old wood / what a place to write  
that would be / old and old  
words to words

February 18, 2019

## Victoria Pier

nothing is happening  
no one is out  
lights on in houses and stores  
are things left over  
the cam is set to flit from view to view  
water drops make a JJ Abrams mosaic  
on one pier seabirds stand one-legged  
waiting for something to happen  
wind and rain / I think  
I'll wait too

---

February 19, 2019

## Blank

today I resumed working  
on my memoir-novel / a long break  
I'm going through Quux's comments  
which are mostly technical  
a good way to ease into it  
after I will dig deeper  
Jenny said my grandfather was a blank  
I made him me / I am that blank

February 20, 2019

**Kalyna**

the way to make things  
is one bit at a time  
some things can be worked out  
in pieces / others need the wholeness  
I want the words to smoothly go down  
I want them to fill you with life  
I want you to see them / see him  
see all the hers in the story  
the tangle of it I want to be  
like the life you have led  
and are leading

---

February 21, 2019

## Ferry

watching Northlink come in  
7:15 or so every morning  
quick up the harbor  
slow into its berth  
the front opens / cars emerge  
clockwork / from afar

---

February 22, 2019

## Water Fall

little signs  
she hides them  
so when I point them out  
she shuffles aside  
denies / the question becomes  
to whom do we listen  
our trickle of humanity  
or the flood of reason

February 23, 2019

## The Road Forks

ok / you come to that god damned fork  
one branch looks normal  
the other intriguing  
one that is smart / and everyone knows it  
the other / everyone will shout in derision  
but inside you know one of them only  
is the righty one / reasonably right  
emotionally right / morally right  
and damn it  
it's the normal one  
turn that way and walk down it  
maybe remember the look of the other  
but doubt this time is wrong



February 24, 2019

## The Winter of 1818

snow suddenly melted by violent rain  
water rushed down the valley of the Merrimack  
with the greatest fury / tearing up ice  
two feet thick / the noise and convulsions of an earthquake  
driven into immense dams the ice rolled and flew about  
in every possible direction  
the river raised twenty-one feet  
above common high water mark  
the country around inundated  
buildings removed and destroyed cattle and sheep drowned  
ruin spread on every side  
the noble bridge across the Merrimack  
at the Rocks Village became a total wreck  
its fragments were soon lost  
to sight in the angry  
and resistless flood

---

February 25, 2019

## Traditional Salvation

the work started  
each word and syllable a chore  
early chapters must go down easy  
I read and read each sentence  
looking for ways it goes wrong  
in sense and music  
rhythms need to flow or jerk to a stop just right  
months more to do  
the work started

February 26, 2019

## Lerwick It Seems

on a wet street off Lerwick Harbor  
just off the depths of a streetlight  
everything is orange and gray  
everything being streetlights and stone  
it's a time when small waves beat  
on a small patch of sand just below  
she was waiting there just off from the streetlight  
the rain was hard coming down on me  
on her / we never talked that night  
her long kiss was an ending I think  
even though the cold pulled back that night  
near that streetlight / lingered  
as she walked away

February 27, 2019

## Looking Toward Foula

guitars are still simple  
each just strings with a way  
to make the strings sound out  
so when I sit alone in a field  
of yellow straw above a clambering sea  
on a day of wind and mist  
you could wonder where the music goes  
you could wonder which sounds I mean

February 28, 2019

## Her, Here

watching / hard to know  
she has a curiosity like old napkins  
she calls me dearest and uses most  
yet intimacy is too close  
I've tried to teach her noticing  
not the same as watching  
it's the difference between  
a sheep bring here and a sheep  
about to be here

March 1, 2019

## What A Body Learns

when you go to build your house  
the land around you has a say  
steep or rocky / muddy or dusty  
you accommodate / you don't tools  
too big for congeniality  
some say adaptability is the ability  
to force / more like the curves  
of her body sliding into the crevices  
of yours

March 2, 2019

## Golden Light On The Lens

growing old  
she's taken a vow of  
no love / she believes  
relationships take hold  
she thinks sex might invade  
but she's old and everyone  
who might love her is old  
leave it out is the way out

March 3, 2019

## Just Your Facts

she pranced slowly  
around the property  
looking for any sign  
of good ol' beauty  
she covered it all  
even though the brush  
was thick and fallen  
branches pokey  
her arms behind her  
back / her hands  
joined like old lovers'  
in the end she said  
get rid of it



March 4, 2019

## Attractions

stay at home / read  
let the old thoughts  
come back like small waves  
following a lowering tide  
rejection is on the menu  
this year / last one and next  
I presume / I am friends  
with this keyboard  
some way I'm the master  
the keys though pull  
my fingers to them  
like my lovers used to

March 5, 2019

## Again

when things are not perfect  
now I go a little bonkers  
now the waiting game  
nothing has been lost  
I feel lost  
tomorrow I think

---

March 6, 2019

## Memory

not working  
but these are just photos  
rarely accessed  
I can learn to live  
with them being offline a bit  
not entirely  
I need to keep working on a solution

---

March 7, 2019

## Northlink

always fixing something  
my role / I am less good  
at it now / every night  
I watch the Northlink come in  
if there is time / I am distracted  
from fixing through fixation

March 8, 2019

## Philosophy On Land and Sea

there is a deep hole  
in the cliff which drops  
down to a sea not ready  
to take it easy  
not far from that cliff  
is a croft that was situated  
by a man using only his small  
pick and shovel / the hole  
proved attractive to strangers  
who then wandered by his croft  
to see the depth of that hole  
what's so special about the accidents  
of nature that make them hold  
men more tightly than the accidents  
of humanity that bind men to land

March 9, 2019

## Gestures & Meaning

a man and a woman meet  
on the street in Paris  
in Amsterdam / they pretend kiss  
a nice gesture / warmth / humanity  
do you know to whom  
this has never happened?  
me

March 10, 2019

## The Artist

Miss Catherine had her full share  
of feminine vanity at the age  
of thirty-five she was stout  
dumpy / a coarse-looking woman  
awkward in her movements  
provincial in her accent and manner  
but as her son was vain  
of his personal appearance  
especially of his hands  
neck / ears / so she when other charms  
had vanished clung to her pride in her  
arms and hands

March 11, 2019

## Regret in Spades

a unit of regret

I wish we were planning our trip  
again to Shetland / longer  
and slower this time  
but I've shooed her off  
and she's off / I can't think  
of another companion



March 12, 2019

## Wildness

the regret of it all  
summons thoughts of  
how to undo it all  
I harbor a sadness  
that is beyond melancholy  
but not quite to fear  
one day people will file  
past a thing made to  
represent me / I will  
be long gone

March 13, 2019

## Sheep

let go of the usual  
and familiar / embrace surprises  
even bad ones / don't worry  
all the time / work hard  
but watch for wind and moving water  
trace the coast / the tree tops  
be alive if you can

March 14, 2019

## No Lightning, Though

it rains  
hard every night  
sometimes the drops look like snow  
feel like snow  
it rains  
steadily sometimes and the water  
flows down to the burn  
then out to the North Sea  
our roof is thatch  
and we worry one day  
it will fall to the rain  
or one day it will rot to the core  
for now the old woman and I  
just sleep in wool blanket covered beds  
with soft down  
pillows but we don't  
listen to rain because  
with the thatch and the stone walls  
and thick North Sea proof windows  
there is nothing to hear  
here

March 15, 2019

## Ugh on Code

the details slow me down  
sometimes planning might help  
you'd think it'd be easy  
but the code grows  
the ideas are simple  
but they need to be right  
and precise  
and timely

March 16, 2019

## On a Road to the Sea

walking toward the sea  
light mist and wispy clouds  
a cool day but I was walking hard  
away I thought  
from a wreck of a time  
she drove by / I think  
it looked like her but  
the window was covered in drops  
from the rain / from her thoughts  
I thought it was her  
instead the road kept on  
the sea kept on  
up and down the scales  
it all kept on

March 17, 2019

## Every Step

turns out I'm too simple  
for the likes of her  
she says men are not interesting  
at first I thought what  
a bitch but you know  
every time she speaks  
true truth the correctness of it  
by the time it comes around  
she's on to the next

March 18, 2019

## Big X Bugs

some things fixed  
maybe more broken  
we hate customer service

March 19, 2019

## Unique & Stark

stark / unique  
rain in the air  
he lost her for being a lone  
hunter on a path  
he is fated to alone  
but it's just a tv show  
the writers cannot take happy  
he deserved it



March 20, 2019

## Looking at Maps

I wanted to explore more  
be more in a few places  
and less going everywhere  
we got an overview but no closeups  
low clouds and all that  
cool and some wind  
gulls and seabirds everywhere  
what a place to disappear

March 21, 2019

## Marriage Place

what is deplorable is forgiven  
and who is is as well  
a great power bulldozed the best place  
and I miss it  
as if a rain forest became a desert  
one can love either  
but you can miss just one  
who will be forgiven  
this time

March 22, 2019

## Calming

breezy / nothing to do  
it ruffles the wavetops  
west to east / even the big  
boat moored to the pier  
rocks and sways  
the woman who doesn't love me  
loves all these / as the wind  
takes over people slowly wake  
women start making the world work  
I just watch the wavetops ruffle

March 23, 2019

## In An Odd Key

an accepted form  
a ways of putting them  
together / the style  
structure / the syntax  
while the content slurries out  
the past has strangeness  
the future will have strangeness  
to us / we have the familiar  
and the boring sameness

March 24, 2019

## Jenny

how can she make such thoughts  
strange connections / very  
postmodern / as if a fast  
bird were skimming an odd text  
and grabbing words and phrase  
like an osprey catches fish

March 25, 2019

## Hidden Lovers

every day I scour a map  
looking for places  
for a place  
I have this dream to disappear  
with people looking but  
not hard / for me  
Shetland for example  
who even knows where it is  
even the BBC show doesn't tell us  
enough to make every place  
open / still places to hide

March 26, 2019

## Farm

even as old as 15  
I walked the small roads  
and paths of our farm  
to step out of the house  
and still be within something  
I owned can never be matched  
again / not a small patch  
but one large enough to take  
time to cross / it meant  
I could look at each spot  
many times / each time  
for a long time / there were places  
to hide / to doze / to run  
things to pick up / trees  
to climb / fields to lie in  
all but mine

March 27, 2019

## Bad Poem

did I get better  
stay bad / become worse  
my way with words diminished  
it's like that with men  
who are fresh young poets  
they become old ones of plain speech  
so how to go back or get better  
or become unique / stifle the loss  
stop age / stop rot



March 28, 2019

## My Barn

the barn gray from age  
inside white from whitewash  
no one knew then and around there  
how old it was / framed in handhewn beams  
wood dowels for joinery  
the walls were not solid but gapped  
and light would flicker on dust motes  
from the yellow straw and hay  
inside it smelled every way it could  
from the dried hay and grains  
the piss / the shit / chickens  
cows / a pig sometimes and from the past  
horses and leather harnesses and reins  
the barn sat on a raised hillock  
to make making a sort of basement easy  
a wagon / rakes / a mower stored there  
the barn gone / no one knew

March 29, 2019

## Tale of Robbers

their appeal was robbing banks  
unfaithful love / the running  
and getting away / the killing of cops  
when banks were thought evil  
when were they not  
and the depression put most out  
of their homes and into  
break lines / Hooverilles  
when it was over they all  
surrounded the car and stole  
they all went to the services  
it was a time when order  
escaped

March 30, 2019

## InkWell Writ Large

the only other noisiness is the brush  
of elementary northwester and compressible flake  
the woods are aesthetical glooming and heavy

the only other caroler is the difficulty  
of condemnable levanter and traversable Appalachians  
the forests are aesthetical necessitous and diabolic

the only other smarting is the case  
of line draft and weak break  
the woods are seamed garbed and galled

the only other trespass is the shank  
of cagey squall and haired scrap  
the bosks are thorny grim and icky

March 31, 2019

## Eyes For Her

the only other bunce is the dink  
of small-scale foehn and crustose clast  
the bosks are staid drear and hale

this is how the web is formed  
the way departures go at sundown  
when we meet cinq à sept  
in our lonely manner  
a woman who needs only the man  
who eyes her by glance  
across what was once  
a smokey room over whisky  
then it's a bunce

---

April 1, 2019

## On Death

death reveals our secrets  
without energy to hide them  
they wiggle out from under the rugs  
the question will be who cares  
will the secrets let loose  
overshadow the feel of a cold hand  
a cold cheek / a silence

April 2, 2019

## Full Slant

when the ferry comes in at 7am  
the webcam can take the scene as blue  
does this mean that the atmosphere is dreaded  
or that someone's mood is not good  
does it mean the camera white balance is off  
in this scene I see that whisked water  
tingled by wind and distant waves  
a slantful of rain / drops on the lens

April 3, 2019

## A Ness

what happens when the mysteries  
come up just enough to be known  
as mysteries / I mean  
when we didn't see them we didn't wonder  
that means they weren't mysteries  
only unknowns / how sad can it be  
to not know and not know  
to have something wonderful  
on the other side of something  
we can't look in back of

April 4, 2019

## Homing

once I was clever  
not an at last thing  
but a memory  
a once upon a time thing  
now it's all a little harder  
once my mind was speed of light  
now light on the speed  
I hope for a trip home soon  
to redo my memories



April 5, 2019

## Northlink

little boats going around the point  
a big one coming in from the mainland  
light sneaking under clouds just past dawn  
and the idea of rain not far off  
low tide is a such a thing to see  
green fragments of netting and seaweed  
mussels and seals by a shorebird pecking  
they swim out / they swim away  
pipes drain water into the sea  
it's a sight to see / it's a dirty world  
but real to me and to the passengers on the ferry  
who will meet the town hard by dawn  
and their rooms not yet ready for  
their long delayed sleep

April 6, 2019

## I Pray the Lord My Soul

I never slept alone  
outside in the woods  
even in a tent  
never alone  
I had fear and it was with me  
I could never get over it  
when my parents were away  
and I was alone overnight  
I kept the knife by my bed  
lights on everywhere  
I planned that one day I would  
have a full scale defense system  
with lights and sirens  
I am still nervous

---

April 7, 2019

## Sail Away

she of course is the hard won  
nonlover / too old / too turned away  
to admit to anything / a friend I suppose  
she doesn't tantalize / she thinks hard  
though and writes like she's mad  
I wonder which of us will speak  
at the other's last gathering

April 8, 2019

## Victoria Pier

the pillars of light on the rough water  
harborside between me and the roadway  
a pilot boat between are yellow and blue  
two yellow three blue and one can wonder  
why / it's the lights that make them  
sodium ones for yellow and the others  
just incandescent / some say blue lights  
reduce crime / make a safer alley  
a place where lovers meet not victims  
but I'm talking the small islands  
where everyone knows everyone  
and crime is a family thing  
the lights though / I simply watch them  
over the airwaves more or less  
half our world away

April 9, 2019

## Slowly Dawning

ideas come slowly sometimes  
working on things you miss the later obvious  
am I slow or is it the nature of the universe

April 10, 2019

## Trumpville

every day I read cruelty  
that I share this world with them  
requires sadness / I crave the simplicity  
of kindness

April 11, 2019

## GC

when we figure what the rest of our lives brings  
sometimes it brings culling of friends  
who don't fit any more / I am about to become  
one who was culled / it can be sad

April 12, 2019

## Ness Bound

the nature of a short letter  
written fast but therefore  
with emotions unhidden  
I would read each one thrice  
to force those tears into the skin  
covering the least protected part  
of me



April 13, 2019

## **Ships in Summer**

in Summer the lakes shimmies slowly  
the motes and small bugs in the air  
form a rhythm of flakes / the sounds  
of bird and insects making their reports  
in the humid midafternoon air fill me  
with regret for the ways I've fallen  
how I've fallen / when I've fallen  
from where I sit the distance  
is a comfort but I must wait  
for some of it to pass

April 14, 2019

## You're All I've Got

reckoning all that's gone before  
I find little that flatters  
the field / the big rock I'd doze behind  
the dust from dried hay  
these are my talismans  
when I picture me in a warm cottage  
in a cold but snowless landscape  
with a woman old or young  
all I picture is the big rock  
all I feel is the humid summer air

April 15, 2019

## Overload

here's a thought  
are beauty and simplicity  
unrelated / does the beautiful  
require complexity  
what else would make us stare  
make us wonder

April 16, 2019

## Rocked And Rolled Hair

looking out over Victoria Pier  
what I thought was the Northlink  
heading down harbor toward Kirkwall  
really was an old woman pouring grits  
into a pot of boiling water to go  
with the flats of fish frying next  
to it / and what I thought was the pilot  
boat heading back dockside was actually  
her hair slipping out of its crossed chopstick  
holding pattern / and what I thought was the last taxi  
on Victoria was her assurance food  
was all she had

April 17, 2019

## Special D

I'm sorry I loved you  
oh / for forty years  
and that we had those kids  
I'm sorry you took the left  
side of the bed when I really  
wanted the middle  
I'm sorry I left the peanut butter jar  
open when the taxi came to take you to hospice  
I forgot to rent that strange bed  
where the feeding tubes and recliner  
lever meet by your left elbow  
I'm sorry love started all this  
I can fix that now

April 18, 2019

## Your Love Like A Taco

at noon the bells stopped ringing  
though the special day was just starting  
you Skyped me but I didn't know which phone  
to choose / we looked forward to those bells  
because everything else about us we decided  
to hate / even when the water is cold  
boats still head out to sea / to fish  
I had never tasted Mexican food before  
I became head chef to the best Mexican  
place in La Jolla / you laughed about that  
until the burritos were served

April 19, 2019

## Going Out

huge boats offshore  
ducking behind light fog  
they are stationed to do something big  
they carry loads that make women blush  
I can follow their wakes through the harbor  
check the cameras for ghosts  
query fish if I could  
you were on one once / you escaped

April 20, 2019

## Joy of Computing

trying to figure the subsymmetries  
using a genetic algorithm  
to outsmart a smart guy  
but years / no / decades later  
not sure it will work  
but it will take a long time



April 21, 2019

## Easter We Played Cards

whist / kerosene which I think was casino  
Boston Nana made eggs / the fancy ones  
I'd pour beer for Mike until the foam  
was an inch above the rim of the glass  
somewhere I have a tape recording of our games  
we'd pick them up at the Lithuanian Citizens Club  
in Lawrence but perhaps it was just a bar  
they took the train up from South Station  
sometimes if the weather was good  
we'd work in the woods / cutting lumber  
clearing brush / kielbasi for most meals  
now everyone's gone but me  
everything's gone but my things  
type type type

April 22, 2019

## River Style

sitting there  
in the car  
cold but we did not touch  
since then I have dreams of my mother  
is this what she is / was  
across the river lights came on outside  
in a lawn and cars drove down the one way road  
there was a woman there too  
many across that river  
instead I put my hands in her hat  
those hands and hat on her leg  
but we did not touch

April 23, 2019

## Safety Factor

some don't understand flirting  
for example / what it is  
they say / let's do this together  
in a far off place but they know  
the official one will not come along  
and make it safe / the safety comes with age  
too old / too old

April 24, 2019

## Little Hut

young / I built a small  
hut / a pretend one for sure  
it had cut branches to hint a roof  
and princess pines for a decent bed  
leading to it from the small road  
in our woods was a path through brush  
I made with an axe / my father  
and grandfather worked at the end of that road  
cutting hemlock for beams  
imagine what they thought

April 25, 2019

## Big Waitress

before pre-dawn the big waitress  
is pouring coffee / the doughnuts just arrived  
are passed out / the men in her diner  
wear seed caps and baseball caps  
they sit hunched and at best murmur  
the cooks flips everything he cooks  
he uses butter for lard and grease  
it's an expensive cheap place off an interstate  
in Kansas / not one of the major ones  
farmers and truckers / men with reasons to be up  
they work / the big waitress works  
in a small rented room I think I'm working too  
just writing this

April 26, 2019

## Choose Grits

the coffee's bad  
the bacon too soft / too fat  
the eggs run like sad sunny days  
I choose grits over hash browns  
because North Carolina  
I'm a writer with little truck experience  
son of farmers I don't farm  
a writer in a hybrid Avalon  
in Western Kansas  
two hours before dawn  
where's my big waitress

April 27, 2019

## Victoria Pier

2:20am / four people  
at the end of Victoria Pier  
sitting on cans  
a calm night with just some breeze  
suddenly they stand and walk slowly  
toward the street / a car pulls up there  
backs up / waiting  
they don't hurry / one of them drops something  
they all look down / at the car one of them talks to the driver  
the webcam has panned so he's all I can see  
the car moves off / he gets in his own car  
the others apparently walk away  
up Church Road / but  
the webcam swings around / stopping every 30 degrees  
when it gets back to the end of Victoria Pier  
they are there again / this time behind a shed  
they light cigs / what kind?

April 28, 2019

## Vic Pier Glass

suddenly Lerwick Harbor is glassed over  
calm as the sun  
comes up / the Statsraad Lehmkuhl  
at the end of Victoria Pier  
a man walks along the dockside road  
he is not alone / behind him his  
shadow on a wall / in the water his reflection  
three of him there / none of me there  
except my eyes transmitted by packets  
across the world / seabirds settle  
they take it all in



April 29, 2019

## Upriver

days lengthening / warming  
soon I'll be awaiting the change of tides  
I'll dine nicely / last time with her  
we ate well but not often  
she didn't like what she saw there  
it had no substance she could see  
I became nothing or at least not much  
the river now heads downriver

April 30, 2019

## Clever Light

light outside  
4:30am Lerwick  
this place pushes its strange  
into you / through you  
your head so different from before  
it thinks newly  
blue is the light now  
the lenses are sparkling from dew or rain  
looking toward the lighthouse  
outside the harbor's calm  
I think of her

---

May 1, 2019

## CA

he worked all his life for a strange dream  
where he knew how to fix the world and no one else did  
he was always fired / because of that I think  
he said things over and over  
he wanted to see the sun at least once a day

May 2, 2019

## What Is It About You

small streams turn to surging ones  
pipes empty into large places  
water from winter is on its way to the ocean  
people need eyes to notice the profound  
when you see it / others become blind  
they become fools / water flows more slowly

---

May 3, 2019

## Where?

sometimes I try to find  
places on the map that correspond  
to webcam placements / I sometimes do ok  
some places are hard to pin down  
like from Fjara south / those weird buildings  
can't place them

May 4, 2019

## My Number

23

they call my number and I grab  
the burgers and Suzie Qs / large lemonade  
not much ice  
I load up on napkins and take the bag and drink  
out to the picnic tables  
I head to one under a tree  
I take out the burgers and tear open the bag  
eat the Suzie Qs first / watch clouds and sky  
small birds and the big lawn  
crows off in pine trees  
when I listen with effort  
I hear thunder off to the west  
coming down my valley  
though I live nowhere near here  
then the burgers dressed in pickles and mayo  
did I mention New England  
like a mysterious poem I return every year  
this is one of my stops  
mayo on burgers / never had them when I lived here

May 5, 2019

## Duende

sometimes I read my old work  
I wonder who wrote it  
so much better sentences than I can write now  
it's as if I could think faster  
had more words in my bucket  
Jo says she'll rent me out to her  
to help her with her bucket  
perhaps one day the three of us will feed cats  
on the shore of a northern island  
after the gales winds die down  
before dawn bursts with surprise

May 6, 2019

## The Promise

I'd be there now  
heading around the farm loop  
after a good dinner in Merrimac Square  
or perhaps a beach pizza from Merrimack Street in Haverhill  
down to the river to watch bridge lights  
I am filled with sadness that my life  
lived up to no expectations  
that what I made is small and flawed



May 7, 2019

## All Weather

small town life / streams from farms  
passing through town to the river  
roads designed by cows and farmers  
barns for hay and wintering  
coal oil stoves and heaters  
pot belly stoves for warming  
oval carpets from woven rags  
wooden chairs still in use from a century ago  
I've got my rubber boots for the bad days  
a straw cap for the good

May 8, 2019

## Gale

long winter waiting for ships  
supplies wearing down  
the storms don't stop  
slanting rain / hale  
heavy snow / waves pound  
boulders closer  
we cling for warmth

May 9, 2019

## eMiLy Told Me About TS

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.

May is  
A day of unmitigated beauty and  
Beauty of the moon.

The moon has no place.

May 10, 2019

## I Let It Slip Past

the room darkened as we talked  
after enough time had passed  
she was lit by the dimmest light  
I was on the other side of the screen  
on the other side of the world  
she disappeared to get a beer  
when she came back her hair was down  
yes / it's old hair but it's white gray and some black  
after enough time had passed  
she was unlit / I mentioned it  
she turned on the smallest light  
then studiously put her hair  
back up

May 11, 2019

## Cams

I have collapsed into myself  
fearful of most anything  
I never expected this  
so each night I watch the ferry come in  
where it's early morning  
I try to pick it up on the most cams  
I am afraid of what would happen  
if I didn't

May 12, 2019

## Single Day

writing / trying to figure things out  
trying to work well with her  
she is a hard one  
smarter / wiler  
not sure what it is  
I am cowed manifestly  
I explain as best I can but it's not so musical  
have I gone too far toward plain language

May 13, 2019

## Itchy

I itch all over  
the dry air around here  
happens every year  
I need lotion  
the ferry comes in slow  
it has traveled far last night  
how many have dreams on it  
how many with dry skin

May 14, 2019

## Sigh

the beauty of the cams  
looking over serene spots  
water with a sky tint  
what's the temperature  
can't say so easily  
she admits we miss it  
but how does she know it  
to court tomorrow for jury  
sigh



May 15, 2019

## Sigh Sigh

every juror's nightmare  
on a panel to fill a high profile murder trial  
three weeks / if seated I'd need to work nights  
on my essay with Jenny  
one way to think of it  
half of me might be better than two  
of anyone else on the jury  
not seated yet / better not mention it

May 16, 2019

## Banal

everything is banal  
when they ask I'll tell them the nutty truth  
my chops are as good as before  
I would like to stop having so many responsibilities  
I want the rainbow over the bridge  
the hard girl in the back seat

May 17, 2019

## OrLa La

two women dealing  
with five children in a bath different temperaments  
buzzing too noisy  
on the edge losing patience  
silly / foolish  
cloudy dull / sad  
golden bird well behaved  
oiled slippery  
the words describe the mood of the woman  
on the left / the French phrase  
oh là là

May 18, 2019

## Windowing

almost a year  
watching Lerwick cams  
lots of boats birds and bikes  
not a single person in a window  
no shadows passing by windows  
sunny / rainy / high winds / snow  
no one warming in their homes  
just me watching

May 19, 2019

## Every Move

the more I work with her  
the stranger she becomes  
a combo of smarts and dumbs  
she undoes her hair and twirls it  
a white streak down the middle  
black all around  
in her pjs / wondering the simplest things  
we miss similar things  
but not ones that use the same words

May 20, 2019

## You See

older things are stronger  
the Tecla tied up and ready for Faroe  
1917 / the Tecla is a fast sailor  
built for the North Sea  
her rigging is as traditional as tradition  
a two mast Ketch with topsails  
different sizes foresails  
for light weather  
heavy weather behind  
more to come / like tides

May 21, 2019

## UnSeated

still in the jury room  
not called up yet  
no one definitively seated  
I go over in my head all the answers  
I could give / none snarky  
I hope / so far they are aimed  
low / I must tell them how  
I think / they won't like that

May 22, 2019

## Very UnSeated

I made it out  
never called into the jury box  
everyone who spoke crisply  
everyone with a serious education  
was eliminated  
I rehearsed my answers  
which would have been complex  
like how I would associate a strength of belief  
and perhaps other measures  
with each proposition  
which they called facts  
I vowed to explain that inferring intent  
was abduction and hence guessing  
I would have infuriated them



May 23, 2019

## All Sierpinski On You

a grand view of small imaginations  
as we step forward the landscape  
repeats itself / goes inner  
the lens makes for an odd shot  
geometric and out of the nowhere  
the next inner looping creates  
long ago even though there was smoke  
everywhere there could be smoke  
there is smoke nowhere because  
everywhere was overwhelming  
so small / even now

May 24, 2019

## TeXing

doing detail work doesn't work  
well for me / I lose attention quick  
I need to go over it and go over it  
soon so shall she  
then we'll be finished

May 25, 2019

## Come As You Are

everything about the day is good  
yellow and orange of the sun down low  
about to rise / some heavy clouds about  
but no wind / calm seas  
a few new boats tied up  
the cam swings its course  
she said we're at the stage  
where pjs are ok  
such a busy calm day

May 26, 2019

## Following

we beauty of a project  
is that it ends  
everyone involved turns away  
time to read and write

May 27, 2019

## Looking On The Harbor

when we talk on Skype  
she looks everywhere but at me  
because her camera is nowhere near the screen  
I'm on / she is looking but seems not to  
she's surprised how many Shetland poems I have  
such obsession is not hers  
what does she want is a good question  
who am I another / she doesn't appreciate  
I think the small sidelooks / the small  
hand movements toward  
or the color of a sky not long before dawn  
though that dawn comes slowly from a strange angle  
I can only write about it

---

May 28, 2019

## QWAN

imagine a story  
now write it down  
is it literature  
a story alone is not  
it needs that thing Christopher Alexander called  
the quality without a name  
shall we name it

May 29, 2019

## Craziness Happens

the club's chill-out area  
by the entrance  
under the stadium  
some hot ones / gender not so known  
world's best techno club  
the woman with the green hat  
and flowered fan / in a lowcut  
a metal choker / I would give it up  
for her / for me doing drag is a political decision  
against the patriarchal masculine system  
he said

May 30, 2019

## Cliff Cam

the sun's rising  
or better said  
lowering down the cliff  
to seabirds rousing  
and jumping to the wind to fish  
to soar / warm or cold  
winter or summer  
they are perched and nesting  
pairs rattle bills against each other  
it's the time of love  
in middle spring



May 31, 2019

## Pair Length

simple logic  
not doing well with it  
worry / maybe

June 1, 2019

## Grass

wind hardly up  
the wind turbine just only turning  
early but the sun's above the light low clouds  
by this harbor is a special medicine  
that makes hyphenated words  
like wind-voices and summer-burned  
take the medicine then laugh  
or cry or sit by the harbor

June 2, 2019

## Hey Baby

the Fivla's tied up  
an industrial looking ferry  
not usually seen in Lerwick harbor  
well she and I are just sitting  
at the end of Victoria Pier  
3am / time for bed / I turn to kiss her  
I meet her on her cheek  
like this for years  
and the rest

June 3, 2019

## Cleats

it's a sad song  
not a dirge  
but the wind's low  
the tide's low  
we are low by the pier  
watching the rain wince down  
to the sailboat's railings  
there's a tarp over the spar  
keeping them dry  
we're not / we're hatless  
we choose the words that sound  
best not the ones that mean best

June 4, 2019

## Best Shot

a problem of tense  
past or present  
future? / we don't have one  
the words are just splats of thought  
and pictures in our heads  
we weave new ones when the old  
don't work / the lights will never  
go out

June 5, 2019

## Puffin Cam

birds coming out of their burrows  
before 5am to air their feathers  
get ready to fly out to sea to fish  
like little footballs with orange feet  
the puffins seem wrong / lots wrong  
it takes a while to get it  
then the words are wrong

June 6, 2019

## Luck

I went to dances  
washed my hair before in the sink  
my mother would drive  
we'd pick up Kurkjian sometimes  
cafeteria at Pentucket and sometimes  
a band from Haverhill  
I'd dance the slow ones with Miriam Briscoe  
blond / where is she now  
most of the girls I loved then  
are wrecks now / dead or not there  
what I thought was bad luck  
was good

June 7, 2019

## Notation

times goes on and she  
seems less each time  
we work together and it  
becomes ordinary / like seeing the sunset  
for days forever  
she gets older  
less appealing / allure is like that  
the scope of interest  
declines



June 8, 2019

## Rocks Village Bridge

the bridge back then  
I'd cross it every day on my bike  
the planks had gaps  
the asphalt stuck onto the middles of each  
the gray oily water below  
the smell of shit  
dead fish / I was scared each time across  
how many years of nightmares  
dozens

June 9, 2019

**Fetlar**

is it an obsession  
the desire of the faraway cold place  
with a strange old woman who can never  
be anything / are the projects real  
made up for the adventure  
I'll have to confess it all soon  
not to assuage blame  
but to explain insanity

June 10, 2019

## Skip

tonight is one of the those nights  
when there is too much work really  
to write a decent poem / life is like  
that

June 11, 2019

## Heat Wave

sweating / a tough day  
power on / off  
the copyeditor going a little crazy  
editing F. Scott Fitzgerald  
hard to know what to make of it  
I hope it will all work out  
it is so hot

June 12, 2019

## Bye

she finally admitted  
what I knew  
she doesn't and never has  
trusted me / feels uncomfortable  
colleagues only seems the thing  
but maybe not even that  
if you know me you know  
I hide from people  
who don't like me  
I think no Shetland  
ever again

June 13, 2019

## More Than

I am alone now  
all work away  
I want to never speak  
to be a comfort for myself  
I will flop into the sea  
never return  
a poem like this one  
that's what I'll be

June 14, 2019

## The Right Thing

still not done with this stupid essay  
because the publication cannot deal with anything  
one step away / how to cope  
well should anyone care

June 15, 2019

**De-**

rain dumped last night  
all the drains reamed  
I think the wind was up too  
water down runnels on the edges  
of steep streets  
I'm warmed by a warm body  
dawn was up hours ago  
but still in the night  
now that it's over  
the quiet is pressing



June 16, 2019

## Bought Normally

with the family of bookmark's kindergarten friends  
I had a barbecue in the garden  
put on father's day / wedding anniversary / various reasons  
super good meat in the air!  
a level of meat that will never be bought  
normally lol

thanks to the matured meat steak  
and the red wine marriage  
it was too nice

the weather is just as good as it is  
kids are very happy to play  
my parents eat delicious  
and they are very happy

it was a good saturday

June 17, 2019

## Let Them Know

I stand in shame  
and won't forgive the humiliation that led to it  
she could have been more kind  
instead she got back  
decide what to do

June 18, 2019

## My Bench

nice view out to sea  
I would sit by that bay  
but expense and friend lack  
prevents it  
I am stubbornly kept in my own box  
I don't speak  
I hardly move  
lots of reasons to look  
out to sea

June 19, 2019

## With Somebody

the sky smeared and striated by clouds  
4:25am / off to the left / to the west  
the sun has already looped around the pole  
throws a pink light to the right where everything  
is blue / except the bright flat fronts of buildings  
on the harbor / no one is moving it seems  
a woman wishing for more turns from side to side  
at first toward a love but in the end away

June 20, 2019

## Shetland Hire Cars

the small cars make the strongest stops  
pedals too close together make large feet  
stop it quick when the brake's too close  
to the clutch / those Brits  
and in Shetland too / not many larger cars  
she rented one and thought she could drive it  
what she did those twenty minutes  
was too funny / I won't go back

June 21, 2019

## Poetry

we speak of it now like jokes  
fifty years after  
how JK lusted for CS  
and also NH / how he had yearned for kisses  
but had no nerve / now these years later  
NH is ok / CS not so much and they all laugh  
like puppy love and oh our youth  
I still feel the sting / what Sappho might call  
sweetbitter / at first sweet as a promise  
at last bitter / a dry death

June 22, 2019

## Never There

a sharp morning  
red and orange light making the small harbor town  
crisp and alert  
it's old / the water is almost a mirror  
flat you'd think but the curve is somewhere  
no one is up / the sun where it is now  
is not far from where it set  
we're above 60 degrees / the mark of stubborn north  
when I look at the old photos the beauty is there  
and I missed it then I think / all more  
to miss it now

June 23, 2019

## Without You

every evening I report the news  
what I think / what I thought  
I don't report what she's done  
because she's severed what little we had  
her moment to speak true / my moment too  
next I'll return to my safety place  
to wander and more / I'll visit some  
but just look mostly  
sit in my spots / she was there once  
found it a big nothing



June 24, 2019

## Neverland

when I go there imagining  
the views are blocked and everything's too tightly  
close by / rain greens and blocks  
the sheep are on their bellies waiting  
I'm waiting too / I'll never go there again with her  
but without her is unimaginable / but it's me  
made it so / my bad traits too tightly close by  
too wet

June 25, 2019

**Fivla**

it's MV Fivla for now  
Leirna out of service for some reason  
Summer so the passenger load is high  
she'll stay there / me here  
we'll meet every week somewhere  
she reminded me of the poly on the barbwire  
the symbol of our love  
for Shetland and the smell of sheep  
the cold fish / the smell of the Rayburn  
maybe the ferry is saying something

June 26, 2019

## Farewell

the bridge / the suzies / the burgers  
the lobster / the frappes / the tonic  
the beach pizza / the jabberwocky  
Haverhill / Merrimac / Amesbury / Newburyport  
West Newbury / Groveland / Tamworth  
but the bridge and my evenings there  
what I need is a strong dose of forgotten  
with you at the center / the center  
becoming a healed over hole

June 27, 2019

## Fish and a Walk

the river was soft today  
I sat by it for a couple hours  
not hot / not cold  
birds jumping in it to fish  
a man walking to Amesbury asked me the way  
he was happy with my answer

June 28, 2019

## Sigh

on my nerves  
and it's hot  
my favorite places on vacation now  
wrong time / had to unfollow a friend

June 29, 2019

## Song Bird

fog coming up  
from swampy fields  
and the edges of roads  
humid I suppose  
with a change to cold  
Kurkjian said don't renew  
her contract / she drains  
returns nothing / she says  
it's about trust and if  
she doesn't have it  
why should I

June 30, 2019

**Ma**

the hat  
delaney's  
martha's  
places to eat on 110  
ice cream and clams  
my mother might go there  
cahill's toward Haverhill  
don't forget the tracks in the road  
she would find the world hard against her  
fog behind a gauze curtain

July 1, 2019

## Cobbler's Beavers

beaver pond with tannic acid  
on the far side bullfrogs warping  
it seems calm and natural  
but beaver-made / is it different  
from man-made / two dams  
well engineered / lasting for decades  
with regular maintenance



July 2, 2019

## After Dinner

she was walking down River Street  
gauze pants with the sun behind her  
walking toward me / I could see  
it all made sense then but now  
I need to imagine the photos  
that could have been had

July 3, 2019

## Shakers

they invented ways  
to save time  
to make time  
to worship and reflect  
but never do they mingle  
the men with the women  
they reproduce by acquisition

July 4, 2019

## Shaker Urge

only at the top of the hill  
does the setting sun invade the dwelling  
all those windows otherwise useless  
then / the woman yet streaming lust  
can't find the key to unlock that door  
there is no key / no door  
instead she waits for a passerby  
to stop / to think / to make her child  
a sister and then the lust becomes mother  
and the hens all cluck a lock step mutter

July 5, 2019

## Shake It Up

a day off from the drive  
sad all day and anxious for the waste  
if I lived at Canterbury  
I'd be eating in silence now  
with the same sadness and anxiety  
no one to share with  
the sunsets provoke me to anger  
there always the wayback fence  
and pond beyond where once we dipped  
in skinny and drive was under water

July 6, 2019

## Downpour Undoing

so when the cloud bursts  
as no poet would ever say  
it's fast duck under a tree mode  
and you hope it's summer  
leaves you see  
if you're near a river  
the river rising is a dosage of pretty  
and the sounds of heavy drips  
and river sliding past bank  
never a better sound  
normally I'd want her with me  
but that's all done  
she likes it dry now

July 7, 2019

## Brown Sugar in Newburyport

a waitress with dreads in blonde  
she's older but not  
she walks loose  
she served sweet  
her pink long skirt not from around here  
I wondered about her

July 8, 2019

## Skip's

so many to love  
no choice / no chance  
her hair tightens to a tight bun  
but long on her when she is she  
she loves to see me  
the first time  
then she loves  
to ignore

---

July 9, 2019

## If Not A Girl

the pretty ones go first  
in various ways they go first  
if you're looking for something to last  
look to the written word  
never stop



July 10, 2019

## Desire I Suppose

a man's desire is like a meteor  
long burn through female sky  
then a quick stop and deep sleep  
a woman's desire is like a tornado  
spinning to high fever / lifting  
everything it meets

July 11, 2019

## Hard Shell or Fur

how to move ahead  
with a woman who teases  
but mistrusts  
she digs like a gopher  
but is hard as slate  
she seems to wonder how places make people  
but doesn't know much about people

July 12, 2019

## Downstream

the river rushed upstream  
those few days I sat by it  
it made the sounds of lovemaking  
little vortexes in a flimsy row  
how does such a tide end upstream  
I haven't seen it  
I suppose it's not a wall  
when I approach her it's like that  
the tide stops / the river once  
again flows

July 13, 2019

## Unloved

no one said old age  
would make you unloved  
I think I knew that when young  
but maturity said no that  
doesn't make sense  
well / it does

July 14, 2019

## Shit To Do

the last time I was there  
I forgot to walk every woods road  
I didn't visit the barn  
I didn't lie down in the big field  
I didn't walk back to where Snooks was buried  
I didn't visit the princess pines  
I didn't look into the stupid crude shack I built in the special clearing  
I didn't check out the blueberry patches  
I didn't do shit

July 15, 2019

## Weesp Woman

she knows sitting  
near the bank of the Vecht  
the things that made her life live  
are gone / dying  
she trusts no one to tell  
she whispers little tickles of her hurt  
listening hard you can hear not  
the words falling from her mouth  
the tears falling from everywhere else

July 16, 2019

## Riding Low

she asks and asks  
I listen only halfly  
her time is draining  
I can't stop making mistakes  
I want high wind  
horizontal rain

July 17, 2019

## Underish

the bridge doesn't care  
the life near it not dear  
wind from somewhere else



July 18, 2019

## Late Afternoon

5am full light  
don't spend winter with her  
like a cold highschool date  
a dry hump / the birds huddled into hollows  
there could be warmth / it's the opposite  
now / sight and smell

July 19, 2019

## My No Story

what can it mean  
the roads now paved well  
before just oil on sand  
humped in the middle  
I once thought symbolism  
was key / fix it first  
then write the story  
how wrong was that

July 20, 2019

## Heroic

who writes the spec  
must stare into the turning heart  
of the most mindless reader  
someone whose raw skin  
has been scratched by the breath  
wrong makers / the words back up  
erase / swap as gravity erases space

July 21, 2019

## Nobody

vernacular wins  
think locally  
act locally  
when we tour Oswego  
it's an issue for reality  
making little sense  
the skirt and shorts  
so short  
the tattoos so covering  
the skin canvas stretched  
something wrong is something

July 22, 2019

## Hat To Go

I'm as tired as anyone  
can be while not  
moving a muscle  
back not in gear  
a new hat from Ireland or Scotland  
maybe and  
the way it's made  
is a long way from home

July 23, 2019

## News To Go

my daughter engaged  
she told me today  
I was driving out of Portland OR  
she was surprised I wasn't

July 24, 2019

## Wasting A Way

tears as time wears  
I want to stop the irrelevancy  
I am unlike the ones who make history  
my life was done wrong  
from start to finish  
I need to warn

July 25, 2019

## Fade

as my end approaches  
I note how shallowly I've lived  
how what ordinary people love  
I avoid / how joys for others are nothing  
for me / my job is to lay this all out  
with the time left  
the time left



July 26, 2019

## Detailed Energy

even though  
she's more human/istic  
she's less attuned to the one over there  
she's dazzled by French wording making commonplace statements  
she sees the theory not details  
she doesn't know what invitations mean  
she turns her back and says rub

sometimes I blur my eyes to better see  
the world things / the malformed things  
she gets strong glasses to see every detail  
she misses the standing up world / she sees  
a different eternity / I see the big flatlands  
spread before me yellows / a tangerine  
greens / stilted reds among reeds and fallen leaves  
she says rub

July 27, 2019

## Of Love Life

here's what love of life is  
ceilings caved in / floors caved in  
without the destroyed no one can bear  
the heaviness of new life  
when the rain slants down slanted streets  
into shallow gutters made lovingly by  
the now dead to a catchbasin shunting  
to the harbor a shout goes up  
a drinking song but where's the pub  
where's the party / maybe just the gulls  
or a rusty wheel / wait  
is she up there on the hill  
waiting to wail

July 28, 2019

## Banked Fog

the fog thick around the docks  
and masted boats tied up  
the strait is clogged too  
the ferry needs technological means  
to come to port / birds used to seeing  
where to fly and where to dive for food  
are locked onto the docks  
on rocks above waterline / they wait  
we wait for the sun to burn it away  
or wind to blow it away  
or God to smirk it away  
anyway we put more wood on the fire  
more coal in the firebox  
more peat by the backstone  
everything is waiting except for the practitioners  
of technology and followers of schedule

July 29, 2019

## Their There

a place I never knew  
I'd heard of it  
but where was it  
what did it mean  
to me / now I can't dream  
of anywhere else  
the high bald hills  
the stone houses  
islands everywhere  
cool all year  
neither hot nor cold  
I would live there and write  
but other choices went awry

July 30, 2019

## Her Reflection Teases

she appeared before me  
frumpy / she said her natural elegance  
fought against it / later  
she said she was in her pajamas  
au naturel / I supposed her hair  
white on top she said  
dark toward the back  
toward the nape of her neck  
she didn't try to absolve me  
or soften her critique  
she looked away many times  
I felt something but pushed it aside  
now her last husband dead  
practicalities surface hard  
I go back to the usual

July 31, 2019

## Makers

the story is old  
told at the hearth  
where men and women are finally equal  
men make the walls  
women make the world within walls  
her stuff ephemeral so archaeologists  
are stumped / walls especially of stone  
tell stories for centuries  
hence men  
it's not a matter of equality  
but sense

August 1, 2019

## My Turquoise Luck

the street curves up a narrow canyon  
little changed in a century  
way up there the sky's still blue  
here the yellow lights reflect off  
the wet street / there's a girl  
walking uphill / carrying a small woven bag  
her broad brim hat connects to her long  
dark back-draping hair  
her knit skirt is tight  
her bikini top is small covering everything there  
she walked past me and I tried to ask her  
she said shuddup

August 2, 2019

## Light Shining Through

the north is nervous  
autumn approaches  
the women who came and went  
have gone again / finally the air  
cools / up north  
for some time stops  
people slow / the loop is complete  
plans are made  
peat is cut and dried  
no rivulets falling downhill  
dawn is breaking



August 3, 2019

## Neve McIntosh

she is quite the beauty  
she turns her accent up to hide her girl self  
her heavy brows makes her form serious  
she strides across peat as if  
there are many ways to love her  
all distant / her arms bend back  
when I approach

August 4, 2019

## Shetland Writing

lots of pretty green to see today  
but the fog is not far behind  
cold weather and winter / all that  
the time for writing is here  
I am a slave to all sorts of words  
sentences come and go  
how to put them together  
in the green grass  
under the white fog  
in the cold

August 5, 2019

## Wake and Cry

the rain / the fog / the people waking  
lights coming on / it takes time to live  
even in a world where everything can be had  
coming across on little boats is another way to do it  
come on over and get what you need  
fish on the way / some shellfish too  
there is one light not yet on  
a woman behind it still in bed  
has the heavy blankets pulled up  
she doesn't know why it's tears for her  
maybe / it's because I'm here / she's there  
the loneliness of distance

August 6, 2019

## Mojave

the train slows through Mojave  
I like the corner seat in Mama Coco's Mexican Grill and Bar  
not a real name / hers / but the green chile  
enchiladas bite hard around the palate  
cerveza / they say there's only American junk  
food here / Mama knows better / she serves everyone  
even God when He's in town / He likes  
the planes they dismantle / He wonders  
if the spaceport will work out / mostly  
he likes the rust

---

August 7, 2019

## Learn People

I look for ways to program  
what I want / people have documented  
things badly / my recourse is to  
hack around and try things  
like wiggling the rope  
to untie the knot

August 8, 2019

## The Appeal

who doesn't love a rusty hulk  
a brokeback barn / an old ditch  
half filled with stenchy water  
the best of all is a ware-  
house with windows busted so long  
ago there is glass dust under them  
and the wavy parking is seen behind  
walls drooling / we all crave death

August 9, 2019

## Iconic Oak

some music so strange  
so soft and filled with small notes  
like a man walking up a slight hill  
to find his remaining days  
many slips on wet stones and laid-down branches  
later he sits / back to a stonewall  
a hard lesson to learn  
the creaking insects hush the leaves already fallen  
under the iconic oak / a man will find  
the box holding back his future

August 10, 2019

## Long Journey

a bit of a storm

I put on a record a wife once gave me  
folk songs of Maine sung during rain  
she left me many years ago  
anyhow you don't want to know about her  
the songs go well with our evening storm  
I once wondered whether you would replace her  
the storms are reward enough



---

August 11, 2019

## Text Editors??

she's so helpless  
with computers  
trying to explain  
text editors  
what / implement a language / means  
talking to her over artifacts  
I'd rather spend the Winter  
on Muckle Flugga

August 12, 2019

## Swampy Paths

I needed more time to recover  
perhaps I'm slipping away  
one more trip east  
maybe one to Shetland  
I still can write and think I think  
I still dream of the small paths through the woods  
and how me alone there is central  
all the trees / all the dull and soft land  
mostly swamp / it was ours / it was mine  
now I have nothing and it feels like it

August 13, 2019

## That Smell

we try to learn what people mean  
to read gestures / to savvy looks  
some figure simple rules  
I take a holistic approach  
and use my nose  
not figuratively / like  
I sniff them deeply

August 14, 2019

**Unst**

they gather around the billiards table  
many topics / none of them simple  
some hard and irritable  
just before voices rise  
the table gets loud with sharp shots  
duating off rails / clacking into pockets  
voices stay low / business

August 15, 2019

## Artful Sentences

facts and thoughts pile into a playground  
called consciousness / some just outside  
we pull on little tabs and the slithering  
result is a train of thought  
we believed it was all rational  
but ha ha it's just a dada clump  
suppose we say it without prune  
perhaps we're mad / perhaps brilliant

August 16, 2019

**Scott Miller**

no one wanted to say  
how he did it  
how he killed himself  
once locally obscure  
later nationally obscure  
he wrote songs / I was his boss for years  
I gave him permission to tour and record  
gave him permission / funny way to put it  
he was the artist and I  
a mere merchant

August 17, 2019

## Take It, Louis

I picture myself in the background  
having done the work  
getting no credit  
hidden / shy  
this is my thing  
she is the better presenter  
the more interesting writer  
I the deeper noticer  
the less shallow or  
more appropriately shallow  
thinker / that's me

August 18, 2019

## The Tips of Lovers

the deep rain piles up in the streets  
places people made to push away the hardened world  
the light piles up under sodium lights  
and nearby a wave folds over then another  
the woman who is not beautiful kisses  
the name who is not beautiful in this scene  
but we love them / who can make things like this  
shipyard far away in the back of the embrace  
lights on in the stone rimmed windows hint  
life is acting out tonight / a story is acted  
out tonight



August 19, 2019

## One Such

can you imagine the lovers at the top of the world  
in winter when there's no light / the rain and gales  
keep them in / in all the universe nothing is as important  
as what they do in just one of those nights / I had nights  
like that once / just once / then a train rushing past  
put me out of them / they say people get what they deserve

August 20, 2019

## Winter Day

she wants to look younger  
the small tip away from life  
why fight / she says now her elegance  
is timeless / that her young elegance  
is an old elegance / she offers her mind  
as proof / she nods as I nod

August 21, 2019

## All Helly Up

is this house spiritual  
not do spiritual things happen here  
but the house itself / the house  
alone aside from all eyes all senses  
away from people / I'll leave that question  
to photoshop / the photographer / photoeditor  
makes those decisions with color balance  
and targeted lighting

August 22, 2019

## Leaving

what you want  
if it isn't what she wants  
it might as well not exist  
she was thinking it over as they talked  
on the rock shelf by the North Sea lapping at its creases  
she pretended every answer  
finally the last one that came to her  
she said to him / after she left  
he smiled some / the wind I suppose was chill

August 23, 2019

## Finding

trying to find shooting locations  
I'm good at it but I need maps  
good ones and photos  
deduction doesn't work well  
always / but I've found places  
I need this for the mood  
Capote walking and looking  
listening / I need that too  
or make it up / rain doesn't help

August 24, 2019

## Dating / Dying

we went on a date  
I didn't know she was dying  
I was thinking it could be a beginning  
but she was working on an ending  
why though  
when we were done I wanted to take her home  
instead she went for a walk / alone  
by the harbor / later she told me  
she thought about me / and what kind  
of flowers she wanted me to bring

August 25, 2019

## Quick

the fog came in quick  
sunny then cold mist  
birds flying high dove low  
just barely missing the water  
a big harbor full of boats  
suddenly needing radar  
the woman waiting down the pier  
has been sitting for an hour  
she has a small thermos / tea  
I suppose / a tin of cookies  
her hair's not shiny but it gleams  
everything came in quick

August 26, 2019

## Heartness

the crofts on Unst / more  
humanity / the earth pulls them down  
into her peat heart  
right now fog covers everything  
I've noticed my life  
all seventy years of it  
has been as well  
the earth refuses to pull



August 27, 2019

## Check

find my place and return to it  
fanatically / like the last possible rub  
one by one each thing will happen  
one last time

August 28, 2019

## Water Thoughts

at the bridge I will lament  
what seemed like an intellectual connection  
that turned out to be just a glitch  
don't know what she would call it  
I would say something like a structure  
fallen into disuse and plenty of it

August 29, 2019

## Bad Trip

something like heavy seas  
sets our shared ship bed to swaying  
through the long cold North Sea night  
from a place just a place to a place  
we love / she and I  
once on land the world will explode  
we'll talk with cease / for now we  
hunker and hold like two old lovers

August 30, 2019

## Thule Bar

the bars are open but not  
interesting / this time of night  
when the cute ones are already paired  
or so the bucks think  
the beer doesn't run out  
pretzels and fried food  
game on the screen  
bartender's a job requiring  
patience and curiosity  
tolerance for boredom  
hunger for novelty  
the women all talk to you

August 31, 2019

## Crap

as I get older things worry  
me more / I panic easily  
tonight the sewer again  
we're in a hotel now  
it could be a bad week  
always on a holiday weekend

---

September 1, 2019

## Crap, Crap, and Away

if you read crap  
you're aware of the problem  
solved quickly because  
the city starts responsibility  
right over our back fence  
and it's free  
crap away

September 2, 2019

## CA Mistakes

still working to figure out  
how to explain how Alexander went wrong  
by writing code and checking it hard  
for the mistakes of noticing  
he made

September 3, 2019

## What Was It All For?

I've been there  
done some things  
I was not good at much  
but better than beginners  
at many things  
photos music writing  
hacking research thinking  
noticing riding bikes  
driving some say making love  
not great not even good  
better than a beginner



September 4, 2019

## She Sways

sometimes the work goes slowly  
I wonder if it's deterioration  
or just the work is hard  
I notice I worry harder about small things  
soon I will want someone to take charge  
I am not feeling so in control  
as when I knew less

September 5, 2019

## ARG Passes

we were strange buds  
making pizza / helping with mutts  
we shared a skepticism of our field  
we played music / badly / together  
but well enough to be paid and sometimes  
loved / I have tapes of him  
he was maddening / so why now  
why leave without a word  
without a definitive hey man  
as the notice remarked  
very unexpected

September 6, 2019

## Ron And Mary

who was Mary  
why did she trouble him those ways  
what did he owe her  
what did she deserve  
was it his obsession  
did he have obsessions  
she tolerated no one  
allergic to everything  
what was happening  
how can I know

September 7, 2019

## Last Skip

I will have just two days  
to satisfy my burger needs  
in Merrimac this time around  
beach pizza otherwise and the Thai  
and Rainbow crowd / I suppose  
I'll take it all easier  
perhaps a drive up to NH  
I will relax more / take in less  
be in the place not zooming  
past it

September 8, 2019

## Down

I feel decay coming on  
I must step away from obligations  
focus on writing my ending  
the agony is unbearable

September 9, 2019

## Tamworth

rain outside on the tin roof  
not a tropical rain  
I have the wood stove going  
I'm reading / under a blanket in my soft chair  
I want someone to warm by me  
no one is here  
I hear the piece of a puzzle  
click into place / no one here

September 10, 2019

## Hard September

even though early September  
stormy seas / skies unhappy  
birds under cover  
the ferry approaches but drives forward hard / quick  
urging itself into the harbor  
where everything awaits

---

September 11, 2019

## Ron

every time I move forward  
on this Ron thing I come down limping  
because something about it isn't fair  
younger and maybe better suited to it  
I'll watch his ashes



---

September 12, 2019

## Wonderful

I'm looping on something not important  
I should move on  
then there's the Ron thing  
and going to the lab for tests  
wonderful

September 13, 2019

## Ron

someone called him super overweight  
someone else described him hunched over at his interview  
someone referred to him as big blue for his constant attire  
someone told me he'd been laid off again and couldn't find a job  
I thought him invincible when it came to jobs  
I thought him ever slim or at least fit  
his friend seemed to me to be a witch who hated him  
he became a recluse as life evaporated

September 14, 2019

## Red Sunset Bologna Sandwich

how much we love stories  
that start with one scene  
and end with the same one  
different in story ways  
I'd watch the red skies to the west  
dream of what I'd do once older  
now I watch the red skies to the west  
from the west of my youthful west  
dream of what I'd hoped to do

September 15, 2019

## Fourth of July

I met with his brothers  
he had distanced himself from his mother  
for the damage he said she did  
a therapist was involved it seemed  
and zoloft for depression  
he paid her rent in Los Altos  
paid to store his stuff at the Glass Slipper  
lived at the Extended Stay  
had fifteen storage lockers to pay for  
no wonder no wonder  
he found living too hard  
we all cried all night  
and all day

September 16, 2019

## Bye Ron

Dave and Andy decided to start without Mary  
so we all spoke and I read my things  
the fogbank had vanished  
Dave and Andy paddled their kayak slowly  
but apace out around Johnson Pier  
to the near breakwater to the north  
Mary / Jo / I walked to the end of the pier  
and soon they disappeared  
a gull got Ron's Izzy's bagel  
but he was ok with that  
and we suppose his ashes blended well with the harbor water  
they came back and we all ate  
Rod picked up the tab  
we came home and I sat there  
still am

September 17, 2019

**r6 vs r4(6)**

the fog and funny clouds  
passwords in the simplest code  
the little clue from the clueless woman  
the dog that didn't sit right away  
the nebbish geek no one would fathom  
the wind over seas in the cold of late summer  
where'd you go

September 18, 2019

## In The Bay

he decided I heard someone say  
that having feelings was too risky  
I was in a band they said he said  
they had feelings / look what it got them  
I was in that band / I had feelings  
they said he sounded like he wanted to be Spock  
the Star Trek one / for those of you reading  
this in a hundred years / whop celebrated  
having no feelings / now look at him

September 19, 2019

## Tourist Iba

the first Portugal Lisbon couldn't go  
to the most tourist place  
the street where I stay  
the colorful wall is standing toward the sky  
as it is a narrow road to the narrow path  
this thin road / car and tram fly  
so time doesn't stop and moves  
I don't feel the danger of being  
in a security sense  
but I feel like I'm in a good mood  
cute but dirty / it was a very strange place  
it might have been like this  
when I was an image of my childhood



September 20, 2019

**Porto**

the linked buildings along the narrow street  
shades of dulled pastel  
chunks and blemishes abound  
originally rough stones worn down  
street numbers in cheesy plastic  
or 1960s metal numerals  
women here are not the prettiest  
but they can work and love  
they will make everything needed  
the buildings are narrow to keep down taxes  
the smell of sausage is faint / bright

September 21, 2019

## Champaign Ill

the small park / the big house  
we lived like nothing else for a year there  
she was not a home builder but liked exotics  
I was a timid student hoping for a life  
no such thing as computers at home then  
so I read and worked problems on paper  
at the large table / the living room  
sunk just in front / a double restaurant fridge  
we lived a long cold year there and played  
then away to the land of warm dreams

---

September 22, 2019

## Iba LoLs

when I say lost metal  
I haven't been able to take  
a 1-bit metal in the Dora walk  
I'm not walking too much lol  
you guys are walking around  
10 million steps lol

September 23, 2019

## Truck Tires Line the Docks

heavy rain / high tide  
the ferry comes in anyway  
making big waves  
they slap the truck tires lining the docks  
big winds and autumn is here  
the peerie shop / Thule bar  
no one in the windows no matter the time of day  
no matter the day of the year  
a man walks down the main street  
turns up an ally / someone waiting

September 24, 2019

## When We Say Our Last Ones

when I arrive it will be the last days  
I picture a story like this  
a guitar man loses his bass player in North Dakota  
the gig trail links ahead across the northern tier  
tonight will be in Wolf Point just like last year  
the new bass will fly in from LA  
he learns fast / the guitar man is in his motel room  
restringing his Strat / new strings every night  
snow flurries and he wonders if the gig'll go on  
North of there the tiny but chubby dyed blonde  
hurries through her laundry / she idols the man  
from last year / that evening she plans to wait around back  
the stage area waiting for him to stop playing  
but this time he won't / he will play for his lost bass player  
who is flying out to LA to be sprinkled off  
Ventura while the guitar player and lady singer  
drink beers all day

September 25, 2019

## Wolf Point Montana

in a stinky room in the Tip Top Motel  
the guitar man is changing out his strings  
Blue Steel 10s / he's put them through  
the back of his Strat and is winding them up  
with his tuning wrench / outside the light  
rain has turned to heavy snow / he doesn't know  
whether the replacement bass player will make  
it today or if the gig's still on / he's been  
dozing all day so far / next door the singer's  
wondering why she has her own room  
on the North Line she shares with him  
they lost their bass player two days ago  
in Stanley ND / flew him back out to LA  
on runway 27 / aortic dissection the MD remarked  
done tuning he plays the bassman's favorite licks  
the singer dozes / up North just a bit  
the wife who's waited a year is finishing the laundry  
and is about to attack the cosmetics / she's a dreamer

September 26, 2019

## Scobey Montana

about to attack the cosmetics / she's a dreamer  
Scobey Montana / a little chubby since she married  
she likes to horse around outside her home  
she saw them down in Wolf Point last year  
a warm year with a warm light west wind  
sliding through Scobey then / through Wolf Point  
she liked how he stood still behind the band  
but held it together with springy rhythm strokes  
and finger-pick-like textures / she was no music critic  
she liked his white streaked flowing hair  
his odd wah tone on leads / she liked how obvious  
the singer's passion for him was / how she knew/guessed the singer's  
husband was unaware / she wanted to see him play tonight  
the heavy snow though starting up and the timid bar owner  
maybe she'd miss them / just one night / the next day Havre  
just too far / she reached inside her waistband  
her husband out at Brendis's barn cleaning stalls  
that upward chord move still lingering a full year later

September 27, 2019

## Pillows

that upward chord move still lingering a full year later  
she has the tape she made and plays it over and over  
most days / she never clutched the truth of the singer's passion  
thought it only part of the play the group made around the choice  
of songs they played / the story they told to fit the songs  
together aside from their flaws and mistakes / they were a party band  
not a concert band / in the room next door the singer wondered  
how hard the death would hit the band / hit the guitar player  
she loved him sometimes / years ago on a tour / a decade later  
on another / now the North Tier and here in the Missouri Breaks  
she held a pillow between her legs she thought because of the cold  
that came with the heavy snow and the wind from the West that wrestled  
the light into dusk / she wished his arm over her side and cupping her  
he did most nights and most mornings / instead if she listened hard  
she could hear the plain song of the strings through the door between them  
not fully closed / she knew it was closed / the guitar man had tears  
the band was his and the bassman's / the new guy would be better  
he knew because that's how agents worked / he needed to know the songs  
right now / the bass the only guy who never stopped playing  
he waited for the phone and soon it rang / he let it / then the phone  
next door / she would get it and fate would follow on / up North she took hope  
over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive



September 28, 2019

## How True / So Tough

over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive  
to the Wolf Point venue / like a cliché in her pickup / empty rifle mount  
on the rear window / he bends the strings hard so they settle into their tuners  
the under-window heater pops and flits out dust smoke from an idle season  
he thinks he's been in this room before / he connects to the weak wifi  
finds Living on a Prayer from the 12.12.12 concert and looks for the bass player  
whose role is a simple bottom / Jon Bon Jovi gets the early words wrong  
Tommy used to work on the docks, Mini's been on strike / he's down on his luck  
how true / so tough / the grumbling interplay of Sambora's heavy rhythm intro  
the bass's constant low line the drummer's dear downbeat shade over the mistakes  
the women in the front row love it more / the guitar man remembers from Wolf Point the woman  
who stood off stage right eyeing his fingers / a player he thought but it looked wrong  
she didn't sway the way women do who lust for guitar men / she studied his fingers  
what the left hand did quietly on the fretboard / what the right hand did for rhythm  
the bassman would be to his left in front by a little / the bassman sang so stood forward  
the singer would wander her knees deeply forward and back cranking her hips / he listened  
for the sounds of his vibrato / how deep / how wide / how like the same kind of smear  
passion makes in the right bed / how he knew all these things well forgotten / how true  
the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bed to bath / the red door locked to the outside

September 29, 2019

## Preparations

the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bed to bath / the red door locked to the outside  
from the next room it's on we'll leave in two hours / the answer the phone gave  
their rituals begin / hair body fingers stretching planning the meal / no bassman tonight  
the replacement will meet them at the gig / he knows it won't be the same / he props his suitcase  
lid open / does what he does / up North the woman prepares her story / the snow worries  
the details so she invents different ones / her husband is cleaning his boot treads on the boot brush  
nailed to the porch / after hearing her story he loads four bags of cement in the truck bed  
he works his boots with a hoof pick / they live on the res / the singer strips and washes  
everything / none of her is faked / she wears close black stretch pants and a loose black  
long-sleeve tunic / she begins her warmups slow and low / the darkness coming on wakes her up  
fully / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready

September 30, 2019

## Quiet & Still

fully / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready  
for what matters / up North she breaks free of the ranch / heads into the flaking future  
she doesn't let herself think it but she loves the guitar man / has read all the online  
articles blogs tweets and the grocery store checkout-line rags / she's read the reports of trysts  
with the singer but the singer is too extravagant for him / she can hear that in his playing  
her singing / the guitar player and bassman have been together every band and she can hear  
the bassman in the guitar man's twisting licks / they are the couple / she's read that too  
they rouse the drummer / he likes it late / their manager loads them all up minus one / they head  
into town / when they play multiple nights in a town they mark down the best places / tonight  
it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her mightily but the cement bags hold

October 1, 2019

## Care Crystal

it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her mightily but the cement bags hold her mind safely on the ground / this time she'll talk to him / ask him to take her / wherever he goes / she will wait until the last reverberation of his last note is gone / she has packed small things / they will buy her more later / she'll say she can sing / the guitar player sits on a fixed seat too close to a fixed table / the burgers are dressed with mayo and options / the fries cut into spirals / the bassman hated all of these fixings / he called them fixtures / he pronounced interesting words wrong / when he read the words didn't sound in his ears / when leads went on he counted measures / when you mentioned a song the bass note names came to mind or the relative note distances aphantasia he called it / the singer was sullen / she's not been noticed since she found the bassman in his bath / I thought he was alive but I touched him cold / five gigs canceled / the snow outside can't care about anything / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down

October 2, 2019

## Last Tumbleweed

can't care about anything / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down  
on the road South to Wolfe Point / the woman grips the wheel like the reins on a bull / he is not  
a mistake she thinks over and over then says over and over / the cement bags thump / at the café it's  
sundaes for all / the drummer arrives late / waffles his thing / they jot down a set list / the guitar  
player wonders what the new bass will be able to do / the singer lingers her hand on his wrist  
outside the last tumbleweed bounds past / a snowplow scrapes by / the guitar player wonders whether they  
will too tonight / the bassman's back in LA heading for hunoz where / he is dead to the world / nervous  
for nothing / snow has made it to six inches / the chill to 24 degrees / won't snow much colder  
up North or down here they are all anticipating and regretting / they are wondering about the next ceremony

October 3, 2019

## Warm Air

up North or down here they are all anticipating and regretting / they are wondering about the next ceremony  
a sundae each on the cold night / they stand for leaving and the singer clutches the guitar player  
outside they walk and slide to the manager's van and hope the cold's not torqued the guitars too much  
he idles the van till the heater blasts warm / the van makes it slowly toward the venue  
the snow's been crushed into wet ruts whose sides are splashed onto parked cars as they drive past  
up North the roads are worse / no plows yet so the pickup is hub deep in snow / she is used to it  
she pictures clutching him / the heater blasts warm / they could make it to the coast  
in two days / set up a home / listen to tunes all day / wrap all night / it's better  
than it's ever been for her / at least her dream is hers / the world near her is good at  
changing the rules / good at burying her upward glances / in the distance she notes the flickering  
home lights / meals being cooked / fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up

October 4, 2019

## Just Fear

the fear of travel kicks in  
hard time to even figure out the gate  
boarding pass isn't obviously for the right terminal  
small plane / then returning an issue  
fear just fear / afraid

October 5, 2019

## Made It

last of the drives for many months  
good day sunny day rushed day  
a hasty meal at the cemetery  
but I visited all / crossed the bridge  
didn't go past the farm / it's so different  
only the shape of the land is relevant  
I am in Ottawa



October 6, 2019

## Radio Time

the shape of the marriage place  
is slowly restoring / I find my memories  
a little off putting / I recall the nights  
when we played out and Amy would sing her sad song  
then walk off stage when I took over  
stepping to the back beat / what is it about  
improvised music that each one knows what to do  
to make the music not static

October 7, 2019

## Hillside

today I was sore and ugly  
I made some points but wish  
I hadn't / my stomach ok  
some things are hard to hear  
not much / my friend didn't believe  
my sense of direction / we looped  
only once though / my back

---

October 8, 2019

## North Gower

in rural Canada  
watching game  
the fall is on us  
cool and great sky  
barn-like place  
not sure who I am  
I have been passed by

October 9, 2019

## Over

this is my last conference  
where I work on things  
I'm past my sell date  
I have decided it's over

---

October 10, 2019

## Fatso

lady bugs trapped on the windowsill inside  
dropping down on people  
the ladys are ready for fate  
I look at the photos and turn  
hard away / what shall I do

---

October 11, 2019

## Foo on You

I can't tell you well  
how little I like myself  
I am a toad / I am death  
what have I done / I thought  
I was doing better / guess  
not

October 12, 2019

## Back & Scared

long views across fields  
lady bugs looking for solace  
warm days with Canadian nights  
I am back home now but fear  
for her eyesight / I cannot persuade  
her it's serious / I can hardly stand  
my anxiety

October 13, 2019

## Simply Complex

when we write we have order in mind  
but to convey we need chaos  
we worship simplicity but nothing  
we believe beautiful is simple  
beauty requires return of attention  
simplicity bars such returns  
the purpose of beauty  
in continual noticing



October 14, 2019

## Tens

home lights / meals being cooked / fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up  
her windblown window / if she recalled the stories she read in plains books / if she paid  
attention to the movies made up in men's minds / the bassman didn't talk much / played  
too much like himself / no one else you see / he saw feelings in the others and rejected  
them / the overlays and ambiguity suited him / he knew words he couldn't pronounce  
so involved in his own mind he was / he dropped suddenly and it seemed like he could get  
up if he wanted / he didn't want / he never played with his back to the band / with his back  
to the dancers / shut up and dance he told them once / the woman up North knew  
he was tied to only the guitar player / not the black-leggings singer / she dodged  
a curve in the road her dream covered over / she missed what she never had / she would grab  
that all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel 10s

October 15, 2019

## Shhh

beside me a rock from one of our stone walls  
I return there every year / every day really  
I revisit / re-drive the roads the places the river  
my spots change over time / every time  
this summer I sat many times bridge downriver  
the river shading either up or downriver  
I dozed / the wind warm flowed  
from one open window to the other

October 16, 2019

## Dead Can Dance

Locust Street Cemetery is brilliant  
spring summer fall  
the colors / the contours  
shades of colors / tall oaks  
it calms me to sit there  
among the dead / I especially relish  
Huldah E. Oikle / died 1903  
young / I hope someone missed him  
terribly

October 17, 2019

## Sunset Room

cormorants flying low then diving  
a green bridge over a dark river  
I visit to assert I came further  
than reasonably could be expected  
I did good for a feeble-minded local  
this makes up for my not getting  
as far as my colleagues / I am  
sort of a nothing you see

October 18, 2019

## Crap

I am gnashing my teeth  
angry  
it will prevent this  
from being a poem

---

October 19, 2019

## Anger

I guess it's the pile-up of insults  
and disrespects / capped by not caring  
about my stuff / not caring that I might  
lose it / how many of the things I enjoy  
are less than nothing for her

---

October 20, 2019

## Still

I am not over it  
I need to find a way to make peace with the insults  
I suppose every woman I've been with eventually  
feels as she does now  
I am in my shell and will stay there  
convenience I suppose

October 21, 2019

## Pierhead Restaurant and Bar

we stopped at Pierhead for a quick bite  
nothing to eat there but up the street  
a meat pie bakery / with accompaniment  
we bought some pies and then back to the bar  
for drinks and a heat-up / a green-haired barmaid  
did it all / we should have gone when the kitchen  
was working / the pies sucked / worst meal in Shetland  
the reviewers saw it differently / maybe some other time



October 22, 2019

## Overlays and Ambiguities

all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel tense  
the song's new end / bass and guitar always together / they learned together  
their musical strangeness was the power of the band / the singer was just a warm thing  
on lost nights / tell me of the towns he once said / the towns are worn out  
the flash flood of money out of them / the great photos of plains America display rusted  
tractors / caved in roofs / peeled off paint / tilted silos / old men / old women  
hey baby it's the fourth of July he sang / last slow song of the set / she cries in the dark  
lies and greed he always said / the band's feelings / see how that messed them up  
the new bassman arrives motel-side / unloads luggage / tells his ride take me to the venue  
he will use his own bass but the old bassman's rig / he's a pro / he rides slouched  
snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold in parts / hot in others / sad

October 23, 2019

## Wrong Then Right

snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold in parts / hot in others / sad  
she pulls over upstreet from the dance hall / snow's risen on the parked cars / she  
the other one/ wonders if the last time he pulled her down onto the bed was the last time ever  
the singer always waited patiently undressed under the covers while the guitar  
player hunched out the motel door to tell his kids goodnight / sometimes tell them a story  
he's memorized or makes up about the flat expanses of old railroad land stretching  
toward the foothills / the long miles of dirt road disappearing into twilight fog  
the mist / he tells his wife he loves her / and he does / he also likes densely written books  
the singer's a light read / they are destined only for sweat and expulsion / she feels  
his leads are for her / the words to the songs he picks or writes are for her / she  
this one / is a romantic / the new bassman arrives / the van he's in slides stopped  
he's dressed in boots jeans T-shirt and a leather barn coat/ he owns two cowboy hats  
but didn't wear one for this trip / the woman frozen in her own North world steps  
to the side of the venue / peeks to the parking lot / sees the wrong bassman / news  
of minor deaths doesn't travel / it's not them her head drops / she sees his bass case  
it's not a Fender / a half mile away slipping slow the singer and her temporary man  
are a tangled pair / the North woman slips back to her truck / she will make it to the coast  
in a day or two / she will find the sea as blue as a good thing / hope was what she imagined

October 24, 2019

## Fall Ahead

when the leaves get full soon the year  
passes them up and down they fall  
after their month of full glory  
which is really nothing but death  
when everything has fallen  
the nice woods and riverbanks  
no longer sing loud but whisper  
harshly all winter long

October 25, 2019

## Cleaning Program

sometimes the simplest tasks  
require the most attention  
the big ideas are easy  
the fill-ins not

October 26, 2019

## Lonely Out

the grid of a town  
predictability and order  
laid out by a planner  
but trees and odd houses  
make the cement roads  
seem lonely / out of place  
walking our dog each night  
we'd watch people watching  
TV / blue light on them  
the walls a kind of yellow  
or light amber / in autumn  
the grass faded past yellow  
to brown / leaves left  
we adapted to the strangeness  
of too much human order

October 27, 2019

## Only She Admitted

we sat in the car by the river  
old late afternoon / November / Merrimack River  
the sun was low and the tide was high  
ten miles upriver from the sea  
she asked and I answered / it grew colder  
I put my hand in her cap which she has placed  
on her thigh / knit from New Mexico  
after it had been dark a while I wondered  
how long she would stay  
was something near romance here / instead  
I said we should eat and we went to the only place  
she admitted on this trip / was real

October 28, 2019

## Like Nowhere

I'd like to find a place where trees relax  
leaves fallen are made fast into soil  
where people used to tan their own leather  
where red squirrels still hop from branch to ground  
where one old woman would make me think  
and another would run lotion onto my back  
a place just like nowhere

---

October 29, 2019

## Snooze Looze

sometimes things pile up  
we can't figure out a way out  
right now I am sop tired  
I can't focus my eyes  
I can't find words



October 30, 2019

## Makes Me Tired

I took her to all my places  
everything revealed to her  
revealed her to me / differences matter  
in all I was made fun of  
another day she said her trust was low  
perhaps the walks on peatish hills  
meant nothing / our emotional lives  
so different / one harder / one harsher  
love is a dim light

October 31, 2019

## 70

after a while I noticed  
that my excuse for not doing something new  
was / 70-year-olds don't do that  
this means turning 70 is how I define defunct  
but I hold on to Jenny / not literally  
but she is older and still doing  
even though we're nothing much to each other  
she can still be a beacon  
I can think of her as a plan  
I will follow it

November 1, 2019

## Scared

well hm / another package delivery problem  
what worries me is how such things worry me  
I believe I'm growing more fragile as I age  
simple things through me for a loop / I need  
to relax more / accept mistakes better / I want  
to be a regular person as I near the end

November 2, 2019

## Why I Gave Up

be at the center or  
be far away / no need for  
a current deep knowledge  
of the times and the facts  
people at the center have fallen  
to insanity / there are no facts  
just me-centric ideology and self-interest  
when I was young the place I lived  
seemed open and possibilities vast  
now the best tv shows are about  
the walking dead

November 3, 2019

## Good Road

West on 50 in Kansas  
the sun's down is perforating my eyes  
it's dusty in this mid-Summer  
wheat and milo all around  
as I near Holcomb old fears penetrate  
innocence shot dead point blank  
did this make way for lies as facts  
did Nancy die for nothing  
good

November 4, 2019

## A Thin Cup

in a day or two / he will find the sea as blue as a good thing / hope was what she imagined  
his brothers / who knew? / will get in their kayaks by Ventura Pier near sundown  
the moon a thin cup above / the pier marching piles / if you were on shore watching  
the sky would start black above / turn yellow green under the pier / fade through red to black  
one will carry a box by his feet / the other a bag of bagels / pelicans will linger by just  
above the slight curls / once far enough they will stop and say something people brought up  
by religion would say but mean it something else / then the ashes will slip to the sea  
and a bagel last meal / the brothers will not cry because they have forgotten everything  
the guitar man will turn away from the singer in the Hi-Line Motel after Box Clubs at Boxcars  
the North woman / her bags of cement her only grip on Earth / will be parked on a beach  
in La Push / another res / a different song / a puzzled man behind her / ahead / the same ocean

November 5, 2019

## Speak

I spent the day alone  
as if on a pinnacle / a woman I know  
spent months hunting down death  
spiking it with life / how eager  
she wants to forget the thin line  
I am eager for the lonely days  
I will write every word of it

November 6, 2019

## No Mystery

when she emerges undressed  
from the bathroom / next room / other room  
the stakes are set / I can see what the night holds  
if she's upped the heat it's a display  
not / it's quilts and blankets  
a woman I knew declared one day that that night  
would be a new sort of night but a unique one  
I went to pick her up by the river  
wait she said and I sat on the settee watching the current  
from her large soft bedroom / she emerged undressed



---

November 7, 2019

## Jan

when you see someone absent for years  
nothing good can come from it  
either they will be better than they should be  
or worse / same for you / in this case a small insult  
and too much sadness / I stayed the whole time  
though

November 8, 2019

## A Short Walk

sometimes the envelope is too big  
for instance hiring someone in 1985  
then seeing them once more in 2019  
lotsa yeas there / I wish I could  
have loved it better or at least more  
instead it was the awkward and silly  
her life nothing like what someone  
anyone would love to live

November 9, 2019

## **Ships Lined**

ships lined up in the Channel  
like cars in LA / North on the right  
South on the left / really it's like this  
all over the ocean / I think people believe  
it's a free for all / there are many boats  
cargo / passenger / fishing / we seek

November 10, 2019

## Minneota Lutheran Church

the church that was built out in the open  
far from town / perhaps on a small rise  
to look down on the village now is in the town's  
web and streets filled with cars are all around it  
all the writer's comments about the lonely  
place / less lonely some argue / more others  
maybe are more true / less true

November 11, 2019

## In Mistrust We Trust

loss of trust can't be recovered  
not even if I sit with her for hours  
as twilight comes and goes  
and the cold drifts onto us  
and I place my hands in her wool cap  
and it seems like she forgives me  
I know she cannot / I cannot either

November 12, 2019

## Hey Baby

she has a lover now  
what a way to put it  
even though it means nothing to me  
it means everything to me  
I thought I occupied whatever part of her  
could still entertain lovers  
neither rabbit nor pseudo lover  
there is no place for me  
and then there's also that trust fiasco

November 13, 2019

## Nine

I met her at Woodstock  
1969  
a line of its own  
but after all the people left  
returning to the world  
we were picking up trash  
the smell of dirt and excrement  
vermin dead in their burrows and dens  
beneath the hardened mud  
she focused on organics  
I on paper / she was blond cendré  
and besides doing it literally  
I fell for her / later we washed in the pond  
I followed her to Paris then Amsterdam  
she found a Dutch man in 1979  
I stopped loving her in 2019

---

November 14, 2019

## Shetland Is Out

I had her figured wrong  
I assumed I filled a void  
but she didn't have that one  
that means I did very wrong things  
not criminal / not moral / stupid  
now I need to figure what  
to do next



---

November 15, 2019

## Someone Like No One

nothing that means something  
to me means anything to her  
I am not interesting it seems  
on the other hand / the time  
years ago I met her / that meeting  
did not register on me at all

November 16, 2019

## Living On

after hours by the river  
warm wind blowing in from the West  
slight misting murmur of the water flowing  
song birds lighting on branches / other types  
diving into water / splash of fish  
jumping for bugs / I drove off and  
that's the lesson / now matter how warm  
and sweet the day seems / it always ends  
with someone driving away

November 17, 2019

## Down the Aisle

in the bookstore I tell her  
there are just three books I want to look for  
the shelves carry used and new  
side by side / two are old and one new  
she doesn't care what I read  
so she goes that way and I this  
the set of aisles she visits  
and the set of aisles I do  
are disjoint / she drinks tea  
I coffee / she has decided  
I am not worth loving  
but hey

November 18, 2019

## Whitewash

I thought this was a good idea  
clean out an old chicken coop  
and use it as a clubhouse  
first / no chickens in it for decades  
so it's full of dirt and dust  
second / it is large so the chicken  
is most of the dust  
third / the way you paint  
something like this is with whitewash  
that is / calamine or lime paint  
a type of paint made from slaked lime  
(calcium hydroxide /  $\text{Ca}(\text{OH})_2$ )  
or chalk calcium carbonate ( $\text{CaCO}_3$ )  
sometimes known as whiting  
kind of yucky / but I tried to clean it out  
fourth / I'm lucky I survived  
but what a nice location  
what a great clubhouse it would have been

November 19, 2019

## Night Look

the old man parked his car  
off the least known road  
in Merrimac / to the West  
the sky was death orange  
and laced with black branches  
he walked across the stubbled brown  
field toward the stonewall  
in that West direction  
stopping he knelt before the stones  
some smooth some harsh  
laid his head on one / it was a cold  
twilight in November / he was gone

November 20, 2019

## Mystery or Puzzle

a woman finds a bench in a park  
she once had a good lover  
now that he is out of her life  
she is mourning herself  
in this story it's a rainish day  
some rain some just clouds  
it's Autumn in a foreign country  
they speak a pretty language there  
even through the cold in Winter  
I never mentioned foreign to where  
so all you can assume is some other  
I never told why he is out of her life  
when you answer these questions  
we can begin

November 21, 2019

## Out Of Every Way

is it really about death  
or is it about the passing to nothing  
not the killing but the ending  
death is loss and loss is beginning to forget  
forgetting is the same as nonexistence  
what remains can be only stories  
stories are words / they will disappear too  
who is the more cruel / existence or God

November 22, 2019

## JFK

JFK died this day decades ago  
I was in the Pentucket auditorium  
when I heard of it  
the color day skits before the Masconomet game  
that afternoon at home  
I drew a picture of a sniper on a piece of cardboard  
leaned it against the brick fireplace hearth  
then shot at it from ten feet away with my BB gun  
my mother did not stop me'  
she loved JFK so



November 23, 2019

## Ship Or You?

rain is a harsh way to disappear  
perhaps just the strong gust would do  
if you found your way to my door  
which key would you use or would  
you rely on me to answer / I look  
at older women now / the harbor  
has good size boats tied up  
the weather tilts them this what then that  
I perhaps'd prefer sleeping in one of them  
I'd know what the slender movements mean

November 24, 2019

## Nest Of A House

my dreams are of the parts  
of my house we don't use  
often we live in a few rooms  
with several large / sometimes dozens  
of other rooms closed up and on  
upper floors / sometimes other  
people use them / some are strange  
like abandoned chicken coops others  
are part of the Art Farm Amusement Company  
we thought was our backdoor neighbor  
my dreams of such rooms is to spend hours  
exploring them and the peculiar and particular  
people I meet there / sometimes a lot

November 25, 2019

## Forget All About

I pulled into the lot  
behind Brown Sugar and Mechanica  
I intended to visit Jabberwocky  
the local bookstore / instead  
the dwindling light on a little lighthouse  
slowed me down / then the cold took over  
next a light rain turned snow and I relaxed  
hours later I went inside for Thai  
just before closing / a beautiful hostess sat me  
I asked her about beauty / she said it was complex

---

November 26, 2019

## The Clutter of Fragments

a ruin is a fragment  
an unfinished work is a fragment  
we perceive directly only fragments  
which are pieced into wholes  
a whole leaves out more than a fragment  
and so is more limiting

November 27, 2019

## Hay Walking

smell of cut hay  
sweet and lingering  
midday sun pushing out the wet  
the sweetness is moist  
no one minds me  
walking across the field  
just mown  
the lure of concord grapes  
on vines up an old apple tree  
in this century there are no such things  
but once

November 28, 2019

## Fragments of Beauty

a ruin is a fragment  
a fragment admits revisits  
this so the mind can complete  
or re-complete it  
can it be that the least beautiful  
moment for anything built  
is the instant of completion

November 29, 2019

## Princess Pine

late November in Merrimac  
I'd gather some peach baskets  
head for the woods across the street  
and toward the Bicks  
the pines stood alone there  
for some reason it was the best  
place for princess pine  
I never knew that name until fifty  
years later when it occurred to me to wonder  
they came up with their rhizomes  
easy from the ground  
sometimes good mushrooms grew nearby  
I'd fill two or three peach baskets  
about a bushel each  
I'd take them home and my mother and I  
would bend coat hangers into a circle  
and layer the princess pines around  
gathering their tap roots with twine  
with red ribbons and pine cones  
these were the best wreathes  
for princess pine would stay green  
for many weeks / such love

November 30, 2019

## Far Into Cold

it's simple to want a quiet night  
in a stone house with the wind  
making things up outside  
the bed piled with blankets and quilts  
down in some of them / she beside  
she is like new old stock  
prepared long ago for the cold night tonight  
able to keep up for the long night tonight  
she loves the sound of wind under the eaves  
of branches churning / she loves warm skin  
with luck no tomorrow will open



December 1, 2019

## Snow Extremities

it's snowing back home tonight  
I say back home but I mean Merrimac  
their Santa parade was today  
when I was a kid Santa would drive by  
on the back of a flatbed and wave at me  
even though I stayed inside with the curtain  
pulled aside / snow this early is rare  
like soundproofing snow pulls you in  
to wherever you're centered / like you

December 2, 2019

## Champaign Ill

in Illinois I learned  
the ways to be part of a pair  
I thought us naïve but maybe she wasn't  
we made many things on our own  
I was more of a maker then  
I remember the leaves blowing down our street  
in Autumn / when we huddled after supper  
out back our dog safe in his little house  
the sky huge hanging above / the funny  
experiments with did with our bodies  
some said there was an agenda  
I never saw it / still don't  
we had friends

---

December 3, 2019

## Gave Up Trying

I've seen them sit in pews  
certain God sits on their altar  
I have sat with them  
I've held their hand in my hands  
what they believe they're doing  
is not the same as what I do  
but we both believe the same  
results will follow on

December 4, 2019

## Small to Big

what we care about in beauty  
seems to evaporate as we become  
more ourselves / people move  
from the special to the profitable  
the buildings once loved collapse  
the scents once cherished defuse  
the road to the river carries fewer  
each day until the only thing  
remaining is the big box

December 5, 2019

## Shetland Winter

sky colors are muted  
the sun is too low to fill  
the sky with light  
too far north / on too small an island  
one strong gust comes from the sea  
flattens Winter grass  
whistles the tune of window and door  
leaves us ready

December 6, 2019

## Grief

I waited for everything to settle  
I even stopping looking through second story  
windows at night hoping to see  
the one whom I missed though I searched  
everywhere for her / God gave us two gifts  
grief to suffer so we knew we need others  
tears to wash away grief despite its depth  
I didn't know / looking through her window  
whether it was tears or a few drops of rain

December 7, 2019

## Weather

gusts of wind / heavy rain  
boats banging against each other  
6am still dark / time to get up  
milk the cows / feed the pigs  
open the news from around the globe  
the weather report too  
today is the earliest sunset

December 8, 2019

## Tamworth in Winter 1960s

in the tiny cabin  
a toilet some bunks a small kitchen  
potbelly stove on Sunday morning  
I'd pretend to sleep late on the top bunk  
as heat pooled just above me  
I remember needing to pee urgently  
but holding on holding in  
their voices and soon the smells  
of breakfast I'd turn back the cheap sleeping bag  
I used for a blanket get down get ready  
there just was nothing to do



December 9, 2019

## Woman In A Storm

the most beautiful woman  
ever doesn't look like it  
she is what's risen to the top  
we can't see inside her head  
she is the big wave that skips off  
the sea wall and drenches your bedroom window  
as a storm or as a signal of the warm Summer ahead  
later she is the whitecap alone along the far shore  
what you dream

December 10, 2019

## The Man Who Left

the man who supported every move  
every mistake / my slow burn of learning  
the one I could turn to whatever  
he disappeared before the next time  
I might need him / he crossed  
a wide harbor separating my island  
from his / last time I saw him  
he was waving / goodbye or calling  
for help / it was the fourth of July

December 11, 2019

## Three Or So

the three things I notice  
from my spot on the dock at night  
boats shifting as waves from faraway  
gale force winds agitate gracefully  
the water by the pier  
a stubby car coming down to the high street  
from the heights behind more exposed to the wind  
leaving rain ruts behind like glimpses of dry  
flashing Christmas lights reflected on a tall  
wide window in one of the new buildings behind old  
one last thing / a woman I knew twenty years ago  
who just as she fell asleep I laid down beside her  
when she woke / I entered

December 12, 2019

## Pentucket

the school  
new when I was five  
now too old to sustain  
will be replaced  
wait / what about me

December 13, 2019

## One Day

the tide came up almost to the street  
boats tied up stayed tied up  
gale force winds / waves driving  
hard to drive from one end to the other  
ferries taking the day off  
at Market Cross a couple stopped  
by the tree in the determined wind  
she reached up and he bent down to kiss her  
then off toward Victoria Pier  
where the tide was up almost to the street

December 14, 2019

## Market Cross / Midnightish

one minute the pavement's dry  
two later it's soaked  
the woman dressed for Christmas  
shakes it off / she tumbles toward  
the upstreet / men in yellow vests  
greet her with song and cheer

December 15, 2019

## Tree Fixers

at 6pm they set up their ladder  
and messed with the Market Cross Christmas tree  
raining as usual / Christmas not far off  
the electricity's been on and off  
wind like a dream you wished not have  
I wish I lived there with all the hell  
happening here / cold and wet  
but not everyone insane

December 16, 2019

## Market Cross

a woman with a white dog  
stopped by the tourist office window  
after dark / she looked in / bent over  
to see something / the dog explored up  
an alley then pulled her away  
for just a few seconds I think  
I fell in love with her



December 17, 2019

## By The Time

all the songs written  
of striving toward love  
or leaving love behind  
because it wasn't right  
or it wasn't in balance  
the theme of running away  
of leaving and the discovery  
by the time I get there  
you will know I really meant it

December 18, 2019

## Loved Me So Hard

like the past the tubes in my amp  
make better music even if the solid-state stuff  
helps out front and the digital amp  
helps the sub-bass / clean or musical

if only the past sounded as sultry  
I remember sitting on the brick hearth  
my father built and kept clean with special  
cleaning fluids / red  
pretending I would one day be a special  
scientist or writer / not  
happening so much / the cheap radio  
playing as I went over the roads  
over and over the roads

December 19, 2019

## They Always Work

the winter dance  
of late rise early set  
add rain add wind  
ask the tide to rise  
as high as it ever has  
wait for the clouds to cover  
wrap your fingers around hers  
use these to guide your sleep

December 20, 2019

## Kathryn Cantrill

West Fork Arkansas  
my friend's former wife  
I always think about how each of us  
will be remembered  
like this perhaps

Kathryn was born on November 3 1949  
and passed away on Monday November 11 2019

I wish only that they would have said  
it was a Thursday

December 21, 2019

## Stays With Me

she's just at the top of the spiral staircase  
she said I was welcome  
to sleep there alone / instead I took the floor  
downstairs / in the morning I wake  
to her standing over me drinking tea  
her always-up hair down until after showers  
and rituals / she had no idea of me

December 22, 2019

## Past Stealing

one by one the past dies  
before each does its past fades quick  
near the end / for one thing  
the stone walls were bright and sudden  
since then their parts've been stolen  
for fireplaces and firepits  
even though the granite stones  
are covered in lichen and green moss  
the walls are gray and mark important work  
I was smart / I stole one years back

December 23, 2019

## Wedding Night

once I walked down the road  
by the farm away to the west  
then more west / slow at the start  
I went as far as I could on land  
from a covering place to more  
open then on to the sweet smell  
coast of eucalyptus and tarweed  
of dry grass and live oaks  
I made it there with one woman  
starting 46 years ago today  
but then a twist that made me  
famous / a little / blew it apart  
away / like a bad movie made of car crashes  
the road does not go both ways

December 24, 2019

## Helpless

the little boy  
nothing special about him  
he grew up and an accident  
made him famous  
a little bit  
he broke  
he thought there's  
something special about me  
wrong it turned out



December 25, 2019

## Lerwick

today I started at 11:30am  
on the tourist office webcam  
and sprinkled observations  
until dark / three hours later  
not a single man / nor woman  
no children / no cars  
no bicycles / no animals  
no birds / just rain  
dark windows / dark sky  
Christmas kept at home  
turf fires perhaps at work

December 26, 2019

## Birch Meadow

into a birch meadow  
a stream cut quick into the downslope  
I notice it / the water running fast  
some snow on its little banks  
I sit down / then lie back  
turn on my side / the water makes a sound  
in the Winter we all pray  
where does this water go

December 27, 2019

## Slow Place Like Home

how little I paid attention  
back then  
something grabbed it away from facts  
I was proud of my small world  
nothing better than alone with me  
how can I have been so out of it  
so no place

December 28, 2019

## Surprise Hike

a sweet and beautiful little cabin  
our two lives walked slowly  
toward it up a river valley  
on our backs what we'd need  
for a week of light love  
we didn't know the little cabin  
how its chairs were situated  
whether fireplace or wood stove  
how elaborate the kitchen  
we knew no electricity / but  
indoor plumbing using a tank  
up the valley slope filled by a rivulet  
we didn't know about the bed  
not its size nor its softness  
we knew blankets and quilts abound  
we didn't know each other  
not a little / not even at all  
the silly circumstance of revised lives

December 29, 2019

## The Day I Bought It

I decided one day  
to buy my own funeral  
made possible by inflation  
I opted for simple  
I'll leave that to you to decode  
this way a call and she's done with it  
done with me  
and I with everything

December 30, 2019

## Big Field

a large field stretching  
from road to stone wall  
timothy and sometimes rye  
corn ever now and then  
pears / apples / grapes / raspberries  
a large stone / very large  
in its middle / a place to hide behind  
a little / sometimes  
I loved that field / it's gone  
bought by someone / sold to someone  
the orange sky behind tree silhouettes  
to the west at sunset / that too

December 31, 2019

## Shetland New Year

the big celebrations  
who cares about them  
the small group around Market Cross  
a more than cool night  
a scrawny Christmas tree with blue lights  
at 11:40 no one is there  
at 11:50 they start  
a few seconds before they count down  
then yell and run to each other  
hugs / maybe kisses  
boats sound their horns  
more short skirts than you'd think  
no more than a hundred  
they are not part of the world  
they are their own

# Tuned Adrenaline: A Beat-Boogied Headful

Richard P. Gabriel

June 26, 2020



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## Epigraphs and a Dedication

*Meanwhile, meanwhile, oh!, meanwhile,*

...

*the boys that tremble beneath the pale terror of the directors,  
the women drowned in mineral oils,  
the crowd of hammer, violin, or cloud,  
will scream although their brains may blow out on the wall,  
will scream in front of the domes,  
will scream maddened by fire,  
will scream maddened by snow,  
will scream with their heads full of excrement,  
will scream like all the nights together,  
will scream with a voice so torn  
that the cities tremble like little girls  
and the cities of oil and music break...*

—Scream to Rome  
Federico García Lorca  
1930

*Well, the girls all look when I go by  
It's what I wear that makes 'em sigh  
Black slacks...I wear a red bow-tie...  
Black slacks...they say "me oh my!"  
Black slacks...with a cat chain down to my knees  
I ain't nothin' but a real cool breeze  
Black slacks....*

—Black Slacks  
Joe Bennett and Jimmy Denton  
1957

*Where I'm from, the birds sing a pretty song  
and there's always music in the air.*

—Adapted from "Twin Peaks"  
The Man from Another Place  
1990

—For Ron Goldman, my best sideman and colleague:  
*Play It!*

## When We Say Our Last Ones

when I arrive it will be the last day  
I picture a story like this  
a guitar man loses his bass player in North Dakota  
the gig trail links ahead across the northern tier  
tonight will be Wolf Point just like last year  
the new bass will fly in from LA  
he learns fast / the guitar man is in his motel room  
restringing his Strat / new strings every night  
snow flurries and he wonders if the gig'll go on  
North of there the tiny but chubby dyed blonde  
hurries through her laundry / she idols the man  
from last year / that evening she plans to wait around back  
the stage area / waiting for him to stop playing  
but this time he won't / he will play for his lost bass player  
who is flying out to LA to be sprinkled off  
Ventura while the guitar player and lady singer  
drink beers all day

## Wolf Point Montana

a stinky room in the Tip Top Motel  
the guitar man is changing out his strings  
Blue Steel 10s / he's put them through  
the back of his Strat and is winding them up  
with his tuning wrench / outside the light  
rain has turned to heavy snow / he doesn't know  
whether the replacement player will make  
it today or if the gig's still on / he's been  
dozing all day so far / next door the singer's  
wondering why she has her own room  
on the North Line she shares with him  
they lost their bass two days ago  
in Stanley ND / flew him back out to LA  
on runway 27 / aortic dissection the MD remarked  
done tuning he plays the bassman's favorite licks  
the singer dozes / up North just a bit  
the wife who's waited a year is finishing her laundry  
and is about to attack the cosmetics / she's a dreamer

## Scobey Montana

about to attack the cosmetics / she's a dreamer  
Scobey Montana / a little chubby since she married  
she likes to horse around outside her home  
she saw them down in Wolf Point last year  
a warm year with a warm light west wind  
sliding through Scobey then / through Wolf Point  
she liked how he stood still behind the band  
but held it together with springy rhythm strokes  
and finger-pick-like textures / she was no music critic  
she liked his white streaked flowing hair  
his odd wah tone on leads / she liked how obvious  
the singer's passion for him was / how she knew/guessed the singer's  
husband was unaware / she wanted to see him play tonight  
the heavy snow though starting up and the timid bar owner  
maybe she'll miss them / just one night / the next day Havre  
just too far / she reached inside her waistband  
her husband out at Brendis's barn cleaning stalls  
that upward chord move still lingering a full year later

## Pillows

that upward chord move still lingering a full year later  
she has the tape she made and plays it over and over and over  
most days / she never clutched the truth of the singer's passion  
thought it only part of the play the group made around the choice  
of songs they played / the story they told to fit the songs  
together aside from their flaws and mistakes / they were a party band  
not a concert band / in the room next door the singer wondered  
how hard the death would hit the band / hit the guitar player  
she loved him sometimes / years ago on a tour / a decade later  
on another / now the North Tier and here in the Missouri Breaks  
she held a pillow between her legs / she thought because of the cold  
that came with the heavy snow and the wind from the West that wrestled  
the light into dusk / she wished his arm over her side and cupping her  
he did most nights and most mornings / instead if she listened hard  
she could hear the plain song of the strings through the door between them  
not fully closed / she knew it was closed / the guitar man had tears  
the band was his and the bassman's / the new guy would be better  
he knew because that's how agents worked / he needed to know the songs  
right now / the bass the only guy who never stops playing  
he waited for the phone and soon it rang / he let it / then the phone  
next door / she would get it and fate would follow on / up North she took hope  
over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive

## How True / So Tough

over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive  
to the Wolf Point venue / like a cliché in her pickup / empty rifle mount  
on the rear window / he bends the strings hard so they settle into their tuners  
the under-window heater pops and flits out dust smoke from an idle season  
he thinks he's been in this room before / he connects to the weak wifi  
finds Living on a Prayer from the 12.12.12 concert / looks for the bass player  
his role a simple bottom / Bon Jovi gets the early words wrong after  
the grumbling interplay of Sambora's heavy rhythm intro / Tommy used  
to work on the docks / the bass's constant low line / Mini's been on strike  
the drummer's dear downbeat shade over mistakes / he's down on his luck  
the women in the front row love it more / how true / so tough / the guitar  
man remembers from Wolf Point the woman who stood off stage right eyeing  
him / his fingers / a player he thought but it looked wrong / she didn't  
sway the way women do who lust for guitar men / she studied his fingers  
what the left hand did quietly on the fretboard / what the right hand did for rhythm  
the bassman would be to his left in front by a little / the bassman sang so stood forward  
the singer would wander her knees deeply forward and back cranking her hips / he listened  
for the sounds of his vibrato / how deep / how wide / how like the same kind of smear  
passion makes in the right bed / how he knew all these things well forgotten / how true  
the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bed to bath / the red door locked to the outside

## Preparations

the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bed to bath / the red door locked to the outside  
from the next room it's on / we'll leave in two hours / the answer the phone gave  
their rituals begin / hair body fingers stretching planning the meal / no bassman tonight  
the replacement will meet them at the gig / he knows it won't be the same / he props his suitcase  
lid open / does what he does / up North the woman prepares her story / the snow worries  
the details so she invents different ones / her husband is cleaning his boot treads on the boot brush  
nailed to the porch / after hearing her story he loads four bags of cement in the truck bed  
he works his boots with a hoof pick / they live on the res / the singer strips and washes  
everything / none of her is faked / she wears close black stretch pants and a loose black  
long-sleeve tunic / she begins her warmups slow and low / the darkness coming on wakes her up  
fully / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready



## Quiet & Still

fully / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready  
for what matters / up North she breaks free of the ranch / heads into the flaking future  
she doesn't let herself think it but she loves the guitar man / has read all the online  
articles blogs tweets / the grocery store checkout-line rags / she's read the reports of trysts  
with the singer but the singer is too extravagant for him / she can hear that in his playing  
her singing / the guitar player and bassman have been together every band and she can hear  
the bassman in the guitar man's twisting licks / they are the couple / she's read that too  
they rouse the drummer / he likes it late / their manager loads them all up minus one / they head  
into town / when they play multiple nights in a town they mark down the best places / tonight  
it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her mightily but the cement bags hold

## Care Crystal

it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her mightily but the cement bags hold  
her mind safely on the ground / this time she'll talk to him / ask him to take her / wherever  
he goes / she will wait until the last reverberation of his last note is gone / she has packed  
small things / they will buy her more later / she'll say she can sing / the guitar player sits  
on a fixed seat too close to a fixed table / the burgers are dressed with mayo and options / the fries  
cut into spirals / the bassman hated all of these fixings / he called them fixtures / he pronounced  
interesting words wrong / when he read words they didn't sound in his ears / when leads went on he counted  
measures / when you mentioned a song the bass note names came to mind or the relative note distances  
aphantasia he called it / the sullen singer / she's not been noticed since she found the bassman in his  
bath / I thought he was alive but I touched him cold / five gigs canceled / the snow outside  
can't care about anything / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down

## Last Tumbleweed

can't care about anything / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down  
on the road South to Wolfe Point / the woman grips the wheel like reins on a bull / he is not  
a mistake she thinks over and over then says over and over / the cement bags thump / at the café it's  
sundaes for all / the drummer arrives late / waffles his thing / they jot down a set list / the guitar  
player wonders what the new bass will be able to do / the singer lingers her hand on his wrist  
outside the last tumbleweed bounds past / a snowplow scrapes by / the guitar player wonders whether they  
will too tonight / the bassman's back in LA heading for hunoz where / he is dead to the world / nervous  
for nothing / snow has made it to six inches / the chill to 24 degrees / won't snow much colder  
up North or down here they are all anticipating and regretting / they are wondering about the next ceremony

## Warm Air

up North or down here they are all anticipating and regretting / they are wondering about the next ceremony  
each on the cold night / they stand for leaving and the singer clutches the guitar player  
outside they walk and slide to the manager's van and hope the cold's not torqued the guitars too hard  
he idles the van till the heater blasts warm / the van makes it slowly toward the venue  
the snow's been crushed into wet ruts whose sides are splashed onto parked cars as they drive past  
up North the roads are worse / no plows yet so the pickup is hub deep in snow / she is used to it  
she pictures clutching him / the heater blasts warm / they could make it to the coast  
in two days / set up a home / listen to tunes all day / wrap all night / it's better  
than it's ever been for her / at least her dream is hers / the world near her is good  
at changing the rules / good at burying her upward glances / in the sidelong distance she notes the flickering  
home lights / meals being cooked / fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up

## Tens

home lights / meals being cooked / fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up  
her windblown window / if she recalled the stories she read in plains books / if she paid  
attention to the movies made up in men's minds / the bassman didn't talk much / played  
too much like himself / no one else you see / he figured feelings in the others and rejected  
them / overlays and ambiguity suited him / he knew words he couldn't pronounce  
so involved in his own mind he was / he dropped suddenly and it seemed like he could get  
up if he wanted / he didn't want / he never played with his back to the band / with his back  
to the dancers / shut up and dance he told them once / the woman up North knew  
he was tied to only the guitar player / not the black-leggings singer / she dodged  
a curve in the road her dream covered over / she missed what she never had / she would grab  
that all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel 10s

## Overlays and Ambiguities

all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel tense  
the song's new end / bass and guitar always together / they learned together  
their musical strangeness was the power of the band / the singer was just a warm thing  
on lost nights / tell me of the towns he once said / the towns are worn out  
the flash flood of money out of them / the great photos of plains America display rusted  
tractors / caved in roofs / peeled off paint / tilted silos / old men / old women  
hey baby it's the fourth of July he sang / last slow song of the set / she cries in the dark  
lies and greed he always said / the band's feelings / see how that messed them up  
the new bassman arrives motel-side / unloads luggage / tells his ride take me to the venue  
he will use his own bass but the old bassman's rig / he's a pro / he rides slouched  
snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold in parts / hot in others / sad

## Wrong Then Right

snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold in parts / hot in others / sad  
she pulls over upstreet from the dance hall / snow's risen on the parked cars / she  
the other one/ wonders if the last time he pulled her down onto the bed was the last time ever  
the singer always waited patiently undressed under covers while the guitar  
player hunched out the motel door to tell his kids goodnight / sometimes tell them a story  
he's memorized or makes up about the flat expanses of old railroad land stretching  
toward the foothills / the long miles of dirt road disappearing into twilight fog  
the mist / he tells his wife he loves her / and he does / he also likes densely written books  
the singer's a light read / they are destined only for sweat and expulsion / she feels  
his leads are for her / the words to the songs he picks or writes are for her / she  
this one / is a romantic / the new bassman arrives / the van he's in slides stopped  
he's dressed in boots jeans T-shirt and a leather barn coat / he owns two cowboy hats  
but didn't wear one this trip / the woman frozen in her own North world steps  
to the side of the venue / peeks to the parking lot / sees the wrong bassman / news  
of minor deaths doesn't travel / it's not them her head drops / she sees his bass case  
it's not a Fender / a half mile away slipping slow the singer and her temporary man  
are a tangled pair / the North woman slips back to her truck / she will make it to the coast  
in a day or two / she will find the sea blue / a good thing / hope she imagined

## A Thin Cup

in a day or two / he will find the sea as good as a blue thing / hope was what she imagined  
his brothers / who knew? / will get in their kayaks by Ventura Pier near sundown  
the moon a thin cup above / the pier marching piles / if you were on shore watching  
the sky would start black above / turn yellow green under the pier / fade through red to black  
one will carry a box by his feet / the other a bag of bagels / pelicans will linger by just  
above the slight curls / once far enough they will stop and say something people brought up  
by religion would say but mean it something else / then the ashes will slip to the sea  
and a bagel / last meal / the brothers will not cry because they have forgotten everything  
the guitar man will turn away from the singer in the Hi-Line Motel after Box Clubs at Boxcars  
the North woman / her bags of cement her only grip on Earth / will be parked on a beach  
in La Push / another res / a different song / a puzzled man behind her / ahead / the same ocean



# **The Bosks Are Thorny, Grim, and Icky**

Richard P. Gabriel

January 8, 2021

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Wednesday, January 1, 2020

## **I Snare A Crow**

holly drowns in a silent countryside  
mournfully / willingly the ice locks twigs  
wife / darling though my torch is woeful  
I stop gnashing

Thursday, January 2, 2020

## Damp Note

a damp note to myself  
written on the newest worst day  
I pled my case but who was reading  
I spoke of birch trees  
but not of woods  
I spoke of the white bark and white snow  
that was not my mood  
I wonder how many minutes I will be remembered  
I wonder sometimes whether anyone  
will show up

Friday, January 3, 2020

## Southie

we met in front of a space  
available sign suitable  
for a restaurant / before  
we kissed we decided to have  
a go so we rented the space  
filled it with cooking stuff  
filled the larders with veggies and meats  
I cooked / she served  
in South Boston / a good place  
for a good place / how we cooked  
was how we were / we kissed  
as her long hair / her warm blond hair  
came down like a zephyr after a sharp  
sudden storm

Saturday, January 4, 2020

## Stone Wall

I sat down by the stone wall  
on the far side away from the field  
that abutted the road  
my mother's house across that road  
I sat in the tall hay just beside  
nettles growing right against  
the wall / a hot summer day  
in the 1960s when I was young  
I thought for a moment that I  
would become remarkable  
that moment crept longer  
now in 2020 it seems unlikely  
seems it never was likely  
seems like I never was

Sunday, January 5, 2020

## Gale

I made her breakfast  
french toast on the rayburn  
outside it was a force 10  
power lines buried so our lights  
are on / windows set deep in the stone walls  
she takes hers with tea me with coffee  
today we read

Monday, January 6, 2020

## **As Warm As It Gets**

we decided to nap  
up on the ness south mainland  
a dry day but sea smell and gulls  
the salt grass made a harsh mattress  
we slept most of the afternoon  
for supper fish as usual at a poor place  
we didn't talk much  
didn't need to



Tuesday, January 7, 2020

## Oof

the modern world  
the simple don't work  
I am stuck on a typesetting mission  
pure hacking  
evolution through error  
foo

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

## Hadley Road

the old cartoons  
the old ads in black and white  
corny and childish  
me running from a bedroom to the living room  
the old kitchen table along a wide hallway  
transistor radio up on a sill  
steep steps down to a half cellar  
it all felt small when I was small  
and now even worse I suppose  
a place I could be again

Thursday, January 9, 2020

## Cobbler

growing up it wasn't there  
but later beavers moved into the shallow valley  
of the creek that started on our farm  
and built a dam / a dam so good  
they built another larger one upstream  
making a big pond covered green in scum  
and so many beavers several lodges were made  
upstream of that even more dams for the young'uns  
every trip in Summer I hike to there  
watch for martins and mink / check out  
the raptor nest / maybe an eagle  
I never saw a beaver / might have heard  
a slap / but always the quietly flowing stream  
exiting the dams and heading to the Merrimack  
then heading out to sea

Friday, January 10, 2020

## **The Talk**

the smallest place to stay  
in Paris remains the largest  
place a heart can pump

Saturday, January 11, 2020

## CA Aghast

why is decay beautiful  
it's not the decay of the man-made object alone  
it's that the context / the environment  
has grabbed ahold of the man-made object  
integrated it into itself  
built thing and world in happy confluence

Sunday, January 12, 2020

## A Dream

I tried to stand out  
that was stupid  
I was a target  
they called me one of the browns  
as in brown noses  
I was named Marullus  
people thought I was smart  
but more like perseverance  
going after details  
I suppose I came pretty far  
from my roots / my farm background  
but nothing compared to dreams

Monday, January 13, 2020

## **Prom: 1967**

the pretty black and white  
of young women and their attendant men  
at a high school senior prom  
how lovely / such youth  
I of course never attended  
because no such young woman  
would permit my approach  
now they and I are old  
they let me approach at least  
to talk / to email / to facebook  
they forget the disdain  
the comments / now it seems  
they looked so sweet

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

## Eshanness

we stood at the edge of the cliff  
down to the North Sea one hundred feet  
two hundred feet down to the ocean  
on a stormy day and the waves were  
active and splashing about / we  
didn't know the sleeper wave was coming  
the one that rose up those feet  
and in the gale force wind blew salt  
back a hundred yards / knocking us  
senseless / then later sensible



Wednesday, January 15, 2020

## Milosz

I found the Polish poet  
was born in Lithuania  
hence more on my side of the street  
than some other sides  
how much he took from his birth country  
against his adopted / hard to know  
now off to read all about it  
in his collection

Thursday, January 16, 2020

## Monticello in the Summer

wide streets in the small town  
west of Champaign / we'd ride there  
on weekends / didn't go fast  
but persistently / it was when my future  
was just a soiled blot where the sun  
should have been / now I know it was simply  
disappointment / looking back I'm glad  
I couldn't see how it'd be  
many ticks in the L column

Friday, January 17, 2020

## Ice Frogs

we had our own pond  
in Winter it'd freeze over  
it would be my rink  
a little stream fed it  
with maples in the shallow  
stream-entering end and I'd avoid  
that part / I learned to skate there / alone  
hockey skates and some of the other kids'd  
skate too / we didn't limit them  
50 yards by 50 yards mostly round  
not too deep / which other kids  
had their own pond  
oh and bullfrogs in Summer

Saturday, January 18, 2020

## Death by Hanging

the woods I walk through  
to get to the beaver pond  
is where a man from town  
who'd moved away hung himself

you can't find the story online  
the man's name / how his car  
was parked in the Sweetsir school  
parking lot / as if he didn't matter  
hadn't lived / wasn't able to keep on

maybe he was right

Sunday, January 19, 2020

## Aside

the things I could have done  
come after me now  
I regret the caution my life dictated  
so I write the stories  
I might have lived

Monday, January 20, 2020

## Christina's World

the woman in tense repose  
gazes at the farmhouse / the farm  
outbuildings / around her every  
grass stem / hay stem is perfectly clear  
yet the cut part of the lawn is a toy  
childish / they say she cannot walk  
that to move she crawls / the house  
is proud of its coast / tire tracks  
fade into the cut / the house and buildings  
are real / she and her stems are real  
they are separated by a childish smudge  
that is the foolishly painted lawn  
what she wants / what she is

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

## Messages Outside The Bottle

when a woman ends her email  
with love to your wife  
she is saying don't you dare  
love me

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

## Endings

under a rock  
hiding from a life that passes quickly  
making coffee the hard way  
checking email / night time I worry  
sometimes I hope for the slowly falling leaves  
drifting to a forest carpet  
and the hard to hear slight shifting sound  
of rain on top of it all



Thursday, January 23, 2020

## Mainland

a nice place to eat  
Scalloway Hotel  
one time I was so tired and overrevved  
I needed just to sit quietly  
scallops / hake / monkfish  
she didn't get it / the wrong side of the road  
the shift on the wrong side  
pedals too close  
constant questions / 15 hours nonstop  
just a little too much  
she was there

Friday, January 24, 2020

## Solid

sweet halo of the past  
sparse memories of trees and fields  
future behind a curtain not yet visible  
future behind a curtain / not yet visible  
different things / future was never in my sights  
I've had a life by now but looking back  
nothing was ever on the horizon  
just a sweet halo / trees and fields  
dim dreams never solid

Saturday, January 25, 2020

## Urp

a beautiful woman on a street  
by a river in a city in Europe  
she is well-dressed and of good fragrance  
she was educated to be someone special  
on top of a that a very woman  
I was outside a café with espresso and a tart  
when she passed me by / I noticed her  
one-sidedly / as she went past  
and for minutes after that my future  
became a series of uncontrolled hiccups

Sunday, January 26, 2020

## Quartzite

for dismal places  
try western Arizona  
all dry desert  
good place for minerals  
some places are all trailers  
what can possibly happen here  
except settings for horror  
novels and films / for of all places  
on the earth a poorly kept ranch  
in Arizona is the most melancholy and uninviting  
it reeks of everything unclean  
morally and physically

Monday, January 27, 2020

## **Klinefelter**

no recommended places to eat  
no recommended places to drink  
no recommended places to sightsee  
no recommended places to stay  
no recommended places to shop  
no recommended places to enjoy nightlife  
no recommended places to have a coffee  
no recommended places to see art or history  
no recommended places to do things outdoors  
California

I vaguely remember a discussion about Klinefelter  
California but I can't remember where or why

Tuesday, January 28, 2020

## Map of Chisholm Trail

heading west  
a Dollar General on the left  
the road's made of concrete  
US 50 east of Garden City  
stopped at the Santa Fe Grill  
about 6pm / met a girl I would  
have liked to meet / something  
about her said I can make  
you a home here / we have  
such a lovely cemetery

in the wee hours of June 10 1893  
Bill Doolin and four members  
of his gang robbed a train  
one-half mile east of Cimarron

in 2016 the Southwest Chief owned  
by Amtrak derailed / and Amtrak and BNSF filed  
a lawsuit against one of the companies  
in Cimarron for damaging  
the rails by a road vehicle

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

## Inked Amboy

#retro #travel #route66  
#ipulledoverforthis #tourism  
#urbanphotography #art #lost  
#seekers #urbanexploration  
#abandonedplaces #pitstop  
#deserted #lostplaces #urbex  
#photoshoot #roadsideamerica  
#forgotten #urbexpeople #urbanexploring  
#ig #instagood #instadaily #style  
#amboy #visitamboy

the former Amboy School is adjacent to Roy's  
the school closed in 1999 after the last students moved away  
a palo verde tree east of Roy's on Route 66 was formerly used as a shoe tree  
but collapsed in 2010

Thursday, January 30, 2020

## Replaced

sleeping in a small bed  
people all around because  
we made it out of the desperate canyon  
all we could afford was the single  
room in an old old motel  
near Flagstaff  
I didn't know it then but learned it later  
that starting that night  
I was the less interesting man



Friday, January 31, 2020

## Angry Or Curious

the more I think about it  
the less I like what I accomplished  
a disappointing life / really  
somewhere out there was someone perfect for me  
judging my their reactions  
I never found that person  
too afraid to look

Saturday, February 1, 2020

## Hate

I sit by the bank of a river  
waiting for cruelty to catch up  
why have people fallen into such hatred  
the river though stays the same  
for now / until the sewage comes back  
but for now the water flows as it always has  
away from the heights to the most possible depths

Sunday, February 2, 2020

## Cry

I'm too sad really  
to write a good one today  
or even a pretty lousy one  
you'll need to research the date  
to figure out the silly reason

Monday, February 3, 2020

## Wait for You

a dark room  
a large dark room  
lights sparse on the ceiling  
on the back wall  
the room filled with strangers  
grouped in pockets of friends  
on a raised part of the floor  
music starts and the sound is a mesmerizing drone  
chill / I am the guitar player  
I make the melancholy whispering whine of the song  
but they all watch the singer  
all eyes / all lenses / all ears  
if I stopped the song would disappear  
would anyone notice

Tuesday, February 4, 2020

## Beautiful Red Lights

I've seen red lights blinking  
at intersections of yes and no  
I count how many stop  
it's not good news  
I noticed a house in decay  
half down / rotted out the rest  
moss on the roof  
brush pushing out windows  
such beauty

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

## Shetlandly

what a discussion  
beauty and things I don't get  
sensuous curves in Shaker  
are you sure that's right  
all in the service  
of peat heated stone huts

Thursday, February 6, 2020

## Simply

when there was no future  
we were happy / exploring  
the harbingers of another day  
having a woman with me  
for the first time  
when I wasn't able to ask them anything  
and still can't  
I knew I was destined for nothing  
even with small dreams  
pretending I could be someone  
now every sentence I saw  
is wrong

Friday, February 7, 2020

## Weesp

brick sidewalks  
cobble / painted doors  
house wall exactly at the street  
flower boxes and clunky bikes  
every few streets a canal and bridges  
right now she's just waking  
soon getting ready / her fridge  
too small for American shopping  
a gas stove looking older than the street  
out front / her funny entrance mud room I presume  
she must think me the fool



Saturday, February 8, 2020

## River Lane

by the river people live  
their cellars buckle  
in Winter if the temperature  
and level conspire  
an old place / an old bridge  
in Summer birds in the trees  
some dive into the river  
fish up and down  
I like to sit by there  
sometimes I doze into the warm breezes  
one year the bridge was closed  
so one side was far from the other  
of the river / some of the people  
the rich have a saying  
give it to me

Sunday, February 9, 2020

## Make America

we live in a world new made from hate  
all my life I never imagined we would  
go backward like this / good lord  
education didn't do it all  
smart is the new dumb in my country  
my country tears for thee  
sweet land of misery  
for thee I weep

Monday, February 10, 2020

## Timeless

respected / ambitious / well-dressed  
this is how I'm remembered  
by classmates who roughly speaking  
hated me / would I go back  
I would but only to ask the questions  
I'd bring them with me and the answers back

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

## Snooks

my loyal dog Snooks  
she roamed our farm  
at night she'd hear something  
run out barking into the woods  
from my open window with night cooled air flowing in  
I'd hear her disappear maybe a mile away  
still our farm / she knew cars and tractors / horses  
she'd walk or trot by my side / me on foot or on bike

she got old / my father got ether / just below me  
from my open window with day warmed air flowing in  
I heard her last grunts / her last struggles  
death / then burial in a field back behind the back field  
in a hole dug in sand  
Snooks

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

## Coach

we were on the cross-country team  
me and Kurkjian / lazy runners  
coach'd say highland route  
we'd head out the driveway to 113  
turn left then in hundred yards left again  
onto a woodland path above Pentucket  
after ten minutes we'd stop to talk  
we'd pretend to beat off for a while  
then down the shortcut to the football field  
coach'd see us / yell hit the showers men

Thursday, February 13, 2020

## Cow Come Home

my mother said I returned  
from the back field and said  
a cow is still out there after  
they had all been herded into the barn  
she said they were all in but I said no  
she said / she said she asked me to take her  
there and I took her out to the oldest  
apple tree and I walked up to a deer  
and petted it on the head / my mother  
told me this many times

Friday, February 14, 2020

## Eyes

prairie eye / woods eye  
sometimes I have one  
the other too  
usefulness / clarity  
complexity / ornament  
duende / can we find things in each  
I am swept up in the cleavage  
I am sometimes unable to state it  
around me moths are fluttering  
something fluttering  
I was jolted tonight

Saturday, February 15, 2020

## With

snow and the deep woods  
I drag my booted feet one by one through the snow  
I head for meadows / places with birch trees  
I find a place just below a pine tree  
where needles are still warm next to it  
this will be a last place



Sunday, February 16, 2020

## Loveliness

warm and a summer day  
I walk toward the swamp  
because near are blueberries  
I am playing alone  
lonely boy  
now on any day  
I walk toward a swamp  
not for the delicious  
but for the thrill of loneliness

Monday, February 17, 2020

## Luring

the lure of words  
the way they flee  
the death of some phrases  
prompts suicide stress  
I wrote some sentences today  
I have forgotten them

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

## Chicken Pot Pie

eating a strange meal  
with people who are probing  
the edges of sanity like a chicken  
next to a fence near dusk  
cluck she might say  
the world answers back  
butter

Wednesday, February 19, 2020

## Carts

next to the food cart  
a woman covered in silk  
wrote in a small notebook  
while I ordered a po'boy  
shrimp wi'd savory mayo  
she seemed sad / the notebook  
was green and she used a stubby pencil  
to write the world around her into a pretty bow  
I watched as I waited  
she looked up from her scribbling  
just as my tray came out

Thursday, February 20, 2020

## Shetland

we flew to an island group  
far north but not cold  
we didn't like to stare  
sheep / fish  
you'd think passion would rise up  
no / not a rabbit was I  
anyhow we drove everywhere  
ate fish / slept nearby  
sheep / fish  
rabbits to go

Friday, February 21, 2020

## **Bogus**

I could ride all the way  
from the farm to Martin's  
with my hand off the handle bars  
even the short but sharp uphill parts  
I could ride there in snow  
I was habitual / I was in love  
with friendship

Saturday, February 22, 2020

## Haverhill v. Newburyport

at first I preferred Haverhill  
I would drive its roads  
visit its bad restaurants  
many times on each trip home  
I say home but I mean the place  
that feels like home  
the cemetery too / ice cream stands

but now it's Newburyport  
a town I never visited back then  
the restaurants not great not bad  
a good bookstore / too new too made up  
Haverhill is still derelict  
and therefore I should still love it more  
why / why?

Sunday, February 23, 2020

## By A Voe

an overcast night by the voe  
she wakes up and stands by the window  
blasts of wind / later a sideways rain  
she returns to bed in a haze  
her hair medusa / she rolls away from me

the next afternoon when I see her  
by the fire she has a book in her lap  
her arms are folded  
she stares at me intently  
later I will remember this all  
in a black and white pencil sketch



Monday, February 24, 2020

## Apparition

I watched her come down her spiral stairs  
night past 2 maybe almost 3  
at first I thought her nightclothes were tight  
then I wasn't sure  
she turned slowly down the stairs  
old / unstable  
she slept upstairs / not me  
I spent a hour wondering  
was she dead / where did she come from

Tuesday, February 25, 2020

## Lunge

not a day / we ate after nine  
the smoke fell from the sky  
I decided to walk to the pond  
a dry night / stars lispig behind  
the wispy smoke / I wasn't a smiler

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

## Sherwood

the fields yielding  
to a classic red barn  
like classical music  
such a cliché  
one arm of trees coming in from the right  
separating the near field from far  
if it were my place I'd make small  
shed to work in down in the low field  
I'd invite stunning women  
make martinis / write crap like this

Thursday, February 27, 2020

## Coop

we had a small coop  
near the newest house  
my father built  
an A-frame affair but short and squat  
some farm equipment inside  
like a hay mower blade and some buckets  
I think it was a coop  
or maybe just a storage shed  
there was a sort of lip at an otherwise  
open end / tarpaper all over it  
the roof low and pitched to an A  
nearly to the ground  
what was it / who built it  
why did we keep it for such a long time

Friday, February 28, 2020

## Waiting Their Turns

on the side of a shallow hill  
the men stand in a rough circle  
the women stand with them in a rough circle  
below / out there the sea pauses its rage  
and sends its waves more slowly and more kindly  
a voice low carries barely to each pair of ears  
in their midst a simple box / a rectangle  
carrying what's left behind and then when  
it's time every man places a stem of his choosing on it  
and each woman in her turn places a stem of her choosing  
as close to the one they all miss as she can  
because today is the time to turn away  
the kiss they've placed is not a kiss of love  
but the thing of dissipation

Saturday, February 29, 2020

## Hard Hit

we see beauty then possess it  
we write it / we paint it  
take for instance a low rock shelf  
by the North Sea during a small storm  
the waves hit and hit / spray coming up  
white from bubbles / then now and then  
a wave hits hard and sprays the bitter grass  
up a ways / the sound / the vision

Sunday, March 1, 2020

## Lazy Kid

we came up on the hut way after dark  
we found two open bunk beds saved for us  
by my father's friend Roger  
we had lost some food to a bear on the trail  
a mistake of leaving it behind  
finding it gone a few minutes later  
next morning Roger asked me to bring back split wood  
when I brought a small bundle he told my father  
I was lazy / a robust blond woman made me  
a bacon and fried egg sandwich / I had never tasted  
anything like that before / it had snowed  
the rain on the metal roof going soft was not the end of rain  
but the start of snow / Roger said my sneakers were stupid  
for the trail up Katahdin / we hiked back to our car  
we drove home / eight or ten hours

Monday, March 2, 2020

## Left Behind

I wonder is she  
mommy or intellectual partner  
suppose I was left behind  
and just her for me  
not for that  
but for survival  
food / shelter / companion / warmth  
would she do what she needs  
what I need  
her place is small so things are tucked  
if not enough blankets for two



Tuesday, March 3, 2020

## She Told Me

the black shard-like shapes of bare trees  
against a dimming sky as viewed with the oil-seeming  
surface of a swift wide river behind gives her the creeps  
it's where I started and where I'll end  
hopelessness / the promise of nothing more  
a black shard-like misery

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

## Good Time / Bad Time

we sat in the corner booth  
in an old bank turned restaurant  
had a simple meal but a real one  
she said that at least the place  
was real / the food was not over  
the top good but good / we ate  
while talking / she always talks  
we had come from the river where  
we sat in a car chilling and chilling  
nothing about me interested her  
still we liked the food / liked the  
place / liked the river / she vowed  
never to return

Thursday, March 5, 2020

## Jesus Struck

my mother was afraid of thunderstorms  
when thunder followed lightning by seconds  
she would go to the car and sit inside it  
her husband / my father / said the rubber tires  
would insulate her / she looked scared  
our dog Snooks felt the same way  
she'd head for the car when thunder came  
she liked the back seat / my mother's story  
is that once a lightning bolt came through a window  
and hit a picture of Jesus on the wall above  
the fireplace / when she was little / lessons

Friday, March 6, 2020

## Merrimack

I'm alone by the river  
ice clogged / up by its banks  
even though the salt sea water  
flows up here / big flakes  
a wet storm / skies the way  
you expect / we expect  
warmth when it's cold  
when the snow is piled on ice  
piled on cold North Atlantic  
water / where is she

Saturday, March 7, 2020

## West Side

whetherering the croft  
meaning understanding it  
what makes one place wonderful  
another almost exactly like it  
a pile / it seems convention  
doesn't work and myths are too harsh  
I can think only of crofts in the infrequent snowstorms  
the gales and gripping cold  
who will grip next

Sunday, March 8, 2020

## Rare Catch

Guilford Rail System westbound train  
Waterville Maine to East Deerfield Massachusetts  
crossing the Merrimack River  
from Haverhill to Bradford  
the railroad still rostering  
three ex ATSF SD26s  
two of which on this train  
along with a pair of ex CN GP40-2Ws  
we all took these matched consists for granted  
and sadly even took the SD26s for granted  
although by this time  
they were getting to be a rare catch

Monday, March 9, 2020

## Gift Items

they turned an old church  
into store / first videos  
then snacks and gift items  
back then people worshipped  
there but no it's a place  
of over-abstracted nouns

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

## Help

she revealed more than she  
ever would have before  
wondered why the man would allocate  
his woman friends in slots  
why he would write exquisite letters  
satisfy her exquisitely  
yet go home after a roll and a nap  
how could I know  
why ask me / this is not  
a worthwhile job



Wednesday, March 11, 2020

## **Baz**

hm / things don't sync up  
it's getting worse  
how to fix it  
how to ameliorate it  
baloney

Thursday, March 12, 2020

## Fears

when fear hits the rules bend  
loneliness / oh and the death thing too  
no one's mind flies to the grassy meadow  
bee-filled flower bushes / but to one loved  
or several / when the fear is based on information  
and not bodily fluids the head can hurt  
our fears are like brisk waves against the pier

Friday, March 13, 2020

## Jealousy

she's old / she says  
not looking for anything  
love bumped into her  
puppy love roughly  
you figure the pun  
it's been raining all month  
she is soaked / he's clueless  
his idea of love is her idea  
of betrayal / he's maybe  
on the spectrum  
she tears up now / can't work  
waves hit the pier

Saturday, March 14, 2020

## Sunday Pandemic

wet morning  
boats at rest  
taxis winding round  
the light's not ready yet  
cars at rest  
birds though up and at it  
people maybe are sick  
they are anyhow at home

Sunday, March 15, 2020

## My Father's House

a house made poorly  
by a self-taught man  
he used newspapers  
as insulation in parts  
we were poor when he made the house  
he was not the most talented  
but more so than me  
the house kept us warm  
in the cold cold winters  
even when a well failed  
we had another

gone now / a developer  
decided to burn it down  
start something else  
what my father built had character  
what the developer built had nothing

Monday, March 16, 2020

## On Cape Cod

crowded in a house  
at the end of a road  
woods around / we are locked  
in a trailer locked inside a fence  
down a road with a locked gate  
me / my dog  
at night /scared senseless

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

## Locking

small sense of a small doom  
we don't know who will go down  
we're locked down  
we read and work / writing and thinking  
I find it hard to worry but I take time for it  
I note that the day is longer  
the warmth stays hidden  
I plan to sit

Wednesday, March 18, 2020

## O

sometimes I wonder  
whether my casual idea  
that life goes on  
might be in  
correct



Thursday, March 19, 2020

## Bad Ditch

a little ditch from the barn  
through the orchard  
under the road into our lawn  
into a small swamp then  
through the rough woods  
past birches and maples  
under another road  
now a stream then through  
a gap where one day beavers  
will corral it then under a road  
eventually through town past  
the firehouse and finally into the river  
where it will zigzag to sea  
to the ocean to you

Friday, March 20, 2020

## Like A Desert

the gap between horizon and sky  
is more than twenty buildings  
on end / the colors don't match  
on the hill nearby a woman is singing  
the words are in her language  
it belongs nowhere else  
if I return tomorrow the sky will meet the horizon  
the colors will slip from one to the other  
the woman will be laughing  
laughing at me

Saturday, March 21, 2020

## Deadly

outside my door  
a fate waits  
perhaps a bug I'll catch  
which will do me in  
perhaps not  
I hunker here with some hope  
I need to make it count

Sunday, March 22, 2020

## Darkness

the camera pans in fits and starts  
across to Bressay then toward the south  
we see the theater and finally Northlink's berth  
seabird all over / the water is calm today  
later the ferry will depart  
the darkness will triumph

Monday, March 23, 2020

## Weesp Dreaming

I guess it hit her harder than I guessed  
a lover who made her not special  
she never seemed into romance  
not since her age made headlines  
she seems to walk to think  
of all this and talks to folks for advice  
though she's been married time and again  
I can't help her / her world  
so different so far

Tuesday, March 24, 2020

## Shetlandic

I took a walk along a cluttered shore  
North Sea by my side  
it's probably raining but all I feel  
is a hard drizzle into the side of my face  
I know there's an island not far off shore  
I can't see it for fog and raining mist  
back in the little rental a woman waits  
she's reading a book from the armful she brought  
it never occurs to her we should cook  
we eat out / same place every night but Sunday  
when she sleeps her hair is jazzy  
black under but white near her front  
I dream on my walk

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

## Wind Whip

the wide line of rain wash  
hastens downriver past me  
then past the bridge  
it's a west wind that tells me  
one way to go / I've got my window down  
secondary drops splat on the back of my hand  
resting just below the open window  
it seems cold but I'm more interested  
in the wrestling branches above  
the last leaves leaving for the coast  
I suppose / those that don't leave  
plaster the grass by the side of my rental car  
tonight'll be soup / across the river  
some women sit and read / some of them  
with stray thoughts of the good I once did

Thursday, March 26, 2020

## Stanydale

excavations of sherds of Beaker pottery  
flat-based pots / burnt barley grains  
remains of sheep and cattle  
one building contained saddle-querns and grain-rubbers  
the better to grind barley

we walked across the field  
from a wide place in the road  
she ahead of me  
people like us were once here  
people like us made rough things



Friday, March 27, 2020

## River Day

I made a day for us to sing  
to wade into the river and sing  
when the day came I curled under a pine  
by the back field where the wind was whipping  
my friend's wife went instead  
she waded / she sang

Saturday, March 28, 2020

## Near Bakota

where he lived is soft  
a river with steep slopes  
white stone and gentle terrain  
watching films of it sadden me  
why did he leave  
how much did he miss it  
I saw some pictures of a cemetery  
near where he lived and all I  
could think of was why wasn't  
I there too

Sunday, March 29, 2020

## Hammering

hammering woke me up  
from a croft up the slope  
hammering in the middle of the night  
a hard persistent sound  
I wondered about it so I got out of bed  
I was surprised to be alone  
the other side of the bed cool  
I opened the door and the cold wind  
pushed past me / above I saw  
the celestial Charioteer  
and its bright star  
walking slowly toward the sight  
toward the sound I found her  
at the ends of my fingertips  
she was warmly waiting

Monday, March 30, 2020

## Not Too Fast

did I think it would end  
the playing / the music  
the marriage-like fighting  
the way he would align things  
all in his direction  
did I think that one day  
there would be no hey mans  
or play it / that I'd miss  
his unspecial playing  
and singing / rap-a-billy  
did I think I'd ever miss  
how what he liked were the things  
that must be liked / that were the right  
things to like / not I prefer  
but it is / Ron said once  
not too fast

Tuesday, March 31, 2020

## **She Was Your Stone**

Amber is gone  
the strange match  
unmade I gather  
from evidence tiny  
indirect / unlikely  
Amber what a monster woman  
she stands gleaming  
in front of a window  
painted a view  
of Paris

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

## Not Too Fast

today was his birthday  
gone now / play it his cry  
not too fast / everything I did a little wrong  
but a strong support all the time  
without him I never would have made it  
I still work on ideas I had with him  
he's gone of course  
today would be his birthday  
play it

Thursday, April 2, 2020

## Circle

alone as an angel  
searching for soft light  
crowded as a river  
flowing over smoothed stones  
eager as night  
crawling up background trees  
lonely as the sky  
way up there alone

Friday, April 3, 2020

## Right?

they say now is not the time  
to make art / they said that on 9/11  
they are so wrong / they are so wrong  
they are so wrong / really wrong



Saturday, April 4, 2020

## Music

so making music takes  
fingers in the right places  
at the right times  
then the sounds come for free

instead I listen to a song  
from the North / quiet  
some might say sad  
the sky is tattooed aurora green  
I am lost there

Sunday, April 5, 2020

## Singularity

we try to understand  
we drop confused  
we worry when death will arrive  
we didn't worry when birth would  
tonight is the night  
of most recent terror  
I am alone / I tried to understand  
confusion fled

Monday, April 6, 2020

## Otter

even though the cams are working  
we hesitate to see  
blur from mist  
shaking for upgusts  
I saw a river otter  
head to the small bay  
they like the salt now  
waves abound  
a woman with bouncing hair  
walked past just as the cam  
started to turn away  
two lonely people

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

## The Rump

what a treat  
to live in a time when the world's gone mad  
dictators and a very general  
red mist of hatred  
we elected our dictator  
thinking how fun it would be  
to snub our noses at those  
mud people / never worked for long before  
perhaps it will end  
before I die

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

## The Only ?s

she says  
there is life and there is survival  
one can have beauty / the other?  
beauty though comes from life  
and life comes from survival  
where did I go wrong?

Thursday, April 9, 2020

## Barbara Ryan

I need to stay away from argument  
anything I say will be an insult  
I am angry enough to do something stupid  
I need to calm down somehow

Friday, April 10, 2020

## Church and Chapel

church on one side  
of the top of a hill  
a chapel on the other  
the most holy of days  
no one around  
between them three crosses  
different heights and weights  
I made a mistake  
a woman is walking from church  
to chapel / shrinking her needs  
we thought it would return to normal  
instead this will become normal

Saturday, April 11, 2020

## L P. D.

though we part  
we stay together  
the song rings on without its singer  
heard then unheard  
through memory and imagination  
the air / the page  
even fleeting electrons  
from day to year to century  
beyond life and all things mortal  
beyond death and echoing realms  
we are the voice and the instrument  
the song

though we part  
we sing together



Sunday, April 12, 2020

## Ferrying

ferries less frequent now  
cargo ships instead  
on shortened schedules  
bringing lots / taking back less  
with the right sun  
the right waves  
a good angle the North Sea water  
between two islands is as blue  
as we imagine a good woman's to be

Monday, April 13, 2020

## Rivers On Water

here's something hard to believe  
on calm sea water say close in a bay  
or near a city with not much wind  
there can be rivers on the water  
salt water below and say a drain  
emptying rainwater into the bay  
but instead it's onto the bay  
and what light wind there is  
or slight tilt of ocean from far off  
waves will move that river as if  
across a near flat plain  
rivers of shiny fresh water  
on a sea of salt

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

## Hildasay

tonight just the freighter  
carrying truck trailers  
containers below deck  
strong winds will try  
to block its way  
the 800 miles south  
it goes to bring back  
food and goods  
another day

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

## Hacking

sometimes it just doesn't go right  
or I can't understand well anymore  
then it's a long day or a long night  
better ways exist I'm sure

Thursday, April 16, 2020

## Hacking More

hacking went better  
noticed another failed raid slice  
mirrored so not fatal  
I'll wait until a new computer  
to worry about it  
meanwhile the tide

Friday, April 17, 2020

## Lerwick Harbor

the cams are set up  
so late afternoon  
in the right time of year  
the sea is blue as Ukrainian Easter eggs  
big ships sail out now and then  
a few cars up roads to the hills  
across the bay sheep and brown grass  
even in April / what we long for  
is long away

Saturday, April 18, 2020

## Ringo

a sadness in the west  
the Old West I should say  
I found it on a old mule trail  
not used much now  
near Turkey Creek in Arizona  
I suspect it's from an old feud  
or a love lost in a gunfight  
stories or rumors make hay of it  
you sometimes wonder what  
roadside gravesites are for

Sunday, April 19, 2020

## Gone

the big dump was behind the back field  
filled with rusted cans and parts of old cars  
bedsteads and milk cans with holes and blood red  
near a tree perfect for climbing and near a road  
to a farther back field and into some good woods  
pine and hemlock / some oak and much maple  
the stone walls were all legit not perfect  
like a landscaper's / some places the swampy  
dips made the woods unappealing or the brush  
too thick and I never went into those parts  
it seemed then like I had years to explore  
gone



Monday, April 20, 2020

## The Afterthought of Love

bad news fog rolled in tonight  
not the little cats feet sort  
every cam was just white blanks  
except for the ones close to buildings  
the right thing to do is to head  
for a donut shop and get some jellies  
and a regular coffee / sit down  
wait it out / perhaps with her

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

## Lerwick Fog

I am managing my loneliness  
by hacking my brains out  
sometimes it's working  
sometimes not  
but the foggy days  
don't relieve

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

## Unst

the town sleeps  
the fog finally has blown past  
the woman who cooks sporadically  
has decided to sleep all day  
she is tired of all that reading  
she like the warmth wool brings  
and the old-fashioned peat fire  
in the stove near her bed  
which is near where she cooks  
not so near me

Thursday, April 23, 2020

## **Asia Inspired**

the word for storm  
in some languages  
also means destruction  
the word for sharing  
in some languages  
might mean lingering

Friday, April 24, 2020

## Stoppage

the loneliness of the writer  
is not like yours  
you spend it without company  
while writers are caught  
in small lies / writers are like birds  
that push other eggs aside  
like the gods who waited  
until their tales were told  
them vamoosed / like the program  
that crashed while printing  
the answer

Saturday, April 25, 2020

## Meredith

she stayed upstairs usually  
I was always there to see her  
but left it to chance  
I almost never did  
in the end she told me  
it was my pants  
she didn't like them

Sunday, April 26, 2020

## **Inversion**

I explained to her  
the emotion / the sadness  
on the musician's face  
does not precede to sad sounds  
but are caused by them  
the unexpected / unexplainable

Monday, April 27, 2020

## West Williams

I find it hard to remember  
parts of the houses I lived in  
like the mansion in Champaign  
a staircase went up  
the living room was sunken  
with arches around it  
the dining room table was large and heavy  
the kitchen old and bulky  
upstairs we had the room at the top  
the bathroom across the hall  
what else / not sure  
an old place / Jocko the capuchin  
lived here once



Tuesday, April 28, 2020

## Lie And Wait

programming concurrency hard  
even though we live in a world  
of chaos and get by without  
thinking / maybe it's because  
where we live we can see  
hear / otherwise sense

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

## Looking Afar

the perspective is too long  
the telephoto lens bringing  
in the far up too close  
so finding places on the map  
nearly impossible except  
using the heuristic  
always look too far away

Thursday, April 30, 2020

## Espresso Bar

the surging sea  
I wait by the rocks  
for either you or the high waves  
once wet we'll walk back  
to town for a lingering meal  
followed by tea for you  
something else for me  
you decided to become another granny  
in a rocker but since have thought  
of the surging sea and what it means  
to be

Friday, May 1, 2020

## Jasmine Knutson

the Jasmine Knutson  
sits offshore waiting  
for the right time  
to make Lerwick  
from the Fjarå cam  
it's an orange crescent  
behind a far peninsula  
the digital zoom makes it  
close and big as if  
life compressed became normal

Saturday, May 2, 2020

## Losing Is Not Hard To Do

most of my dreams are about loss  
trying to get somewhere  
trying to find something  
trying to retrieve something  
it's about not being exactly  
sometimes it's the large house  
strange or many rooms  
rambling / hard to navigate  
and in it I search  
loss really

Sunday, May 3, 2020

## Pie

the complex bit of writing  
not a poem not quite lyrics  
loss as everything is  
we hope everything that can  
have a meaning has a meaning  
the fascinating order  
we cannot turn for long  
away / it's the end of pretty

Monday, May 4, 2020

**50 in 50 end**

so there you have it  
a tandem talk  
a random walk  
less survey than picaresque  
we marvel at the potpourri  
the comely / homely / and grotesque  
we revel in variety  
in purpose / mischief / art / and craft  
we hope you've learned / improved your wit  
but if naught else / you've laughed  
you've cried

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

## Notan

balance of light and dark  
this is fine art  
how we appreciate art derives  
from our noses for dark / light  
light / dark / I've had lovers  
some were wives / light & dark  
dark & light / why do they  
all come to see me dark



Wednesday, May 6, 2020

## Murray Cooper from Fetlar

got the surprise of his life  
when his Zwarteables black ewe  
became a mother of four  
Avalina said Murray can you  
give me back those lambs  
I lent you / Murray said  
give me a chance to wash  
the black dye out

Thursday, May 7, 2020

## Our Private Trash Heap

I remember our private dump  
a little kid but I would go with  
my father would take bags and boxes  
garbage / trash 50 yards behind  
the house just past treeline  
just toss it on the pile  
let nature take care of it  
oil / bones / didn't matter  
on the pile it went  
the pile never grew much  
nature taking care of it  
animals too I guess  
think local / act local

Friday, May 8, 2020

## A Colourful Volley of Abuse

looking at legislation  
concerning coronavirus lockdown  
in Shetland I am wondering if trout  
fishermen in Shetland could be considered  
a special case

we belong to a certain sector of society  
whose mental health is considered  
by many to be in serious doubt

anyone who has seen us  
at the start of the trout season  
up to our oxters  
in the middle of a freezing loch  
with hailstones bouncing off our heads  
will bear witness to this

Saturday, May 9, 2020

## Scud

everyone describes nature  
the same / like clouds scudding  
makes them seem artistic they think  
but it makes them into monkey  
see monkey do / too new and it's  
like an insult / except the wind  
it never stops

Sunday, May 10, 2020

## -Be

in May it may snow  
in New England and pity  
the daffodils when it does  
the roads won't catch it  
likely / neither the grass greening  
nor the trees leafing  
but a camera set right might  
spot the spots of snow  
coming down like down  
down in May

Monday, May 11, 2020

## Pure Convex

I saw her just once  
the same time I heard a song  
I never heard again  
I cannot quite remember it  
but I remember it was smooth  
as a pure white convex stone  
the notes swimming into me  
as I waited in a waiting room  
for my eye doctor  
the feeling of both like the way  
the world ends

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

## How

we wonder how it's done  
now you paint  
now you write  
we are told how to prepare the canvas  
how to select the right software  
what kind of notebook to purchase  
then it's mix the paint  
dip the brush / stroke  
open the file / sharpen the pencil  
tap tap tap

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

## **Know Her**

the humble kitchen  
in a terrible town  
provides a woman  
with a place to thrive  
a place to be the boss  
she will cook bread  
using the same ingredients  
as every other woman  
in town / but all  
will know her bread



Thursday, May 14, 2020

## Hellar

when the ships head out the north end  
of the narrows between Shetland and Bressay  
you have to wonder what the wind is up to  
or the tides or other boats or swarms of fish  
or perhaps the boredom of a captain  
who has always gone south

Friday, May 15, 2020

## Great

I faced fear today  
but it perhaps was dehydration  
lots of water / now I feel better  
I wondered what it would be like  
to not be / no more nice breezes  
by the great river / no more nice  
naps by the great bridge

Saturday, May 16, 2020

## Tic

even if you know everything  
you might make the wrong decision  
learning a lot from a simple puzzle  
an example / I couldn't figure out  
what day today was

Sunday, May 17, 2020

## Tac

still not winning  
getting the data structures  
to line up right is not easy  
then probably some kind of minimax search  
not sure

Monday, May 18, 2020

## Staging

the street scene  
is it the streets and buildings  
a streetscape / just structures  
or is it the people and the street  
a theater / a stage  
for me it's a beautiful woman  
walking away

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

## Toe

after effort it works  
need to apply a simple game-tree logic  
need to know when a game is won or is a tie  
the concepts of win / tie / lose  
need to be there  
the notion of a game tree  
ending in monte carlo scores  
or win / lose / tie for backing up the tree  
then a random choice for tied values  
to make the machine player interesting

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

## Train All Night

in a sleeping car  
from Zurich to Florence  
Zürich to Firenze  
after a meal in the dining car  
we crept into our small wall beds  
we had our own bathroom  
they claimed  
tiny  
at different times the car would sway  
sounds of towns passing  
of train crossings  
at different times a clunk  
as we were disconnected  
shuttled to a side track  
voices shouting from afar  
whispering outside out window  
my small wife who planned it  
loved it

Thursday, May 21, 2020

## Melancholy

after the war  
many weak were commodities  
to work / to fuck / to be beaten  
they said you did things to stay alive  
even the beautiful were not immune  
the opposite  
along the far walls an audience of other people  
cheer



Friday, May 22, 2020

## Baked and Boiled

one time in Florence  
the nights were so hot  
no window / no fan  
I won't even mention the absent  
more extremes / I could not sleep  
no one could / the next day  
and the one after we'd see art  
and palaces / humble churches and strange sights  
the heat and Tuscan food unlike  
the stateside idea of Italian

Saturday, May 23, 2020

## With Kathy

Philo a dream from a greater past  
I remember not thinking  
what my future could be  
I had no ambitions then  
the present was fully present  
I spent every day spending every day  
I was not good at much  
but some saw talent / they had it wrong  
I was good at looking good

Sunday, May 24, 2020

## Out West

lonely as everything  
the plight of a friend  
I can't help him  
smart / educated  
esoteric thinker  
boring writer / boring speaker  
he is on a mountain far  
from everyone / lonely as everything

Monday, May 25, 2020

## **In From The Sea**

when the wind stutters by our windows  
after she's been sleeping for hours  
I sit up and toast the mice  
who've made their lives with us  
toast in a metaphorical form  
because when in bed the only thing to drink  
is the glory of pouting winds

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

## Shiloh

working slowly from puzzle  
to solution which is yet another puzzle  
like small typos / fix one  
make another / move forward

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

## On A Summer's Day

when the girl in the Mustang  
with California plates rolled through town  
Summer 1966 / or 1965 / we boys were laid low  
we were Beach Boys boys and all  
the leaves were brown  
no gray skies though / we followed her  
on bikes mostly but in a car sometimes  
we didn't follow as much as head  
the direction someone told us the Mustang  
had gone / the girl had brown hair  
we loved her in an instant  
we expected nothing except to see her  
how many times is this the ultimate  
the dream of men / just to see her  
clearly and not far away

Thursday, May 28, 2020

## Cucumber

I always think plants are amazing  
this is a cucumber  
but I'm going to grab a fence  
with a vine like the tentacles  
that stretched out  
and I'm going to go up to the top  
and I'm going to take a lot of sun light

Friday, May 29, 2020

## Five Lights

do you believe your eyes  
or your heroes  
there are five lights he says  
you say I see four lights  
this is the largest crowd ever he says  
you say it looks small  
with torment and torture and propaganda  
over and over  
there comes a fifth light



Saturday, May 30, 2020

## Limitless

a hard twilight alights  
ground up / I will grow alert  
when the cold snaps its fingertop branches  
the snow is ripped free and down  
on the fields stubbled brown  
when the road eventually permits sticking  
the fat cars will sway like virgins  
in brisk winds / I am alone  
the perfect setting has a fire behind me  
but instead only the dark of empty  
bedrooms / I put on the kettle  
behind me a bed creaks  
soon

Sunday, May 31, 2020

## TOS

in the remaster Star Trek TOS  
the colors are bonkersville  
perhaps oversaturated in the studio  
to offset the TV sets of the 60s  
remastered to capture the real world  
captures the thoughts of proportion  
made many decades ago  
how we compensate today  
will look like shit in 100

Monday, June 1, 2020

## Guitars

we rehearsed every week  
for decades / we never were good  
but people would dance  
we were a jam band because  
that's all I could do  
I was not a good player  
but I played my own style  
every song played different every time  
small differences amplified  
I would stare into the garage

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

## D'John

what if we don't make it  
what if this is the end  
of our country  
where will we go  
what will happen  
we have gone mad

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

## Uki

I found out  
that a small bug  
is going to happen  
in the bag / I decided  
to get the compo out

even so  
I'm going to collect raw  
garbage / put it in  
a con post / it's so much fun  
to be close to the feeling  
that I'm going to feed  
my pet compo  
wow

today is so much!  
it's like this is delicious  
even when it's uki  
it's more fun  
to be raised  
than I thought

Thursday, June 4, 2020

## Bit??

“unfinished”  
the powerful word of “unfinished”  
in this context is a blend  
into a song  
and it’s a bit  
of a bit of a bit  
of a bit of a bit  
of a bit of a bit  
of a bit of a bit  
of a bit  
of a bit

Friday, June 5, 2020

## On Thinking About A Chippy

on the shore of a lake  
or a river the panicked  
find a place to sleep  
listen to the water  
lap or slide past  
various sorts of across can work  
the other shore  
a bridge / I once saw a woman  
lose her pants over there  
the book on my lap half  
folded shut over my hand  
asks to be read or  
its writer asks / I wonder  
look it's just water  
I'm words / which of us  
is more like you

Saturday, June 6, 2020

## Gitche Gumee

sometimes simplicity  
don't work  
don't cut it  
don't fascinate  
the simple is for the simple  
something clean and pretty  
is only pretty clean  
not cleanly pretty  
Longfellow wept



Sunday, June 7, 2020

## Feather Duster

covered in dust  
years of working without stop  
books and papers piled  
how to clean it  
shelves / cables and me in the middle  
the dull sadness that surrounds debris

Monday, June 8, 2020

## Calm Waters

calm day / sun rising  
the islands are slabs of stone  
not a tree in sight  
peaty grass for unhappy sheep  
brambles and the occasional  
winter snow / my lady friend  
is from nearby islands  
her ancestors I mean  
this is what I tell her  
when there's nothing to write  
practice more or less  
seriously she says  
though the day is calm

Tuesday, June 9, 2020

## HOPL IV

with luck I'm done  
with that conference  
that journal at least  
a few years of very hard work  
my friend though  
will get all the credit  
so I plan to make sure  
he is the only one who can  
how to do it though  
is a question  
he will resist  
I have to sneak it past him

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

## Whittier Lies Here

Whittier was local  
buried to the east  
born to the west  
talking a couple miles each way  
he wrote when poetry was governed  
by silliness / when ordinary talking  
was ordinary / poems were remarkable  
Whittier thought / but he liked  
the place he lived and I do too  
something green and creepy about it  
not like anywhere else  
it is like me / like him

Thursday, June 11, 2020

## Every Bond

she came to our house  
with a small bag  
dressed plain and prim  
a place to change she asked  
my mother pointed to a bedroom  
when enough time passed  
she came out in a short tight skirt  
and sweater blouse in the same direction  
well we had our date in Boston  
Cat Stevens on the Common  
then the cemetery for nuzzling  
home and the reverse  
like the stacks I would learn  
about in computer science classes  
it sounds so romantic

she went on to marry someone else  
had a beautiful daughter  
died thirty years later of cancer  
I could have been the one  
to stand by her bed as she moved  
away forever

Friday, June 12, 2020

**Veluzat**

a small room  
cliché paintings of red barns  
and horses approaching a home  
at Christmas / a mission  
at the end of the street  
a flop bed / a small desk and chair  
a kerosene lamp and a bowl for washing  
I landed in a western town  
in Santa Clarita / I think  
it's a movie set

Saturday, June 13, 2020

## Great Ness

I plan my words with  
great carelessness  
my time like sand  
in the same box  
I imagine the rutted road  
leading now to nowhere  
once leading to the great  
city / its time  
like sand in a different box  
whom I've loved is not  
a matter of fact  
I am wrapped in harmless  
harnesses / I linger  
for her

Sunday, June 14, 2020

## Noticed

many of the colors  
when the sun is low down  
are not the usuals  
not so blue / not even  
so red / yellows / green  
Van Gogh was right when  
he said the colors that are there  
in our thoughts are not the ones  
there / I'm thinking that we write  
by gathering a pile of noticeds  
the more of them we have the richer  
our sentences and paragraphs  
the less the harder to write  
and the worse the writing  
the less the writer



Monday, June 15, 2020

## Shetland

light all night  
puffins out at midnight  
a place to go to be  
with old women  
the fish / the bad lamb  
the steep round hills  
stone houses / but livable  
a peaty love story

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

## Waltz To Illinois

I was his first phd student  
and I was left out of his memorial  
the ones who claimed him later  
claimed themselves ahead of me  
of all his students my risk  
was the greatest / we moved  
to a strange far away place  
with little hope of winning  
and we worked like hell  
to make it work / the later  
students did not care  
I tried hard to honor him  
they tried ok  
Dave Waltz / we moved to  
Central Illinois like  
heroes in a long-ago epic.

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

## **Peter's Store**

when the bird needed more spice  
they went to Peter Walls store over in Newton  
in their fancy car / Connie was home  
when they returned the house  
was burning / I can't remember the details  
I was not alive

Thursday, June 18, 2020

## Ugh

misery / not a fool  
but like one  
sad from talking  
voice uncertain  
maybe a fool after all  
I cannot move

Friday, June 19, 2020

## Silja

the world's aviation industry  
is more kibishi than I imagined  
selling blankets with unused brands  
and various ingenuity / I wonder  
if silja other than the so-called  
developed country will return  
to the state / it's not easy  
to be a demand revival

Saturday, June 20, 2020

## Hadley Road

the house was smaller inside  
than I remember  
it was insulated in places  
with newspapers / fiberglass cloth  
small rooms and a steep staircase  
kitchen hard to move around in  
a bar that separates kitchen  
from living room still with tile  
my father set / mold and decay  
the basement with a low ceiling  
stairs down to there hard to manage  
were we smaller then  
am I too large now  
the past seems to have a delicate  
sense of humor

Sunday, June 21, 2020

## Daughter

when they think to look for me  
they will never think of the right places to look  
even though I made no secret of them  
but they will not think or not  
want to look in every writing window  
even if they guess the right street  
the right time of year  
they might ask who has the best headphones  
who listens to the most music

Monday, June 22, 2020

## Near Mojave

a dog trots across an empty street  
this town is now no town  
on the other side he finds discarded wrappers  
finds a half burger and a pint of fries  
flies scatter / the dog is lean and worried  
no one has touched his fur in weeks  
the town is abandoned of people  
critters and predators are still here  
or are returning / the town is on the edge  
of a desert / the houses abandoned  
for political reasons



Tuesday, June 23, 2020

## Wrong House

the house is new and fresh  
just finished and every part  
is square and perfect  
the stucco lends a constancy  
to the outside walls  
the windows shine black in the noon sun  
the lines are crackling  
those who love perfection love this house  
I told the real estate agent  
to shove it

Wednesday, June 24, 2020

## Easy Feeling

the guitar chicken pickin'  
sends my feet swaying back  
to a time in the desert  
when the wife of a friend  
took me on a geology expedition

I had the jeep and trailer  
good for hauling equipment  
and what she found / a tent  
and cookware / we spent days  
looking / nights cooking  
what we found we either  
published or kept

Thursday, June 25, 2020

## Up Up and Away

I've walked close to rivers and bays  
docks nearby and a hard rock plate under the earth  
around me women wrapped in warm coats cruise by  
the hands locked in another's  
to call it loneliness is to make it too common  
emptiness is closer but still too human  
I am light the fog that rolling in  
tonight and that'll lift lifelessly away  
at dawn

Friday, June 26, 2020

## Hopìikwa 622

it looks like it's frozen to only a thin ice  
stone is quite thin  
a potter sometimes uses a hardened rind of squash to rub on her pottery piece  
some of the people who live on the other side of the Colorado are narrow-eyed  
the potsherds are scattered around here  
here's an antelope that's trapped  
the wind drifted trash over here alone  
clean up that trash pile over there  
the cornhusks have formed a drift  
the girl and her family go to the boy's home  
if he accepts the qömi this begins the process of marriage  
the deadfall trap rock should be heavy in order to be right  
you placed that on a slant  
she spat the chewed ingredient about two times into a bowl of batter  
oh my / our poor dishrack seems to have cracked  
the broken pottery was in piles all around

Saturday, June 27, 2020

**Hopiikwa 296**

this morning the caller went around  
from kiva to kiva to call for preparations  
for the stone-kicking race  
make the mud outside into ridges  
so the runoff water can't come in here  
you and your wife eat somewhat alike  
since I'm not comfortable living  
with my wife we are tending to go separate ways  
two women grabbed me from each side  
when he didn't paint his bullroarers  
the same he made their patterns  
different from each other

Sunday, June 28, 2020

**Hopìikwa 410**

when you go to feed your chickens  
you make sounds that way to them  
piipi pi pi  
then he slapped the coyote's fat  
onto the ants  
the children are being bad  
they're going around splattering  
the girls' behinds with ripe peaches  
when they were having the wedding mudfight  
the mud landed on the face of one of the old women  
they say if you want to be a fast short distance sprinter  
you practice it by running down a slight incline  
you're going around with something stuck to your bottom

Monday, June 29, 2020

## Hopìikwa 91

he provided his corn cob dart  
with a chicken wing feather  
I thought I ground a lot  
of ceremonial cornmeal  
it seems my shirt shrank  
I never eat dried sliced pears  
anywhere nowadays  
I'm singeing its wool because  
I'm going to roast the sheep's head  
when Old Spider Woman shrinks  
the land for the boy  
he'll get home right away

Tuesday, June 30, 2020

## Simple

as my life winds down  
I am living in a decaying country  
brought on by someone of my generation  
more or less  
he paints the world in lies  
there is no reality but only the fantasy  
of loss / in his world the losers  
of the past are the winners of today  
and all those losers voted for him  
to make themselves winners



Wednesday, July 1, 2020

## Hopìikwa 512

when it was the day for the hunt  
I was in jail  
it seems our mother is always looking  
for her seed jar  
this corn smut is used for black body paint  
save the seeds from the yellow-meat watermelon  
last night many of them were jailed  
he's going around from town to town  
serving jail sentences

Thursday, July 2, 2020

## **Reject**

you know how I write all these poems  
I really stink at it

Friday, July 3, 2020

## **Reject & Shun**

not better today  
cannot produce

Saturday, July 4, 2020

## Hey Baby

the hot days in Summer 1965  
late sunsets through trees to the west  
across the road / our land on both sides of it  
for quite a stretch / smell of cut grass  
mosquitos at dusk / bats at dusk  
what is hard to recall is the loneliness  
the random direction my life seemed destined for  
the unknown future / I was unafraid

Sunday, July 5, 2020

## Nil

mediocre in every way  
not special / not memorable  
after an inkling of greatness  
it all tapered off and I am  
left nobody

Monday, July 6, 2020

## Tiny Ideas

can you see the lonely lights  
on the horizon  
like tiny ideas that go nowhere  
the ones that remain  
we watch them  
turn away then watch them again  
we never finish watching them

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

## Hrossey

sometimes the ferry to Aberdeen  
goes north and then around Bressay  
sometimes you can see it from the Fjarå cam  
past the lighthouse  
when I watch the ferry head south  
I wonder about it coming  
north again

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

## **Fear Full**

everything a little mess today  
worried / things might go wrong  
unfair I say / what is wrong  
with me



Thursday, July 9, 2020

## **Done**

when things get interesting  
they never finish

Friday, July 10, 2020

## Street Dust

the streets are dusty  
the sidewalks barren  
a hot wind blowing in from the West  
I'm standing on a sheltered corner  
wishing someone would drive by  
the desert doesn't like us  
doesn't like much of anything  
when the thermometer hits 117  
thinking is out the window  
even the lizards shelter under cover  
the lizards are dusty

Saturday, July 11, 2020

## The Light

one day I'll walk from the old farm  
across the Merrimack to Meredith's and Kurkjian's old places  
maybe to Pentucket  
then I'll walk back stopping near the bridge  
not long after that someone nice to me for no good reason  
will bury me somewhere  
Linwood / Locust Street / tossed off Rocks Village  
I think I won't care  
the signalman swinging his lantern  
and the old farm brought back to new  
will keep those thoughts away

Sunday, July 12, 2020

## **Bad Luck**

wow  
things go wrong  
I find it hard to cope  
help

Monday, July 13, 2020

## Storm Day

hard rain / slow cars  
the streets empty / rain falls  
heavy rain / emotionally crippling rain  
a man walks down an alley toward a bigger street  
a woman walks down the bigger street toward the river  
the river drains fields and hills  
animals shelter in hidey-holes and nests  
hollow logs and engineered tunnels  
the slow cars worry her  
the hard rain slows him

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

## Homeless with Clear Air

the world slowed to a stop  
the air cleared and people could breathe  
but everyone was fired to save the companies  
the companies disappeared  
to make people feel better  
the worse off were hired by the city  
to be homeless

Wednesday, July 15, 2020

## Form Language

houses built alike  
every detail different  
all dimensions different  
different materials / colors  
nothing the same among them  
nevertheless all alike  
mysterious / like flowing clouds  
before an angled sun

Thursday, July 16, 2020

## **As If a Priest**

you said you'd visit  
come in the night when the moon  
was full / come in that October  
night when the frost refused  
to yield / I waited by the tree  
and then by the pond / awake  
I watched for you / then  
the moon dipped and the sun rose



Friday, July 17, 2020

## One or Two

we crouch by the brook  
oak leaves rustle above  
it's the breeze that summons  
evening / the light breeze  
of Summer / we squat  
by the sacred stream and wash  
our hands / our feet / our faces  
our selves and each other  
two as like one

fall approaches

Saturday, July 18, 2020

## Such Colors

late afternoon on a cool  
trending cold day  
the high bridge over the gorge  
reaches out  
a long-tailed magpie white and black  
trending blue drifts over the bridge  
away from me / the frost coats  
the bridge and ground  
as the evening turns old  
everything grows white

Sunday, July 19, 2020

## Autumn Night in Japan

walking behind her  
clouds abound this Autumn night  
she is invisible at the edge of the field  
but a wind pulls rifts / opens gaps  
in the clouds / moonlight seeps  
through and suddenly  
she is a bright-edged silhouette

Monday, July 20, 2020

## Sheltered Harvest

Autumn / I live simply  
my hut is crude  
its thatched roof leaks  
but at least the harvest  
is sheltered in the end of the hut  
closer to the sea / a sea  
that leaks into the inlets  
that wrinkle my mind  
my sleeve<sup>1</sup> is wet from dew  
or tears / my heart

---

<sup>1</sup>See Poem 90.

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

## Mountain Past

like the bird  
with a long tail feather  
dragging behind it  
at the edge of a field  
I drag my feet  
on this mountain pass  
ahead is my long night  
I wonder who will come  
no one? / sleep?

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

## Chocorua Mountain Highway

near Mt Chocorua  
at the sad end of  
Chocorua Lake alone  
I was taken by the white cloak  
covering the summit above  
taken by the still-falling snow

Thursday, July 23, 2020

## **Crimson Leaves**

from this hilltop  
I watch a higher ridge  
the leaves there gold and crimson  
a coyote howls  
I hear his pain / his desire  
the sound pushes through the leaves  
makes all clear  
Autumn is the time of sadness

Friday, July 24, 2020

## Stone Dark

night is a dark field  
darkened before me  
I stare into it and imagine  
a decaying stone croft  
the old woman who lived there I once knew  
I imagine also  
the croft and her standing next to it  
lit by this same rising moon



Saturday, July 25, 2020

## Skaw

I write in Unst  
atop a hill in a croft  
I remade overlooking  
a part of the North Sea

*he's abandoned us*  
I hear some people have said  
*for that desolation*  
*for that hilltop*  
for those words

Sunday, July 26, 2020

## Narrowing Road

along the narrow road  
these blossoms' colors  
have faded / their vanity evaporated  
their glory a past pleasure  
my worn body too  
now faces the longing  
the long long rains

Monday, July 27, 2020

## Hey

this pier is the place  
of leaving / returning  
parting from people  
some we know / some not  
how we know comes and goes  
with the tides

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

## Past Out Skerries

the sea beyond Bressay  
is an uncertain wavering meadow  
in my yoaI I ventured out  
now I wish I had begged  
someone left behind  
to tell those I left behind  
how a boat took me away

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

## Sky Paths

between me and the dancing girls  
a light fog has risen above  
the dip that separates me from them  
I cannot see them mostly  
I've called on a divine wind  
to come up from the west  
and close the paths the fog takes  
that I might watch them longer  
more intently

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Thursday, July 30, 2020

## Puzzle

she gave me her headscarf  
a printed pattern of tangled ferns  
green on bone  
a mixed feeling affair  
a love still secret

Friday, July 31, 2020

## Herbs

into the herb garden  
green in the Spring  
I go to get grandmother's herbs  
when I return to her kitchen  
her gray hair shining white  
I point to my sleeve  
the white flakes there  
I say it's the snow

Saturday, August 1, 2020

## Mountainous

she came to stand beside me  
from this ridge we looked  
to another / here just  
a meadow but there  
maples and pines  
she held her place  
I must go I told her  
but if you grieve  
and this I learn  
I will hasten to return  
with this the wind freshened



Sunday, August 2, 2020

## Light Fall

we walk  
she and I  
carefully along the shore  
in yellow sunlight  
all can see but who does  
we walk  
she and I  
carefully along the shore  
in crimson dreams  
we cannot hide our love  
either place  
waves approaching the shore  
carry nightfall  
yellow turns crimson

Monday, August 3, 2020

## Impossible Gap

I said goodbye to her  
along the rock shores  
south of the bay  
Autumn turning colder  
those stones so small  
the spaces between so small  
after that and other farewells  
we cannot share  
even that much time  
together / it is too close between

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

## Grief!

once upon a time  
the pieces of our love affair  
came like waves just before  
a great and furious storm  
instead now that drama has passed  
grief like a morning calm  
separates us as never before  
we can now never meet

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

## Storm and Destruction

storm  
mountain wind in late Autumn  
grass knocked flat  
trees whipped  
a deep-seated argument  
destruction  
branches broken  
windows shattered  
a love ended

Thursday, August 6, 2020

## Moon Viewing

the blue-tinged sky and moon within  
every one of those thousand things  
that make a thousand thoughts  
can bring tears  
alone I view all this

you / still

I'm not the only one  
whom Autumn affects this way

Friday, August 7, 2020

## Brocade

nothing in my pockets  
nothing in my sack  
above I fear the gods  
await my offering  
hoping for their usual pleasure  
all I have is what I see above me  
on this grave mountainside  
brocade of red and yellow leaves

Saturday, August 8, 2020

## Mount Rendezvous

I texted her  
please join me  
we call the tall hill  
Mount Rendezvous  
I needed her  
I needed to be wrapped  
around her like a voracious vine  
the name is perfect  
wool blanket on the peat  
both words / Mount Rendezvous

Sunday, August 9, 2020

## Past Snowfall

I asked Mt Chocorua  
to save my love  
she will arrive after the first  
snowfall / she will relent  
I know if the maples  
remain Autumn color  
even under a Winter tinge  
she is that poetic



Monday, August 10, 2020

## Meadow Near

you wouldn't think  
that rain here  
even rain that obstinate  
would froth the river so  
bright after rain  
I saw her walking on the far bank  
walk then stop  
let the river enter her memory  
then resume  
when will I see her again?

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

## **Worst Ever**

Winter desolation  
the day you left  
our high place on a mighty mountain  
you left down the mountain path  
I watched the grass wither  
as you went away

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

## Whiteness

tonight I want to bring  
her freshcut blossoms from the meadow  
by the quick river  
the colors to soften her

but the season's first frost  
has disguised the colored blooms  
as pure white chrysanthemums

it is now up to my heart  
to guess / yes to guess

Thursday, August 13, 2020

## In The Sunrise

moon setting at dawn  
throwing its light  
somewhere else  
a cold cold parting  
moon-drop took it all  
alone I watch them both  
daybreak brought nothing  
but your absent affection

Friday, August 14, 2020

## Light or White

we woke / light of dawn  
opposite the lingering moon  
outside our pearl-lit door  
Winter cold / we looked down on a vision  
of a white town by the harbor

no / wait

it is from the snow

Saturday, August 15, 2020

## **Many, Strong, Narrow, Shallow, Red**

many maples  
strong wind  
narrow mountain stream  
shallow stream  
now a small dam  
between the two banks  
the water blocked  
held captive  
by red maple leaves

Sunday, August 16, 2020

## Chaos Scattering

there is order  
in the eternal sky  
its light though fading  
still fills the day  
a Spring day  
are there degrees of perfect?  
still blooms scatter  
in what wind there is  
after they have added their  
distinctiveness to the perfection  
we cannot help  
fearing that chaos

Monday, August 17, 2020

## Merrimac Town

how many have I loved  
many and even more loved  
me I think  
death took them all  
Merrimac has pines  
as old as me  
but none of them  
are my friends



Tuesday, August 18, 2020

## Perfume

I believed she loved me  
those times in the back room  
in the Winter  
we stayed over by the shore  
her heart drifted  
since then mine has too  
still I return to find  
the old plum blooming  
the air full of its perfume

Wednesday, August 19, 2020

## **Moon Rest**

toward the red horizon  
sun arriving  
toward another red horizon  
moon departing  
a mid-Summer night  
it feels like early evening  
behind which cloud  
is the moon resting?

Thursday, August 20, 2020

## Autumn Field

in the field of timothy  
the flowerheads are glittering  
with dewdrops and shining white  
in the wind whipped field  
the sun sits them down in a line  
and to the two of us at the edge  
of the field they seem like  
scattered pearls snapped from a string  
trembling with surprise and delight

Friday, August 21, 2020

## She Hate Me

after years together  
you cast me aside  
you vowed to hate and despise  
in place of love and respect  
this doesn't bother me much  
I worry after you  
sacred vows people make  
sometimes eat away and haunt

Saturday, August 22, 2020

## Bamboo Hidden

my calm self  
is the tall coarse meadow grass  
my fiery love is bamboo  
I hide the one in the other  
to keep from you  
and everyone else  
my feelings / my desire  
how long can I continue  
in this mask?

Sunday, August 23, 2020

## Give Away

*who are you thinking about?*  
my face a new color  
as passion rises and falls  
I try to hide my feelings  
but exposed as they are  
everyone presumes to ask

Monday, August 24, 2020

## Boxed

I fell for the wrong woman  
that's what people tell me  
I wanted to keep it secret  
so my reputation's at risk  
what gave my feelings away?

Tuesday, August 25, 2020

## Tear-Soaked Sleeves

I promised her  
she promised back  
a ritual of tears wiped dry  
by sleeves / imagine it  
our love will endure  
despite this after all  
even if the last mountain  
is washed over by the sea



Wednesday, August 26, 2020

## **Afterwards**

they made me recall  
the feelings after  
the time together  
what I was like  
before we ever met

Thursday, August 27, 2020

## Good Always

enough sweetness  
has passed between us  
that an unhappy end  
would have no room  
for resentment or anger  
neither from her  
nor from me  
such were our meetings

Friday, August 28, 2020

## Expectations

as I ready for death  
I plan a solitude  
I notice pity from all around  
but they say it's kindness  
I've heard I'm stupid / a fool  
you have never shown me pity

Saturday, August 29, 2020

## Downstream

a small boat  
crossing an angry river  
near the straits / near the rocks  
the boatman can lose his rudder  
lose control / drift downstream

so with true love's path

Sunday, August 30, 2020

## Layered Creeping Vines

staying here so long  
a small hut not far  
from a layered forest  
creeping vines cover it  
and me / lost in loneliness  
I cannot see the world  
can hardly see myself  
cannot see what love  
that may have been  
is it Autumn yet?

Monday, August 31, 2020

## Slamming A Spire

one night my grief  
hit you like a windstorm  
seething into a stony crag  
you laughed it off  
for you it dissipated  
not for me  
now it's shattered / no parts still whole  
the passion I had  
once for you

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

## Lively Fire and Lovely

we placed good peat  
against the burnstone  
in our hearth / the one  
we've shared around  
for all our time together  
it burns slowly burns  
through the night  
as daybreak comes  
the flames have died down  
just as it is between us

Wednesday, September 2, 2020

## A Deal With God

before  
if you had needed it  
I would have given up  
my pitiful existence  
for your sake  
since  
our long life together  
is what I fully desire



Thursday, September 3, 2020

## **Artemisia Vulgaris or Mugwort**

even writing this  
could drive me to moxibustion  
to bring some relief  
to ward off evil spirits  
to stop my heart bleeding  
to purge my stomach of impurities  
to lure you in

but you remain unaffected  
by this fire in my feelings

Friday, September 4, 2020

## Dawn Paints

all night we did it  
every way anyone could think of  
dawn's pomegranate orange  
enshrines our love scene  
sure / sunset will return  
night will return  
I resent however  
the day's approach

Saturday, September 5, 2020

## Alone Ness

nights I sleep alone  
days there are empty rooms  
always I am sighing  
the last time you stayed here  
another season  
or one before that  
but what do you care

Sunday, September 6, 2020

## After Touch

sometimes we promise  
such as *I'll never leave you*  
when it's said now  
that's the moment I live in  
the future is just an idea  
prediction is just a guess  
I choose not to live beyond today

Monday, September 7, 2020

## **In A Narrow Valley**

up an old path  
up the side of an old mountain  
there was once a waterfall  
long long ago its source dried  
it's sound long long ago died  
but its name survives  
in stories / in stories still  
told today

Tuesday, September 8, 2020

## Memories Last

someone said  
*each world seeps into the next*  
a fade-out coupled with a fade-in  
in a too-short time I will so seep / so fade  
visit me once more  
one more meeting / my friend  
give me one more memory to take

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

## On My Street

from my stone-lined window  
on the cobbled street by the harbor  
on one of Winter's coldest evenings  
I thought I saw an old friend  
coming to visit but instead  
she disappeared into  
midnight's moonlight

Thursday, September 10, 2020

## **The Farm / A Field**

on a farm I once loved  
in field of full-grown timothy  
a wind is blowing  
the rustle of a woman listing past  
how could I forget you



Friday, September 11, 2020

## Until

were you supposed  
to arrive / I waited up  
I should have slept  
that would have been better  
the evening collapsed around me  
sitting up / lying down  
at last the moon set

Saturday, September 12, 2020

## Obscurity

from one far place  
to another far place  
the trip is long and requires  
a note from Mother  
I didn't take the trip  
I didn't even go to Heaven's Bridge<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>*Ama-no-Hashidate* ("Bridge to Heaven") is a wooded sandbar crossing Miyazu Bay in northern Kyoto Prefecture—considered one of the three finest views in Japan.

Sunday, September 13, 2020

## **Eight Then Nine**

imagine the most fragrant  
flowers perhaps jasmine  
or cherry blossoms eightfold  
more fragrant than you can recall  
then imagine those blossoms  
blessing your marriage bed  
with their fine perfume  
imagine the woman who deserves this

Monday, September 14, 2020

## Or A Gate

sunrise is hours away  
your side of the bed is cooling  
you said you heard a rooster  
outside the window  
you got up and opened  
the back door / a ploy  
to leave me / the first  
ferry off the island  
leaves at dawn

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

## Card

I sent her a card  
picked out from a forlorn storefront  
telling her my passion's  
been ordered dropped  
by the other  
it was a card of grief  
sending my sympathy  
better that than  
face to face

Wednesday, September 16, 2020

## **Fish And Mist**

I woke before dawn  
dawn's light held  
over the river mist  
little by little  
I could see the tops  
of wooden stakes  
come into view  
fishing weirs

I thought of you

Thursday, September 17, 2020

## Wet and Rotten

a bad idea / was  
me and you  
I cry into my sleeves  
tear-soaked sleeves  
our love is rotten too  
grief and resentment  
equals my life today  
my good name  
who cares any more

Friday, September 18, 2020

## Don't We

we shared our mourning space  
by the rock shelf by the sea  
we shared our dissolved friend  
in a pool melancholy  
not far away a lady slipper  
under a short pine  
her pink petal like a pouch  
more dear to me now  
than any person  
living or not



Saturday, September 19, 2020

## Pointless

some things should not be loved  
you dear are one of those  
my reputation would be out the window  
had I realized the dream I had  
last early Spring when the nights  
were still short / to lay  
my head on your arm

Sunday, September 20, 2020

## After She Left

what I want and how I feel  
don't fit well  
in our crude flawed fleeting world  
I want more / for example  
lonely moonlight at midnight

Monday, September 21, 2020

## **A Brutal Gust**

after a long love  
things remained unsettled  
Autumn / maples red to yellow  
a storm came running up  
blew those leaves into our river  
my river / a long beautiful brocade

Tuesday, September 22, 2020

## And You?

as twilight deepens  
a mist rises from the just-cut field  
in my small hut my loneliness  
likewise deepens / I rise  
to go outside / all around  
all is the same in a washed out  
gray way / bleak Autumn twilight

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

## **In The Evening**

from across the fields  
from roads radiating away from me  
tumbleweeds come calling  
knocking against my windows  
my doors / the winds of Autumn blow

Thursday, September 24, 2020

## You Beach

the coast has tough waves  
capricious / they approach strangely  
without warning / I don't play  
with them / I won't play  
with you / I'll avoid wet  
salty sleeves

Friday, September 25, 2020

## Don't Dare

this Autumn the leaves  
are full colored and hanging  
on branches on mountains  
the morning draws mists  
from the fields and from hillsides  
I plead with them  
do not block my view

Saturday, September 26, 2020

## A Place

there's a rise near the sea  
where lovers love and storms  
empty their careless thoughtless  
mean tempests / my long gone  
love was like that rise  
a hoarse withering blast  
after or before a still  
repose / this is not  
what I prayed for



Sunday, September 27, 2020

## Your Promise

what you told me means nothing  
just sweat to keep evil away  
I swear grief has overtaken me  
this Autumn / but the season  
will soon pass

Monday, September 28, 2020

## Indistinguishable

have you noticed  
that the distant sky  
its clouds / the white-capped  
far sea-plain cannot be seen  
apart / may we travel like this

Tuesday, September 29, 2020

## Trust

the river / our canoe trip  
rapids / the rock  
blocking / dividing  
steep cascades / falls  
we separated / we will  
be united

Wednesday, September 30, 2020

## **Crow Sounds**

ravens make their calls  
in many voices  
constantly / through the years  
gatekeepers and watchers  
awaken at the sound

Thursday, October 1, 2020

## Darkening Shetland

over Lerwick harbor  
fall winds pull apart  
clouds forming rifts  
and slits / gaps  
through them the moonlight  
gets skinny / slips thought  
forming bright-edged silhouettes

Friday, October 2, 2020

## She

my black hair's undone  
unraveling in disarray  
how long will it last  
my heart has no ideas  
especially not this one  
the morning is wondering  
as am I / as are my emotions

Saturday, October 3, 2020

## Daybreak

a mockingbird sings  
from the firethorn bush  
I look for him / his  
song a collage / but  
the only thing left to find  
is the shining daybreak moon

Sunday, October 4, 2020

## **Mortal Life**

what you did / such grief  
my life continues / this one at least  
I'd leave all behind  
I resist the melancholy you prescribed  
even so tears arrive



Monday, October 5, 2020

## Stags and Others

every path is wide with pain  
I've retreated to a high meadow  
far from the sea / from you  
even the beasts cry with pain  
I endure them all with my stillness

Tuesday, October 6, 2020

## Now As Then

troubles abound now  
as in the past  
back then mean  
hard / fear-filled days  
filled every void  
but now are recalled in nostalgia  
today's trouble will be also  
given enough time

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

## **Anxious**

I lie in bed  
eyes open / waiting  
for night to end  
sunrise never comes  
a curtain blocks the light  
such a heartless companion

Thursday, October 8, 2020

## Surrender

sometimes I listen to the moon  
it tells me to grieve  
sometimes I listen to the rest of nature  
it tells me to grieve  
sometimes it seems like an obsession

but in the end  
my grumbling troubled face  
surrenders / the tears

Friday, October 9, 2020

## With Sadness Comes

not dry yet  
drops from the rain  
receding to the east  
rest on needles  
a fog starts to rise  
up into the Autumn twilight

Saturday, October 10, 2020

## Near a Cold Bay

when we traveled  
those islands and we stopped  
one night for a quick rest  
a short candle was enough for getting ready  
in the end we were together  
a quick passionate act  
how did that cement us?

Sunday, October 11, 2020

## Strands

she said her necklace of jewels  
has weakened / is fragile  
dropping stones at any jiggle  
she says she's lived a long time  
kept her emotions hidden  
and I know she has  
she says she can feel  
herself grow frail  
and I know she can

Monday, October 12, 2020

## Pearls

in Japan  
tears on one's sleeves  
means hard emotions  
in Japan  
some hard women  
have difficult work  
pearl diving  
their sleeves are always wet  
when hard emotions come  
the colors don't ever change



Tuesday, October 13, 2020

## Past Summer

I laid out my robe  
on our sometimes bed  
outside cracked windows  
a cricket makes his clatter  
the night frosty  
as is his song  
I wonder / perhaps I should ask  
*do I sleep alone tonight?*

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

## Ever In Repose

in the metaphor of our love  
even when the tide is low  
my sleeves are wet  
my eyes fill with tears so full  
they seem only large eyes not wet eyes  
low tide and no sandbar to the stone island  
you are unable to grasp  
my sleeves will never dry

Thursday, October 15, 2020

## How It Might End

offshore boats pass  
fishing crews have been pulling  
in their lines / their nets  
the bay is a dream / the world  
is part of the dream  
in all a lovely scene  
and sad

Friday, October 16, 2020

## Persistence

Autumn keeps on into the evening  
pulled down from the mountain back there  
by the shore people from town  
pound their clothes with rocks and sticks  
making what they wear gather full  
into a sheen

Saturday, October 17, 2020

## Wet and White

Spring has gone by  
Summer has sprung up  
on a line as if between the two  
our clothes are draped for drying  
everything is blinding white and mysterious  
near a sacred mountain  
whose name has been forgotten

Sunday, October 18, 2020

## Forked River

I have two minds  
from a doubled peak  
ideas tumble and flow  
one is about love  
the others are about you  
my desire for you  
is trapped in a deep pool  
is it a passionate pool?

Monday, October 19, 2020

## Long Red Road

one day a big wind  
came down our valley  
maples red and yellow  
leaning out over a slow  
part of the river  
dropped their reds  
the yellows hung on  
like lovers reluctant  
about the logic of love  
the river flowed crimson  
a thousand year thing

Tuesday, October 20, 2020

## And Then He Found Me

I visited a monk  
I once knew as a kid  
he turned away from the promise  
of shallow living  
a sensual life  
he had read all the books  
as that kid / books I could not approach  
he said he learned the life  
found there would be peaceless  
when I last saw him  
he was black robed  
I turned away



Wednesday, October 21, 2020

## Above a Harbor

a figure passed by  
in a garden nearby  
white flowers and all sorts  
a storm just passed  
and my thought was snow  
passing / a storm  
my life / you  
maybe / maybe not

Thursday, October 22, 2020

## Near Vidlin

boiling down North Sea water  
to rescue salt / but the heat  
rises too and that suffering  
joins the wasted wait  
in the twilight calm  
for her to arrive

Friday, October 23, 2020

## **When All Is Said / Sad**

life is an emotion  
made from experiences  
here are two  
I've loved some  
I've hated some  
now life has little  
appeal for me

Saturday, October 24, 2020

## That Only Road

now I'm left in this small hut  
in woods far from the sea of my days  
the day I first looked out our bedroom  
window I saw through the maples and pines  
a road / the road that came from the sea  
alone / the hut is hidden by countless  
ferns but if I could count  
them they'd number fewer  
than the memories I carry

Sunday, October 25, 2020

## Hero

it's been a long time  
since I've been in the middle  
of a long time since I've been  
in the middle of a long time  
since I've been in the middle  
of a long time since I've been  
in the middle of a awesome

the tires are thick  
and the air pressure is low  
but it's fast and comfortable

Monday, October 26, 2020

## Northern Time

mirrie dancers alight above  
our croft / she as usual asleep  
outside alone I walk along  
the edge of an achadh<sup>3</sup>  
watch them twitter and mutter  
a reminder of my past  
a green glow against a dark  
star-dotted landscape

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<sup>3</sup>field

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

**Di Prima's Gift (1934–2020)**

I bedded down near  
a simple house where  
a famous poet died recently  
I knew her work but didn't favor it  
a simple way of speaking  
a well-known plainness many aspire to  
I will take my cue from her  
a sort of quote  
a cure

overnight the snow came cupped  
in the hollows above and below  
my simple house  
my long white candles lit  
to show wanderers the way to me  
cups / hollows / candle lines  
white silence filled all her  
and my contours

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

## Olden Glass

my window's old  
not washed in years  
except for the hard spray  
of slanted rain or stray  
waves blown by a too-hard wind  
and it's made crudely  
filled with imperfections  
that render outdoor scenes  
childish poems

I spotted you  
one day wandering toward  
my place along the ridge  
that separates here from there  
my window had an opinion



Thursday, October 29, 2020

## Snow / Eyes

I won't make the first snow  
New England / still October  
instead doctors will look at my eyes  
you all know how afraid of that I am  
with no sight I have little reason  
to / well / you know  
the snow tomorrow will cover  
my old world / make what's indoors  
a strong warmth / I will be shivering  
all day

Friday, October 30, 2020

## **Eyes / Snow**

today I proved my pessimism  
correct / a problem with my eyes  
but repaired / sort of  
the procedure hurt like  
when I was a kid / I am now  
worried about the future  
as always / pessimistic

btw it snowed back home

Saturday, October 31, 2020

## Birthdays Far Away

after a year away  
I hardly can remember  
the warmth by the river  
sitting with windows open  
dozing and the breeze  
filled with river smell  
and grass and tree smells  
the people fishing downstream  
the green bridge waiting to carry  
everything ever from one side  
to the other / the place I imagine  
dying

Sunday, November 1, 2020

## No More

a few years back we sat in my car  
a cold November late afternoon  
by the river I always sit by  
and we talked for hours  
shivering at times but chaste  
not a touch / not a hint  
across the river cars drove  
down the dead-end road and parked  
a party or dinner or a family thing  
the wind blew decently hard  
and still we shivered without touch  
finally we had a good meal  
at a local place / once a bank  
and though it was plain and a little sterile  
she said it was real / I wondered  
still wonder / what is real?

Monday, November 2, 2020

## Time To Read

I sat by the river one late Summer day  
downstream a family was fishing  
a warm day / calm  
aside from cars crossing the bridge  
it was quiet / not even  
many birds / a fish jumping sometimes  
I must have fallen asleep  
it had grown dark

even with no love  
I still miss her

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

## Too Afraid To Watch

tonight the moon rose orange  
behind the black limbs of trees  
the earth spinning made its climb visible  
outside it was cool / maybe cold  
I worried about life and love  
as I emptied the trash and such  
into bins by the road  
an everyday thing  
complicated by history

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

## Walk

this road will lead  
along the river to a wash-out  
Cobbler Brook ends near here  
I've never walked it but  
I will / a last thing  
a lasting thing  
a start of sorts at the headwaters  
such a funny way to put it  
an end of sorts where it meets  
the Merrimack which flows to the Atlantic  
then on the back of the Gulf Stream  
toward Eshaness / maybe good poetry  
lies in this

Thursday, November 5, 2020

## Saying No

I had to turn down  
a request to review  
of a lost friend's paper  
like the Terminator's eyes  
at the sad ends of his movies  
I fade to black



Friday, November 6, 2020

## L'Anguish

with the darkness comes a memory  
love of twilight and the arrival  
of Winter / it connotes an attraction  
to endings / beginnings it seems  
are forgotten as if a lifting fog  
I spent a lot of time doing nothing  
as a child / reading but only in snippets  
attention hard to contain  
with darkness comes defeat / driving  
back roads / hoping for a dream  
to appear

Saturday, November 7, 2020

## **This**

after a long day she left  
me alone in our distant house  
above a bay lined with rock cliffs  
northern lights tell me I'm near home  
night fell early as it does in Winter  
I lit a candle / it wavered in stray drafts  
but she had left and all's left are books  
I never got to

after some time passed  
the candle burned to a stump  
a final puff and it was out

Sunday, November 8, 2020

## She Who?

they found a picture in an old attic  
in a wooden box that should have been burned  
after a detailed investigation they determined  
it was my mother at an age when men would stop  
some disagreed and others pointed out  
the houses blurred behind her and the notions  
of cars nearly off the frame made that impossible  
that it was instead my wife / one of them  
the first some said / others the third  
I couldn't say because all had left  
and when the doors bang-banged shut  
for them all was forgiven / for me  
all forgotten

Monday, November 9, 2020

## Promised Land

we bought snacks for our hike's  
destination rest / chips but  
the British kind / we came upon  
a Bronze age settlement / oval houses  
with thick stone walls well settled  
into the earth from the pressure of time  
we had our snack while the sky  
remained a similar blue  
to Bronze age blue

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

## Sentenced To Love

I fell in love this evening  
with a lovely sentence  
it started in a metaphorical  
direction then was galvanized  
with side thoughts and brute  
interruptions / like a snake  
it slithered up the trunk  
of my ego and lodged  
itself in my dream state  
after a page of turns  
its period stopped it  
and me in our tracks

Wednesday, November 11, 2020

## Blinding

some good looking women kissed  
me in the past / some did more  
my inside insight was so bad  
I couldn't connect any dots  
and still is / I married some  
of them / almost all eventually  
walked away / some are getting  
ready for that / it's because  
the forests I approach have dark  
understories I cannot observe  
am too farfetched even to guess  
about them / and such things  
are also women

Thursday, November 12, 2020

## St Olaf's Kirk

Lund Kirk in Unst  
has the saddest juxtaposition  
old and new headstones  
by the ruins of St Olaf's  
nearby Burn of Vigga  
and a sandy arc of beach  
church of stone so old  
headstones are inside

Friday, November 13, 2020

## Not Real

you have seen her in these poems  
a secret other whom I love  
but she is wistfully not lovable  
at least not by me / she is sometimes  
one real woman / sometimes another  
sometimes several rolled into one  
sometimes a photo I found on the Net  
I have always had such an other  
several times I made them real  
usually I don't because I'm not real  
enough



Saturday, November 14, 2020

## Leaving

she's put on her light  
makeup / reddend her lips  
with lipstick / now she waters  
the plants by the wall in her yard  
after she's waited and he's  
not come she packs her purse  
puts on a coat / she wanders  
then walks with intent to the other  
who waits

Sunday, November 15, 2020

## Underland

now that everything is knowable  
on the Net I can check all the facts  
like *"Close by, fresher petals spilled  
across a newer mound—the grave of  
Bonnie Jean Ashida, the Ashidas'  
elder daughter, who while visiting  
Garden City had been killed  
in a car collision."*

nearby in a different cemetery  
Sunset Memorial Gardens not  
Valley View / and Coleen Whitehurst  
not Colleen / the search for facts  
goes on because mystery has a deep  
underland

Monday, November 16, 2020

## Lerwick Looking

for years I've watched webcams  
in Lerwick / night time there  
I've looked for people in windows  
standing / walking / sitting / watching  
never saw anyone / some buildings  
are homes / some businesses  
no one / is there no sadness there?

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

## Just Say It

yesterday I wrote  
that I'd never seen anyone  
in a window in Lerwick  
via webcam at night  
right after writing that poem  
I saw someone in a window  
in Lerwick via webcam  
at night

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

## Off The Coast

the heavy rains flooded  
some shops and roads were closed  
the tide came up high  
it made me want to read while warm  
want to be unfindable  
to unweave and withstand  
high wind speeds

Thursday, November 19, 2020

## **Baz**

I'm fragile when  
it comes to bad news  
I will not sleep for nights  
I will mope for days  
I will simply  
do nothing

Friday, November 20, 2020

## **Almost Winter**

some have decided to hurry home  
the rain has prompted thoughts  
of a hard wet on the world  
others have decided to slow down  
keep the rain on their heads  
away from the faces / their chests  
no matter / whoever wants me  
has stayed home / stayed dry  
the wind / the wet / the wishes

Saturday, November 21, 2020

## **Eshanness In November**

the waves on sharped rocks  
near and at the bases  
of tall gritty cliffs  
fly up over the tops  
of those cliffs  
and soak small ponds of salt water  
on the downward away-from-cliff meadows

scattered are large rocks  
same kind as the rocks below  
some say they got here the  
same way the salt water did  
as puzzling as first-sight love



Sunday, November 22, 2020

## Kolyma Highway

fitting today  
for the shop owner  
to stand in the snow and stubble  
of a prisoner graveyard  
in a former forced-labor camp  
he gazes in sadness  
the ground before and beneath  
him / he has built an orthodox  
cross of rough wood he's cut himself

when the snow melts or mining work  
disturbs the frozen earth  
the buried past sometimes still  
surges to the surface along the road  
the sky is almost blue

Monday, November 23, 2020

## What Is A Brain For?

when I try to teach them  
they try to forget  
they store up a stash  
of forgotten things  
and exchange them  
for my new ideas  
I was going to say  
a lot more / I've  
forgotten what

Tuesday, November 24, 2020

## **Black Water**

outside my car the river  
sweeps past / late November  
dark unto midnight  
just a little swish  
or a bubble rising  
across lights are on but  
shutting off a bit at a time  
I've been alone here for hours  
dozing then attending  
above points over black  
the days seems butter

Wednesday, November 25, 2020

## What Can This Mean?

out behind the back fields  
a woods sloping down toward NH  
the stonewall there I thought  
was the border likely wasn't  
when I could drive back then  
I could drive big distances  
without concern for time  
I invented a way to get from  
the road to that stonewall  
in the middle of darkness  
twice within one night  
from far away

Thursday, November 26, 2020

## My Other

my other has moved on  
or I've moved on from her  
she is part real but  
mostly fiction / when  
you read my poems  
especially the Shetland ones  
you will see her haunting  
and looming / she is  
the other who pushes against  
my melancholy to make  
a joyful noise

Friday, November 27, 2020

## 1007 South Cottage Grove

in our small house  
middle of a prairie state  
we lived like trolls for a year  
some would say it was an emblem  
of my fate / a stillness  
a sadness

Saturday, November 28, 2020

## Long Ago Boat

obsession cannot fatigue  
the longest day is the one of fear  
when old photos are shown  
we see the sepia never the tears  
the cute trolley has the tow car  
behind it / the snow is always  
too deep / the trolley always  
too close to the river when off  
its tracks / the Titanic is heroically  
flattened and dispersed / those who  
lived to tell the tale are heroically  
flattened in our obsessed memories

Sunday, November 29, 2020

## Character

the past can't remember us  
it's filled with off-color ideas  
the characters we invent  
are as real as we are  
we should choose our words more carefully  
they say who we are even as we say them



Monday, November 30, 2020

## Onward! Hacking

the slow work of coding  
slowly dawning and all that  
more testing to do but first  
how to test / I'd rather  
be writing poems  
right?

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

## Needs Fixed

everything has its WTF moments  
when an explanation cannot take hold  
when incremental improvements bring  
catastrophic errors / you wind your way  
around them / they are like sudden  
monoliths in the canyons / reflective  
steel in red rock and dirt  
I can always wind around the thing  
but does anything ever fixed?

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

## Still

Winter light has it right  
slanted and dim  
the green is not winning  
peat is building up  
it looks cold but it's a mild cold  
dirt tracks are mud tracks  
what snow comes comes in chunks  
today is a strange day  
still

Thursday, December 3, 2020

## Standby Mode

as I sit here and type this in  
I feel my circle closing  
I feel the effects of years  
my curiosity remains  
I will proceed

Friday, December 4, 2020

## Willing or Not

I was willing to believe  
that sitting cold in a car  
by the river would make things work  
that being warm would overtake the resentment  
instead we watched the water flow  
downstream as the cars heading  
to the party drove up  
a good meal later was all  
we could manage

Saturday, December 5, 2020

## Boyhood Fantasy

under the pine branches  
only stray flakes fall  
I've made a small fire  
in the woods / New England  
wintertime of course  
the fire's made of dried  
pine branches snapped short and soon  
I'll find no more / a sad scene  
you think / I am less than  
a hundred yards from my warm house  
and warm bed

Sunday, December 6, 2020

## Town Square

not many times have I  
stood in Merrimac Square  
and watched Merrimac go by  
I lived on the western edge  
of that town / the enclave  
I knew no one / no one knew me  
a symmetry to it by all accounts  
these days when there I simply  
drive through / hardly notice  
anything / anyone

Monday, December 7, 2020

## Givens

some say giving is the hardest thing  
to give up / give away / give to  
the result is a lessness / some say  
some are given to despair / to anger  
who gives them in this bargain  
who gives a damn



Tuesday, December 8, 2020

## Time Attacks

I walked toward the restaurant  
from the Square / she came up the street  
from the other side / we didn't see  
each other / I stopped on the Square side  
looked in to see her / I was late / very  
late / she stopped on the other street side  
looked in to see me / she was late / very  
late / driving back to my friends' place  
in the dark in December in New England  
I regretted what time had done to us

Wednesday, December 9, 2020

## Strange Mysteries

let's talk about the strange mysteries  
that launch questions about how to  
I often pause to eat at the wrong times  
then I am unable to delve the mysteries  
once I bought too much beach pizza  
and drove from promising spot  
to promising spot to eat alone  
but always the crowd gathered  
strange

Thursday, December 10, 2020

## Ferry Crossing

I waited on the dock for her  
ferry to arrive / she of sea sickness  
and reluctance / the wind was up  
the tide too and waves sprayed  
me over and over / Winter night  
when I thought the last person off  
the boat I waited some more  
later dawn come over me

Friday, December 11, 2020

## **Lawsuits**

the goal is to build pressure  
keep pressure up as long as possible  
then use it to make a change  
establish order after chaos  
after turbulence

Saturday, December 12, 2020

## Steamed

we sat at a corner table  
deep in November up north  
the kitchen was just a bar away  
the windows were steamed  
to opalescence / the meal was heavy  
we sat for hours by the river  
then this / the next day  
she'd depart and I never  
saw her again / oh  
we talked and skyped / all that  
but never within breathing distance  
the windows we looked out  
became our definition

Sunday, December 13, 2020

## Huxter Whalsay

the house and yard  
a lined by lights  
Christmas on Whalsay  
shot to blackness all around  
it's like a line drawing  
floating on a carpet  
you can't see Shetland  
in this photo but  
you can see the tears of hope  
Christmas after a year of hell  
a year of waiting

Monday, December 14, 2020

## Farm Pond

I used to skate on a pond  
on our farm / I used to catch  
frogs there in Summer / what  
does it mean for a boy to have  
a world all his own

later like wet sleeves  
in a Japanese poem  
the love that implied  
would be lost

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

## Cold Separation

did it all appear  
when you were looking  
for the little restaurant  
or were things too creepy  
or underlandish / you  
never said the positive words  
and your demeanor was always  
centered on jokes / I felt  
like the little spider  
afraid to approach



Wednesday, December 16, 2020

## Perfect Day

we listened to the water  
ease past where we sat  
on the bank of my river  
we never spoke  
later we walked up the hill  
then over the to cemetery  
where we placed rocks  
on the black headstone  
of Andre Dubus  
we never spoke

Thursday, December 17, 2020

## Strokes

the beauty of the harsh and vague  
paintings that capture the starch  
that holds meaning together define  
colors and strokes that keep us  
as close to being people as people  
can be

Friday, December 18, 2020

## Wang's Table

the restaurant claimed Chinese  
it seemed in an old bank building  
on Merrimack Street Haverhill  
most people were at the bar  
when the waitress approached  
my friend asked for oolong  
though the waitress looked Asian  
she said what's that / the beginning  
of the worst meal

Saturday, December 19, 2020

## Ohio

she followed I guess  
her heart / married  
into some wealth but  
maybe she wasn't all  
up to it / all I know  
is later she married a picker  
I didn't know what that meant  
perhaps the word is not  
quite right / dump picker  
is what I heard but  
it could have been more  
like an antique finder  
after all that she decided  
to go Jehovah's W  
now she's just a woman  
an old one / in Ohio

Sunday, December 20, 2020

## Surviving Winter

it doesn't take much  
powder snow on a roof  
to make for a swirling curtain off a roof  
when the wind's right  
a light on a pole  
in the space between  
house and barn makes  
it seem like warmth  
returning / that blown snow  
I wonder what warmth  
will find me tonight

Monday, December 21, 2020

## **In Winter**

I took comfort in snow  
the inverse blanket  
over the fields  
the paths made with stealth  
but plain as scripture  
sometimes we cut deep  
trails from house to barn  
from garage to shed  
trenches / the war  
though was our hesitations

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

## Not Me

all the writers at my school  
loved each other then  
love each other now  
back then they didn't much  
like me / and it's the same now  
I suppose this means something  
I wonder whether it's important

Wednesday, December 23, 2020

## Christmas Thinking

princess pines in a bushel basket  
then tying them onto rounded coat  
hangers / some pine cones and a sprig  
of holly / nothing fancy for Christmas  
we were poor / our hopes were modest  
and we shied away from them  
the snow packed blue in our memories  
we were always alone



Thursday, December 24, 2020

## Toy

I could hardly sleep  
15 and still expecting Santa  
it was the year I got the most toys  
our tree from the town forest  
don't tell anyone / and my best  
toy was a bulldog tank with a small motor  
how much older did I ever get

Friday, December 25, 2020

## Night Patrol

in Lerwick a rough tree stands  
in Market Cross / covered in mostly  
blue and green lights / as usual  
it's raining and windy / as I  
write this it's 2:22am / not  
many boats are sailing  
if all's well someone is waiting  
for someone important

Saturday, December 26, 2020

## Reminisce

eating at Skip's  
a hamburger and suzi-q fries  
large lemonade no ice  
in the grove outside  
with grey tables / builtin  
bench seats / tear one side  
of the bag open / two tears  
to get to the fries  
eat them all then the burger  
or two / watch the clouds  
the trees sway at the border  
of the cruise night fieldI traveled across the country  
and rented a car to do this

Sunday, December 27, 2020

## Freezing Problem

as I age problems  
bother me more  
I was raised to hope  
for safety / a problem  
sometimes freezes me  
perhaps if I simplified  
somehow

Monday, December 28, 2020

## Leaving

I stood on the dock  
she stood by the rail  
I waved to her  
she looked away

Tuesday, December 29, 2020

## Awaiting

the moon gets it wrong  
every month / the moon  
believes it is the source  
of light for people on earth  
a strange idea posing as fiction  
when liars depart truth  
sneaks back

Wednesday, December 30, 2020

## The Edit

I live in a word world  
the l in world come from life  
and is stuck in word

Thursday, December 31, 2020

## Last Couple

midnight arrived at Market Cross  
Lerwick / the tree blown by small  
breezes waves / its lights swing  
no one celebrates

12:01 a millennial couple arrives  
the pavers are wet / they look about  
to celebrate / no one  
they pull out their phones and gaze  
at them / after a minute  
they walk away toward  
the yellow lit dock



# 100 Poems Imitating 100 Translations



Richard P. Gabriel

December 30, 2020

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## What Is This?—An Introduction

THESE poems are responses to / retellings of the translations of 100 classic Japanese poems by my good friend John Gribble, published in “100 Poets, One Song Each: The *Ogawa Hyakunin Isshu* of Fujiwara no Teika.” Each of my poems responds to one in his book, in the same order.

For each poem, I first copied it into a text editor, and then I permitted it to sit in my mind—or perhaps more accurately I allowed it to work its spell on me. Then I tried to write a poem that captured the mood and essence of the original but adapted to my life and circumstances. I tried to retain some link—either a word, phrase, or notion—from the original. I did not try to retain any of the formal structure.

Most of the landscape imagery derives from Shetland, the Merrimack Valley of Massachusetts, and New England; some is from Japan; and one is from Holcomb, Kansas, where the wind never stops.

A translation of a poem is an imitation: a poem in one language imitating one in another. My poems are in the language of my experiences, my language—so my poems here are translations of translations, and perhaps they could be appropriately called *100 Imitations of 100 Imitations*.

### Background

The *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu* is an anthology of one hundred *waka* or *tanka*, short poems compiled by poet-scholar Fujiwara no Teika some time in the 1230s CE. A concise collection, it includes “perfectly turned verse” on the natural world. It is an excellent introduction to Classical Japanese poetry.

Fujiwara no Teika (1162–1241) was a leading literary figure of his time. He was not only a significant poet, but an acknowledged expert on literature and language. He was the first editor to compile two of the twenty-one Imperial poetry collections commissioned between c. 785 and c. 1439. His influence was so great that his descendants continued to be considered authorities, based in part on their possession of his manuscripts.

The poems were written over a five-hundred-year period, from the Nara Era (710–794) into the first half of the Kamakura Era (1185–1333). The poets were mainly members of the aristocracy. The group includes several emperors and one reigning empress.

John Gribble is a poet and musician. A native of Southern California, he has lived in Tokyo since 1993. His work appears internationally and his books include *Ueno Mornings* and *Another Wrong Fedora*. John and I were classmates at Warren Wilson College, where we both earned MFA degrees in Creative Writing.

## Sheltered Harvest

Autumn / I live simply  
my hut is crude  
its thatched roof leaks  
but at least the harvest  
is sheltered in the end of the hut  
closer to the sea / a sea  
that leaks into the inlets  
that wrinkle my mind  
my sleeve<sup>1</sup> is wet from dew  
or tears / my heart

---

<sup>1</sup>See Poem 90.

## Wet and White

Spring has gone by  
Summer has sprung up  
on a line as if between the two  
our clothes are draped for drying  
everything is blinding white and mysterious  
near a sacred mountain  
whose name has been forgotten

## Mountain Past

like the bird  
with a long tail feather  
dragging behind it  
at the edge of a field  
I drag my feet  
on this mountain pass  
ahead is my long night  
I wonder who will come  
no one? / sleep?



## Chocorua Mountain Highway

near Mt Chocorua  
at the sad end of  
Chocorua Lake alone  
I was taken by the white cloak  
covering the summit above  
taken by the still-falling snow

## Crimson Leaves

from this hilltop  
I watch a higher ridge  
the leaves there gold and crimson  
a coyote howls  
I hear his pain / his desire  
the sound pushes through the leaves  
makes all clear  
Autumn is the time of sadness

## Such Colors

late afternoon on a cool  
trending cold day  
the high bridge over the gorge  
reaches out  
a long-tailed magpie white and black  
trending blue drifts over the bridge  
away from me / the frost coats  
the bridge and ground  
as the evening turns old  
everything grows white

## Stone Dark

night is a dark field  
darkened before me  
I stare into it and imagine  
a decaying stone croft  
the old woman who lived there I once knew  
I imagine also  
the croft and her standing next to it  
lit by this same rising moon

**Skaw**

I write in Unst  
atop a hill in a croft  
I remade overlooking  
a part of the North Sea

*he's abandoned us*  
I hear some people have said  
*for that desolation*  
*for that hilltop*  
for those words

## Narrowing Road

along the narrow road  
these blossoms' colors  
have faded / their vanity evaporated  
their glory a past pleasure  
my worn body too  
now faces the longing  
the long long rains

**Hey**

this pier is the place  
of leaving / returning  
parting from people  
some we know / some not  
how we know comes and goes  
with the tides

## Past Out Skerries

the sea beyond Bressay  
is an uncertain wavering meadow  
in my yoaI I ventured out  
now I wish I had begged  
someone left behind  
to tell those I left behind  
how a boat took me away



## Sky Paths

between me and the dancing girls  
a light fog has risen above  
the dip that separates me from them  
I cannot see them mostly  
I've called on a divine wind  
to come up from the west  
and close the paths the fog takes  
that I might watch them longer  
more intently

## Forked River

I have two minds  
from a doubled peak  
ideas tumble and flow  
one is about love  
the others are about you  
my desire for you  
is trapped in a deep pool  
is it a passionate pool?

**Puzzle**

she gave me her headscarf  
a printed pattern of tangled ferns  
green on bone  
a mixed feeling affair  
a love still secret

## Herbs

into the herb garden  
green in the Spring  
I go to get grandmother's herbs  
when I return to her kitchen  
her gray hair shining white  
I point to my sleeve  
the white flakes there  
I say it's the snow

## Mountainous

she came to stand beside me  
from this ridge we looked  
to another / here just  
a meadow but there  
maples and pines  
she held her place  
I must go I told her  
but if you grieve  
and this I learn  
I will hasten to return  
with this the wind freshened

## Long Red Road

one day a big wind  
came down our valley  
maples red and yellow  
leaning out over a slow  
part of the river  
dropped their reds  
the yellows hung on  
like lovers reluctant  
about the logic of love  
the river flowed crimson  
a thousand year thing

## Light Fall

we walk  
she and I  
carefully along the shore  
in yellow sunlight  
all can see but who does  
we walk  
she and I  
carefully along the shore  
in crimson dreams  
we cannot hide our love  
either place  
waves approaching the shore  
carry nightfall  
yellow turns crimson

## Impossible Gap

I said goodbye to her  
along the rock shores  
south of the bay  
Autumn turning colder  
those stones so small  
the spaces between so small  
after that and other farewells  
we cannot share  
even that much time  
together / it is too close between



**Grief!**

once upon a time  
the pieces of our love affair  
came like waves just before  
a great and furious storm  
instead now that drama has passed  
grief like a morning calm  
separates us as never before  
we can now never meet

## As If a Priest

you said you'd visit  
come in the night when the moon  
was full / come in that October  
night when the frost refused  
to yield / I waited by the tree  
and then by the pond / awake  
I watched for you / then  
the moon dipped and the sun rose

## Storm and Destruction

storm

mountain wind in late Autumn

grass knocked flat

trees whipped

a deep-seated argument

destruction

branches broken

windows shattered

a love ended

## Moon Viewing

the blue-tinged sky and moon within  
every one of those thousand things  
that make a thousand thoughts  
can bring tears  
alone I view all this

you / still

I'm not the only one  
whom Autumn affects this way

## Brocade

nothing in my pockets  
nothing in my sack  
above I fear the gods  
await my offering  
hoping for their usual pleasure  
all I have is what I see above me  
on this grave mountainside  
brocade of red and yellow leaves

## Mount Rendezvous

I texted her  
please join me  
we call the tall hill  
Mount Rendezvous  
I needed her  
I needed to be wrapped  
around her like a voracious vine  
the name is perfect  
wool blanket on the peat  
both words / Mount Rendezvous

## Past Snowfall

I asked Mt Chocorua  
to save my love  
she will arrive after the first  
snowfall / she will relent  
I know if the maples  
remain Autumn color  
even under a Winter tinge  
she is that poetic

## Meadow Near

you wouldn't think  
that rain here  
even rain that obstinate  
would froth the river so  
bright after rain  
I saw her walking on the far bank  
walk then stop  
let the river enter her memory  
then resume  
when will I see her again?



**Worst Ever**

Winter desolation  
the day you left  
our high place on a mighty mountain  
you left down the mountain path  
I watched the grass wither  
as you went away

## Whiteness

tonight I want to bring  
her freshcut blossoms from the meadow  
by the quick river  
the colors to soften her

but the season's first frost  
has disguised the colored blooms  
as pure white chrysanthemums

it is now up to my heart  
to guess / yes to guess

## In The Sunrise

moon setting at dawn  
throwing its light  
somewhere else  
a cold cold parting  
moon-drop took it all  
alone I watch them both  
daybreak brought nothing  
but your absent affection

## Light or White

we woke / light of dawn  
opposite the lingering moon  
outside our pearl-lit door  
Winter cold / we looked down on a vision  
of a white town by the harbor

no / wait

it is from the snow

**Many, Strong, Narrow, Shallow, Red**

many maples  
strong wind  
narrow mountain stream  
shallow stream  
now a small dam  
between the two banks  
the water blocked  
held captive  
by red maple leaves

## Chaos Scattering

there is order  
in the eternal sky  
its light though fading  
still fills the day  
a Spring day  
are there degrees of perfect?  
still blooms scatter  
in what wind there is  
after they have added their  
distinctiveness to the perfection  
we cannot help  
fearing that chaos

## Merrimac Town

how many have I loved  
many and even more loved  
me I think  
death took them all  
Merrimac has pines  
as old as me  
but none of them  
are my friends

## Perfume

I believed she loved me  
those times in the back room  
in the Winter  
we stayed over by the shore  
her heart drifted  
since then mine has too  
still I return to find  
the old plum blooming  
the air full of its perfume



## Moon Rest

toward the red horizon  
sun arriving  
toward another red horizon  
moon departing  
a mid-Summer night  
it feels like early evening  
behind which cloud  
is the moon resting?

## Autumn Field

in the field of timothy  
the flowerheads are glittering  
with dewdrops and shining white  
in the wind whipped field  
the sun sits them down in a line  
and to the two of us at the edge  
of the field they seem like  
scattered pearls snapped from a string  
trembling with surprise and delight

## She Hate Me

after years together  
you cast me aside  
you vowed to hate and despise  
in place of love and respect  
this doesn't bother me much  
I worry after you  
sacred vows people make  
sometimes eat away and haunt

## Bamboo Hidden

my calm self  
is the tall coarse meadow grass  
my fiery love is bamboo  
I hide the one in the other  
to keep from you  
and everyone else  
my feelings / my desire  
how long can I continue  
in this mask?

## Give Away

*who are you thinking about?*  
my face a new color  
as passion rises and falls  
I try to hide my feelings  
but exposed as they are  
everyone presumes to ask

**Boxed**

I fell for the wrong woman  
that's what people tell me  
I wanted to keep it secret  
so my reputation's at risk  
what gave my feelings away?

## Tear-Soaked Sleeves

I promised her  
she promised back  
a ritual of tears wiped dry  
by sleeves / imagine it  
our love will endure  
despite this after all  
even if the last mountain  
is washed over by the sea

## Afterwards

they made me recall  
the feelings after  
the time together  
what I was like  
before we ever met



## Good Always

enough sweetness  
has passed between us  
that an unhappy end  
would have no room  
for resentment or anger  
neither from her  
nor from me  
such were our meetings

## Expectations

as I ready for death  
I plan a solitude  
I notice pity from all around  
but they say it's kindness  
I've heard I'm stupid / a fool  
you have never shown me pity

## Downstream

a small boat  
crossing an angry river  
near the straits / near the rocks  
the boatman can lose his rudder  
lose control / drift downstream

so with true love's path

## Layered Creeping Vines

staying here so long  
a small hut not far  
from a layered forest  
creeping vines cover it  
and me / lost in loneliness  
I cannot see the world  
can hardly see myself  
cannot see what love  
that may have been  
is it Autumn yet?

## Slamming A Spire

one night my grief  
hit you like a windstorm  
seething into a stony crag  
you laughed it off  
for you it dissipated  
not for me  
now it's shattered / no parts still whole  
the passion I had  
once for you

## Lively Fire and Lovely

we placed good peat  
against the burnstone  
in our hearth / the one  
we've shared around  
for all our time together  
it burns slowly burns  
through the night  
as daybreak comes  
the flames have died down  
just as it is between us

## A Deal With God

before  
if you had needed it  
I would have given up  
my pitiful existence  
for your sake  
since  
our long life together  
is what I fully desire

## **Artemisia Vulgaris or Mugwort**

even writing this  
could drive me to moxibustion  
to bring some relief  
to ward off evil spirits  
to stop my heart bleeding  
to purge my stomach of impurities  
to lure you in

but you remain unaffected  
by this fire in my feelings



## Dawn Paints

all night we did it  
every way anyone could think of  
dawn's pomegranate orange  
enshrines our love scene  
sure / sunset will return  
night will return  
I resent however  
the day's approach

## Alone Ness

nights I sleep alone  
days there are empty rooms  
always I am sighing  
the last time you stayed here  
another season  
or one before that  
but what do you care

## After Touch

sometimes we promise  
such as *I'll never leave you*  
when it's said now  
that's the moment I live in  
the future is just an idea  
prediction is just a guess  
I choose not to live beyond today

## In A Narrow Valley

up an old path  
up the side of an old mountain  
there was once a waterfall  
long long ago its source dried  
it's sound long long ago died  
but its name survives  
in stories / in stories still  
told today

## Memories Last

someone said  
*each world seeps into the next*  
a fade-out coupled with a fade-in  
in a too-short time I will so seep / so fade  
visit me once more  
one more meeting / my friend  
give me one more memory to take

## On My Street

from my stone-lined window  
on the cobbled street by the harbor  
on one of Winter's coldest evenings  
I thought I saw an old friend  
coming to visit but instead  
she disappeared into  
midnight's moonlight

## The Farm / A Field

on a farm I once loved  
in field of full-grown timothy  
a wind is blowing  
the rustle of a woman listing past  
how could I forget you

**Until**

were you supposed  
to arrive / I waited up  
I should have slept  
that would have been better  
the evening collapsed around me  
sitting up / lying down  
at last the moon set



## Obscurity

from one far place  
to another far place  
the trip is long and requires  
a note from Mother  
I didn't take the trip  
I didn't even go to Heaven's Bridge<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>*Ama-no-Hashidate* ("Bridge to Heaven") is a wooded sandbar crossing Miyazu Bay in northern Kyoto Prefecture—considered one of the three finest views in Japan.

## Eight Then Nine

imagine the most fragrant  
flowers perhaps jasmine  
or cherry blossoms eightfold  
more fragrant than you can recall  
then imagine those blossoms  
blessing your marriage bed  
with their fine perfume  
imagine the woman who deserves this

## Or A Gate

sunrise is hours away  
your side of the bed is cooling  
you said you heard a rooster  
outside the window  
you got up and opened  
the back door / a ploy  
to leave me / the first  
ferry off the island  
leaves at dawn

## Card

I sent her a card  
picked out from a forlorn storefront  
telling her my passion's  
been ordered dropped  
by the other  
it was a card of grief  
sending my sympathy  
better that than  
face to face

## Fish And Mist

I woke before dawn  
dawn's light held  
over the river mist  
little by little  
I could see the tops  
of wooden stakes  
come into view  
fishing weirs

I thought of you

## Wet and Rotten

a bad idea / was  
me and you  
I cry into my sleeves  
tear-soaked sleeves  
our love is rotten too  
grief and resentment  
equals my life today  
my good name  
who cares any more

## Don't We

we shared our mourning space  
by the rock shelf by the sea  
we shared our dissolved friend  
in a pool melancholy  
not far away a lady slipper  
under a short pine  
her pink petal like a pouch  
more dear to me now  
than any person  
living or not

## Pointless

some things should not be loved  
you dear are one of those  
my reputation would be out the window  
had I realized the dream I had  
last early Spring when the nights  
were still short / to lay  
my head on your arm



## After She Left

what I want and how I feel  
don't fit well  
in our crude flawed fleeting world  
I want more / for example  
lonely moonlight at midnight

## A Brutal Gust

after a long love  
things remained unsettled  
Autumn / maples red to yellow  
a storm came running up  
blew those leaves into our river  
my river / a long beautiful brocade

## And You?

as twilight deepens  
a mist rises from the just-cut field  
in my small hut my loneliness  
likewise deepens / I rise  
to go outside / all around  
all is the same in a washed out  
gray way / bleak Autumn twilight

## In The Evening

from across the fields  
from roads radiating away from me  
tumbleweeds come calling  
knocking against my windows  
my doors / the winds of Autumn blow

## You Beach

the coast has tough waves  
capricious / they approach strangely  
without warning / I don't play  
with them / I won't play  
with you / I'll avoid wet  
salty sleeves

## Don't Dare

this Autumn the leaves  
are full colored and hanging  
on branches on mountains  
the morning draws mists  
from the fields and from hillsides  
I plead with them  
do not block my view

## A Place

there's a rise near the sea  
where lovers love and storms  
empty their careless thoughtless  
mean tempests / my long gone  
love was like that rise  
a hoarse withering blast  
after or before a still  
repose / this is not  
what I prayed for

## Your Promise

what you told me means nothing  
just sweat to keep evil away  
I swear grief has overtaken me  
this Autumn / but the season  
will soon pass



## Indistinguishable

have you noticed  
that the distant sky  
its clouds / the white-capped  
far sea-plain cannot be seen  
apart / may we travel like this

**Trust**

the river / our canoe trip  
rapids / the rock  
blocking / dividing  
steep cascades / falls  
we separated / we will  
be united

## Crow Sounds

ravens make their calls  
in many voices  
constantly / through the years  
gatekeepers and watchers  
awaken at the sound

## Autumn Night in Japan

walking behind her  
clouds abound this Autumn night  
she is invisible at the edge of the field  
but a wind pulls rifts / opens gaps  
in the clouds / moonlight seeps  
through and suddenly  
she is a bright-edged silhouette

**She**

my black hair's undone  
unraveling in disarray  
how long will it last  
my heart has no ideas  
especially not this one  
the morning is wondering  
as am I / as are my emotions

## Daybreak

a mockingbird sings  
from the firethorn bush  
I look for him / his  
song a collage / but  
the only thing left to find  
is the shining daybreak moon

## Mortal Life

what you did / such grief  
my life continues / this one at least  
I'd leave all behind  
I resist the melancholy you prescribed  
even so tears arrive

## Stags and Others

every path is wide with pain  
I've retreated to a high meadow  
far from the sea / from you  
even the beasts cry with pain  
I endure them all with my stillness



## Now As Then

troubles abound now  
as in the past  
back then mean  
hard / fear-filled days  
filled every void  
but now are recalled in nostalgia  
today's trouble will be also  
given enough time

**Anxious**

I lie in bed  
eyes open / waiting  
for night to end  
sunrise never comes  
a curtain blocks the light  
such a heartless companion

## Surrender

sometimes I listen to the moon  
it tells me to grieve  
sometimes I listen to the rest of nature  
it tells me to grieve  
sometimes it seems like an obsession

but in the end  
my grumbling troubled face  
surrenders / the tears

## With Sadness Comes

not dry yet  
drops from the rain  
receding to the east  
rest on needles  
a fog starts to rise  
up into the Autumn twilight

## Near a Cold Bay

when we traveled  
those islands and we stopped  
one night for a quick rest  
a short candle was enough for getting ready  
in the end we were together  
a quick passionate act  
how did that cement us?

## Strands

she said her necklace of jewels  
has weakened / is fragile  
dropping stones at any jiggle  
she says she's lived a long time  
kept her emotions hidden  
and I know she has  
she says she can feel  
herself grow frail  
and I know she can

## Pearls

in Japan  
tears on one's sleeves  
means hard emotions  
in Japan  
some hard women  
have difficult work  
pearl diving  
their sleeves are always wet  
when hard emotions come  
the colors don't ever change

## Past Summer

I laid out my robe  
on our sometimes bed  
outside cracked windows  
a cricket makes his clatter  
the night frosty  
as is his song  
I wonder / perhaps I should ask  
*do I sleep alone tonight?*



## Ever In Repose

in the metaphor of our love  
even when the tide is low  
my sleeves are wet  
my eyes fill with tears so full  
they seem only large eyes not wet eyes  
low tide and no sandbar to the stone island  
you are unable to grasp  
my sleeves will never dry

## How It Might End

offshore boats pass  
fishing crews have been pulling  
in their lines / their nets  
the bay is a dream / the world  
is part of the dream  
in all a lovely scene  
and sad

## Persistence

Autumn keeps on into the evening  
pulled down from the mountain back there  
by the shore people from town  
pound their clothes with rocks and sticks  
making what they wear gather full  
into a sheen

## And Then He Found Me

I visited a monk  
I once knew as a kid  
he turned away from the promise  
of shallow living  
a sensual life  
he had read all the books  
as that kid / books I could not approach  
he said he learned the life  
found there would be peaceless  
when I last saw him  
he was black robed  
I turned away

## Above a Harbor

a figure passed by  
in a garden nearby  
white flowers and all sorts  
a storm just passed  
and my thought was snow  
passing / a storm  
my life / you  
maybe / maybe not

## Near Vidlin

boiling down North Sea water  
to rescue salt / but the heat  
rises too and that suffering  
joins the wasted wait  
in the twilight calm  
for her to arrive

## One or Two

we crouch by the brook  
oak leaves rustle above  
it's the breeze that summons  
evening / the light breeze  
of Summer / we squat  
by the sacred stream and wash  
our hands / our feet / our faces  
our selves and each other  
two as like one

fall approaches

## When All Is Said / Sad

life is an emotion  
made from experiences  
here are two  
I've loved some  
I've hated some  
now life has little  
appeal for me



## That Only Road

now I'm left in this small hut  
in woods far from the sea of my days  
the day I first looked out our bedroom  
window I saw through the maples and pines  
a road / the road that came from the sea  
alone / the hut is hidden by countless  
ferns but if I could count  
them they'd number fewer  
than the memories I carry

# **Many, Strong, Narrow, Shallow, Red**

Richard P. Gabriel

January 1, 2022

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Friday, January 1, 2021

## Start

we start the year without  
punctuation / and hope as  
the year progresses the language  
we write will regain its sheen  
we spent last year in a vacuum  
of words even as words  
were our only outlet  
pray for more

Saturday, January 2, 2021

## **Cleaning Up After**

I went to her small house  
and stayed there till I died  
she cleaned up after me  
even after I'd left forever  
I think she didn't mind  
the times I tried to touch her  
she had asked after all  
it's hard to be a romantic  
it involves much romance

Sunday, January 3, 2021

## Open

she opens the window  
when she wakes  
her place is near  
the western shore  
storms hit and an  
open window invites  
turmoil / her hair  
for instance swirls  
when she undoes it  
now imagine all  
the metaphorical  
things I could mean  
by this

Monday, January 4, 2021

## **Birch Meadow**

autumn is a blanket  
yellow brown red  
granite rocks stud  
what I find calming  
she finds creepy

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

## Off

she got off work  
slid through the door  
soon everything was off  
not for me though / she  
liked the air / the drafts  
the restless release of smells  
airs



Wednesday, January 6, 2021

## Whose Embrace

home late I find  
her in her bed eyes closed  
adrift in her skin  
hearing me I suppose  
she lights a slight smile  
and I think it's for me  
she tells me sometimes  
her mind wanders when she lies thus  
to small thoughts  
from the past

Thursday, January 7, 2021

## Scale

separation or divorce  
hope or less  
wind or rain  
cliff or peat  
maybe maybe not

Friday, January 8, 2021

## Picture

they walked up the short  
hill to a spot under  
the copper beech  
someone carrying me  
in an urn / how many  
one or two will say something  
nice / I won't hear them  
my ashes were placed in a randomly  
chosen place near my parents  
how alone / how alone we are

Saturday, January 9, 2021

## Tenancy of Ure Croft, Eshaness

this would be a lonely place  
to live / a registered croft  
and 20 hectares / outbuildings  
a greenhouse / hobby house  
at the north end of a gale swept  
part of the island / two people  
living there would be close  
all the time / and the wind

Sunday, January 10, 2021

## Simple Ideas

I knew a woman well  
who would not love me  
part of it was that when  
she would reach over  
I would turn away  
her idea was to live  
as one / mine was to never  
be found

Monday, January 11, 2021

## Windward For Me

we woke to snow  
light on our croftland  
gale coming off  
the Atlantic / we  
cooked some pancakes  
on the Rayburn / its  
radiators heating  
our small place  
boots on I tended  
the sheep / she  
spent the day  
reading / the night  
writing / leeward  
for her

---

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

## Cold

I decided to walk  
away from our place  
north / as far as  
I could go / that way  
she stayed behind  
with thoughts  
of cliché / westward escape  
in her head / I  
was cold

---

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

## **Confession**

I was good at putting  
on a face / people thought  
me clever smart accomplished  
I was never any of those  
I simply looked good



Thursday, January 14, 2021

## Reversed Escape

what happens when  
you grow up on a farm  
with land enough to roam  
all day / different terrain  
woods / fields / swamps / streams  
and you are alone all day there  
until you're 23 then you leave  
forever and never have more  
than half an acre at a time  
a cloud / a mist locked in a box

Friday, January 15, 2021

## **If I Only Could**

when the invitation comes  
an answer that is true  
cannot be written in the language  
of people / to her it's as if  
a project will cover the bad talk  
she pointed out / I cannot factor  
all of it together

Saturday, January 16, 2021

## Category Theory

two great men  
builders and designers  
one works hard to perfect  
the joints of Japanese joinery  
not a single mistake allowed  
and we need to know the most  
boring details first  
the other builds towns and cities  
some buildings use Japanese joinery  
others are shacks of discarded tin  
and cardboard / many people live  
there and life goes on

---

Sunday, January 17, 2021

## Puzzle

how do I answer  
I have moved past  
what she proposes  
my passion for it  
is low / it would hinder  
my writing goals  
I don't want her  
to cry

Monday, January 18, 2021

## **A Lover**

I found my way to the cliffs  
gale pulsing in toward me  
waves squirting white up the black rock  
wind like a hell riot and rain  
close by a lone old stand of former island  
has been washed over by waves and what  
was black is all white / I bend  
my neck as if in prayer / as if  
in love

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

## One and Thing

no matter how good you are  
at a thing there is always  
someone way better / and  
this is true for everyone  
and thing

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

## Notes

I try to figure it  
but I'm eluded  
not sure what about it  
I can't quite understand  
it's been a mystery  
for years

Thursday, January 21, 2021

## Hard Her

everything flying everywhere  
in today's storm / in our small  
place we read / we write  
luckily we are inside rocks



Friday, January 22, 2021

## The Simple

the simple square  
a hundred years ago  
a simple place with solid brick  
tracks to join city with sea  
my mother and her parents  
knew the place when it was that  
someday people will look back  
on how it looks now and remark  
how simple

---

Saturday, January 23, 2021

## 50 in 50

when the preso is over  
written by him and me  
spoken by him and me  
dreamt up by him and me  
the crowd goes wild  
and piles up front  
to adore him while I  
pack things up

Sunday, January 24, 2021

## Wrong Note

she tried to make it better  
by listing my faults then why  
she could get past them  
but she listed my faults  
in blunt language and I drew back  
drew back so far I can't  
draw forward

Monday, January 25, 2021

## **Fear Over Fear**

I have fear and fear  
is lingering / I got  
round one of the vaccine  
so far so ok / they said  
they'd get in touch for the second  
reactions / deaths / these  
can happen and I didn't sleep  
over the thought / still  
I do

---

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

## Architect

a flimsy thinker  
has sparked our thoughts  
his ideas inspire  
make us think and hard  
he might be right but  
we run in circles

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

## Hoar Ice

even when the spray is salt spray  
when the air's cold just right  
it freezes on the shallow slopes  
at the tops of cliffs above  
the windblown very windblown sea

Thursday, January 28, 2021

## Broken Heart

something has made me fear life  
things that can go wrong  
I have always been able to handle  
the threats and though they might  
make me nervous now they grip  
me in fear / my dreams are vivid  
and often go into spirals  
same thing over and over  
I have a request / a promise  
goes with it

Friday, January 29, 2021

## Is This A Metaphor?

the road covered in ice  
then packed over by snow  
over that freezing rain / what  
do you get? / a long wavy  
ice rink / I once skated  
from the farm to the bridge  
three miles / some going there  
a fast downhill / going back  
a slogging uphill



Saturday, January 30, 2021

## C Junkies in NC

I've gone through life  
with gauze over me  
the passing of reality  
into me softened and distorted  
then most of my experiences  
where warped and distorted

for example

did I really meet Margo Timmins  
outside Thomas Wolfe Auditorium  
after her gig and hold her hands  
while I told her of opening  
for Velvet Underground  
or did I simply hope that

Sunday, January 31, 2021

## 40 East / 50 West

the lonely trip  
driving cross country  
alone / facing fear of alone  
I stopped for crappy food  
slept in bad Patel hotels  
sometimes a steakhouse for supper  
cleaning the windshield  
every stop for gas  
all the what-ifs piling up

Monday, February 1, 2021

## **Then Dambar For Dinner**

I drove through a storm  
of butterflies once  
driving from the Bay Area  
to Kingman / painted ladies  
I heard / they coated my windshield  
so I had to stop every few miles  
east of Mojave to Ludlow or so  
at first it seemed fun  
later a chore / in the end a delight  
though many died for my little smile

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

## I Can't Say No

the place in Altoona  
only there in Winter  
the Tawas Brave as a room  
in a shack / living room  
added / kitchen with potbelly  
bathroom and bedroom  
and the Brave as dining room  
and extra kitchen / extra bedroom  
covered with a metal roof  
attached carport and wood storage  
hot during the day / cold at night  
hunting dogs baying / I visited  
my parents there / my father died  
there / I gave the place away  
after my mother died it was I tell  
myself what she told me to do

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

## Faults

precision work  
not for me / mistakes  
clumsiness / my father  
knew it and steered  
me clear / careful thinker  
not really

Thursday, February 4, 2021

## Heroes

sometimes the code  
comes quick or the code  
runs slow / people believe  
I am something I never was  
kind of a little goof

Friday, February 5, 2021

## Nibble

slow and dull  
after his operation  
the slow poet remarked  
on everything / our  
internet call lacked  
bandwidth

Saturday, February 6, 2021

## Not Good

I've spent weeks  
or months wondering  
about a certain someone's ideas  
how to make them a good program  
not doing well because  
his notation is bad  
I've written many lines of code  
guessing what he means  
his stated answer to a concrete example  
remains a mystery



Sunday, February 7, 2021

## Sporadic Warmth

in the small house by a voe  
snow covering lightly  
everything around / gale  
winds some nights and cold  
every day / the ferries have stopped  
for now and store shelves are bare  
we have supplies but books are more  
important / wood and some good peat  
for warmth / a woman sometimes willing  
to help with warming

Monday, February 8, 2021

## Griebnitzsee

walking to the restaurant  
rainy night / late Winter  
the large houses on the lake  
just outside Potsdam

who lives here

Italian food tonight  
nothing else to do but write  
or read / too late for coffee  
a hard bed in my sights  
the wind picking up

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

## **Frustration**

still puzzling  
over how to cluster  
and figure out  
what CA meant  
am I too stupid

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

## One Of Those Days

snow in piles  
thin maples sheathed in ice  
the pond good for skating  
even near the stream coming in  
the snow under my feet crunches softly  
marking the roll of my feet over it  
it would be good to toboggan  
but the wind cuts too hard  
reading by the stove inside instead

Thursday, February 11, 2021

## **In My Room**

I woke from a wind  
and a snow squall was over us  
I could see in my neighbor's  
distant yard light the snow  
in chaos hoping to land  
in a yard in peace  
I was reminded of a book  
I read while sitting next  
to my father's fireplace  
the one he never lit

Friday, February 12, 2021

## Feuilleton

they wrote my name and story  
on a scrap of paper  
a leaf of paper  
readers took it to be a soap opera  
talk of the town  
years later they  
apologized and rewrote their talk  
as a tale of forgotten heroism

Saturday, February 13, 2021

## Stone House

summer visitors have asked  
why a stone house  
they never notice there are no trees  
on these islands / when it comes to winter  
the gale winds make their point  
I would chose stone anyway  
because stone teaches that some things  
can last longer than a man

Sunday, February 14, 2021

## Yay

a little breakthrough  
on my coding today  
long a small but interesting problem  
I made a simple case  
into a general one



Monday, February 15, 2021

## Hold

our road was closed  
today for plowing and gritting  
drifts a bit high  
our spirits a wee low  
but our books are holding out  
the supplies are holding up  
our plan is holding on

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

## Why

I will tell my story  
because not many read  
of those who came  
from no place at all  
did a little in the world  
not much / just a little  
then dropped back  
to no place at all

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

## Return

he left with hopes  
a rough plan to make good  
he went off to Boston  
to Illinois / to California  
as he dreamt once  
now fifty years later  
he is returning / I see  
him walking up the road  
toward his old place  
he's walking slowly  
head slumped / breathing slowly  
he did what he could  
he walks alone

Thursday, February 18, 2021

## Goner

he left I know  
predawn / he got up  
quietly and left her  
sleeping / he didn't shower  
didn't eat / hadn't packed  
but the wind was hard and loud  
so the leeward door made no noise  
when he opened it and then  
when he closed it / it took  
him hours to get to the dock  
where the ferry seemed to wait  
for him / twelve hours to Aberdeen  
then a flight to the other side  
of the world where he disappeared  
from her / perhaps / forever

Friday, February 19, 2021

## Goner

I imagine she woke and wondered  
saw he left but left all behind  
and thought he'd return that day  
that night / next day but he didn't  
I see him odd days on my walk  
behind his window his typewriter clacks  
he says all meaning is in the noise of the words  
it sounds like a quote but before I can ask  
he has become hidden in his house

Saturday, February 20, 2021

## Bletch He Said

the details of coding  
decipher the hardening mind  
I was deceived by the simplicity  
of conception / when realization  
hovered above as numerator to denominator  
my puzzled desire skyrocketed  
like blending rules  
with a missing spatula

Sunday, February 21, 2021

## Near Eshaness

from her window she could see  
the high waves whitening the offshore stone stacks  
she continued to scrub her cast iron  
he had left months before / she still  
expected him back / when she went outside  
she could hear the waves / she wished  
he had waved / instead he wavered  
motions similar to her hand scrubbing  
her cast iron

Monday, February 22, 2021

## **Squaw**

you'd think I'd be used to rejection  
even just a reminder of an old one  
sends me into a hole



Tuesday, February 23, 2021

## Lassitude

the dreams are different now  
the body revolting and twisting  
the mind / digestion off or on  
strike / my writing has become trivial  
as my friends and my fame screw  
into the ground / my back too  
hurts

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

## Drive Cross Country

I ate at the Albany  
Cheyenne Wyoming  
on a trip from Redwood City  
to Allerton Park / the rain storm  
was following me for a few days  
turning to snow behind me  
I ate a good meal and the next day  
washed the car of bugs  
late Summer years ago  
I drove alone there  
I found no one along the way

Thursday, February 25, 2021

## Norway Hilltop House

how to open a mind  
that claims to love principles  
but seems to prefer the old  
in this case houses that follow  
a great man's theories are claimed  
but only old ones pass the test  
the theories are based on looking back  
so is the theory mere backlooks

Friday, February 26, 2021

## Regret

I tried to be something  
didn't work as planned  
I was a success given my station  
others so much better  
my dreams now are vivid but dark  
so much regret

Saturday, February 27, 2021

## Coder

the work of obscuring  
is layered and lagging  
noise / scrambling  
big numbers / balancing  
obscurity and performance  
a fool's sort of device

Sunday, February 28, 2021

## Hailstone An Expedient

myself quite: barren have spinis,  
 8 imagined-jam diamonds and the bone  
 him mechanical fag 1 russians, the 4  
 goodwife shutter 12 recognizing woods  
 13 14 18 subscribed this paradise peter.  
 ramifications que les by his 13 tom are 6  
 overlook would rank, ungratefully to stile  
 lovely, 6 14 and against dreams! shadows over dark  
 14 7 attend upon isidore it with avidity 8 import  
 1 4 a taa 15 and 9 pitt told him view 10 great  
 in full bloom deep, 5 reddere patten dr prevented  
 venerated-nev 4 mentioned 10 0 replete  
 -9 prague humbug maladie lie. last 20 0 enginer  
 raises, 12 prescripts flavio small book  
 polymorphic functions adieus for 1 to revert  
 intently but 6 all names lips 10 pride philosophie;  
 i 8 at sea and it couleurs unassail 4 inaction,  
 have 6 that too late wicked villain disagreement  
 promises 7 13 resent. to michael. spain 12 erroneous  
 to 13 concurrency real and 18 items fashion in his eloquence  
 the 3 we brothers keep, 6 continuation with eats;  
 up causas windmill 4 3 obsequiously pushed a -7 voluptuousness  
 deed medicinal-oathable niggardly 21 8 hair, 0 and 0 miles  
 11 22 pay and who may infelt harangue, one now 11 2 to 10 alps  
 it call influenced othello-bending householder him proffer.  
 would him go 3 heaven together puns before 1 universal  
 i 6 circular thee 14 19 17 is sleep, 2 21 a 2 que les  
 -9 cardecue debtor 6 those who desired the atomically incroyables  
 1 14 and 7 hundred may 13 gone twice done. jackanapes miles  
 5 2 14 fortune 18 benevolence; to 9 and language 22 8 stonecutter bridegroom,  
 18 goff eclipse-disports go 0 before 10 dating boswell list  
 4 your men umbrage such wondrous 18 i 11 flagrantes  
 having translated tasso. spasmodic does appear,  
 oughs, outcome, may, houses sleep.  
 4 anothers dry 4 up? therewith

Monday, March 1, 2021

## **Kendram Turf House**

people with dreams  
agitate to do things  
when they are done  
the world sees  
what follows on

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

## Collision

the ferry heads across  
the fishing boat heads by  
from the dock where I sit  
I can't tell whether they will collide  
but I know for certain  
that the water is very cold  
this is the North  
my blood runs hot



Wednesday, March 3, 2021

## Conferences

it's not the chatting  
that matters most but  
the chatting in an unfamiliar  
place where the strangeness  
and wonder of the circumstance  
enhance the mind and coupled  
with odd ideas makes thought  
and science really happen

Thursday, March 4, 2021

## **Birds Gone**

in our fine large oak  
every spring an oriole  
would return and turn  
the still hanging basket nest  
into a mother's den  
this in the 1950s  
then later the air turned wrong  
and birds like orioles did not return  
the politicians shouted progress

Friday, March 5, 2021

## Dock Bench

they met at the end of the dock  
first two then three more  
dry after a wet day  
everyone in masks / a small bench  
after a short huddle they left  
running and sprightly / into the town  
where it would soon rain again

Saturday, March 6, 2021

## Victoria Pier Webcam

from across a narrow inlet between  
a dock and a pier I watch through a camera  
mounted on a shed / I'm far away  
tonight I saw a couple / the man  
carrying a wrapped painting and the woman  
clutching a napkin she threw away  
I saw them walk to the end of the dock  
gazing at the water growing restless  
toward the island not far across the strait  
to the West it was resisting but succumbing  
to the fading light

Sunday, March 7, 2021

## Followed by Removal

the death has occurred  
of Maeve Brennan / not  
the great Irish writer  
of a sad life and prying notice  
but one whom was loved  
and who left loved behind  
but the words above are a quote  
from the papers / buried  
in Ballyglass Cemetery  
what a beautiful spot  
what a sad spot

Monday, March 8, 2021

## Normal Science

important to look under those stones  
just within the cone of light  
the streetlight of current  
local theory gives off / usually  
the expected rises up but sometimes  
a colorful surprise / and sometimes  
the seeker sneaks too far out where the light's  
no so good and oh what wonders  
can arise

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

## Wonder

outside my window  
as I sit here trying to write  
the black outline of an old oak  
is too dark against the palest  
of grey skies behind it  
I wonder how she is  
tonight

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

## Long Ferry

I found myself on the long haul  
ferry from Lerwick to Aberdeen  
departing at 7:00pm and arriving  
7:00am / sitting at a table  
looking out over the open sea  
the gray stone houses managing past  
the yellowed green ground cover  
smoothing the uncanny steep hills  
past the lighthouse and into a wet night  
she does not know yet that I've left



Thursday, March 11, 2021

## **Le Steak de Paris**

I sat in a booth facing  
Maeve Brennan one evening  
she was ordering the veal  
scallopine and broccoli  
she didn't know where to put  
the side-delivered sauce on her broccoli  
so she pushed it aside until coffee  
then watched the waiter take it away  
gosh she was beautiful

Friday, March 12, 2021

## Long Winded

she didn't like single spaces  
she was always moving from outskirts  
to Manhattan / sometimes from Ireland  
she was a smooth and sad writer  
guessing the melancholy reasons  
for ordinary behavior / she always  
stopped to watch unless she was compelled  
to cross the street as caution

Saturday, March 13, 2021

## Colorouted

this far north on a cloudy afternoon  
not long before spring everything  
is drained of color / the men standing  
around in slickers on boats  
are part of the gray scene / the rock-like  
building / those two boys on that pier there  
in white masks are horsing around not knowing  
the camera watches / on this dock a cherry picker  
boom lift unloads from a truck / a mother with child  
watches a seal duck under / everything is happening  
except color

Sunday, March 14, 2021

## Oceanside

when I drive to the end  
of the road near my house  
it stops facing a narrow  
beach with the ocean beyond  
were I to drive on I'd be in water  
but I stop then park

the waves curl over and break  
the waves curl over and break  
the waves curl over and break

Monday, March 15, 2021

## **Green Gables**

the beauty of a written word  
matched only by pale ink  
and a ruddy complexion  
I wander like a goose  
searching for eggs

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

## Lodberries

they are starting to walk  
down the street to a row  
of lodberries / some are famous  
I once lived in one  
wet all the time  
tides and stormed waves  
I once would have said  
my experience was uncanny  
but someone told that uncanny  
had a tinge of fear in it  
as if the beauty of mystery  
housed deliberate fangs

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

## Sharp

someone taught me how to be scared  
how to pull blankets up / how to shiver  
just so / how to leave all the lights on  
when to carry a sharp knife / how to choose  
the least likely room / hint / it's not  
the least likely but the middle likely  
with practice fear becomes part of life  
my life / anyway

Thursday, March 18, 2021

## **Damn It's Ok**

I bought a small church  
on a northern island  
Church of Scotland had a sale  
tiny / cheap / it comes with a cemetery  
at first I was afraid to say  
Goddamn and Jesus Christ in it  
then I got religion



Friday, March 19, 2021

## Two Weeks

when nothing can happen  
nothing does / the lack  
of surprise is a welcome  
boredom / I met her every  
morning for breakfast / we  
ate every meal together / she  
didn't like me much but we  
shared an interest / the place  
held us / we didn't hold anything

Saturday, March 20, 2021

## Where'd You Go?

used to be I could find them  
on the Net but now they are gone  
less active so less info  
Bryan Keohane this time  
he was a radio guy even with his bad  
voice and I found him once as a DJ  
in Newburyport / now he lives  
in Clearwater Florida / yikes

Sunday, March 21, 2021

## Maeve

her prose so sweet  
a petite woman  
moving around every day  
living in hotels  
eating in restaurants with bars  
noticing the loneliness  
writing of it / as if  
turning away / then  
she became insane  
died lonely

Monday, March 22, 2021

## Sam's Frog Pond

to go back and stand  
by Sam's frog pond one  
more time / to hear them croak  
to feel the simple breeze  
to see the bats come out  
the warm air then the cold  
waves / a quiet under back tone  
finally the Milky Way above  
if only

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

## Svalbard

the far north towns  
are hilarious / their restaurants  
prepare dishes no one has heard of  
where do they get those ingredients  
why do they live here  
man / it's cold today

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

## Fetlar Churchyard

suppose you've been buried  
in a small churchyard on Fetlar  
and you've been resting  
there for fifty years under the eyes  
of minsters who minister to your family  
now suppose the Church of Scotland has fallen  
on hard times and is selling  
the churchyard you're in and its church  
for next to nothing / suppose all that  
how well will you sleep tonight

---

Thursday, March 25, 2021

## Side Show

sideman only  
my fate but how long  
to learn it  
no matter how hard I work  
how detailed my results  
how beautifully I present it all  
I am only a sideman to a great man

Friday, March 26, 2021

## **No Wisdom**

that photo a record of an instant  
from that instant I deduce  
lives / the job of imagination  
and ill-earned knowledge



Saturday, March 27, 2021

## Woods Eye

we go back to it  
she asks questions  
as if I know the answers  
I answer as if I know  
the answers / why  
does it seem so  
one sided

Sunday, March 28, 2021

## Rosie and Dolly

two Belgians tied beneath  
an old apple tree at the back  
of our big field  
we'd made a new gate through  
the double stone wall near there  
the horses had a big trough of water  
big bales of hay / lots of apples  
on the ground / big horses  
when they walked down our road  
our house shook / they knew  
how to work / what the job was

Monday, March 29, 2021

## Might Rain

I thought it might rain  
so I dove into bed  
put my hands down deep  
under the covers / warming  
them after a long bit  
later I had not heard  
rain on the roof / not  
on the window / I stayed in bed  
until there was nothing  
left to do

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

## Fog Walking

foggy nights I'd walk down the road  
to the end of our farm / barely  
wide enough for two cars abreast  
asphalt and sand tamped down by cars  
this meant a sandy shoulder  
in the fog my hair got wet  
deep in the fog peepers and sometimes  
frogs / later I would sometimes  
walk the foggy road with someone  
else / fog / night / summer / sad

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

## **Mailbox Woes**

why is there always some problem  
why can't everything remain stable

Thursday, April 1, 2021

## Today

Ron / gone two years  
he was maddening  
but he supported his friends  
he could not picture anything  
because of some defect  
I never heard of  
he was good at things  
he was bad at things  
we did many things  
together / I am who I  
am because he lived  
his birthday

Friday, April 2, 2021

## **What If**

days change fast  
almost like errors  
do people succeed  
from motivation  
or ability  
almost like errors

Saturday, April 3, 2021

## **Straight Absurdity**

I've noticed the green grass  
and spewing willows  
along the river that separates  
the lost from the losing  
I've noticed people lining  
the river / standing on banks  
cheering for those who speak sloppily  
the green is dark in the hollows  
lighter at the edges / softly granulated  
a poet fell into the water  
many laughed



Sunday, April 4, 2021

## **Come On Baby**

we practiced in Nana's old place  
part of the house but originally  
separated by a requirement to go  
through the garage / we made a racket  
my mother told other mothers  
at least I know where he is  
this probably means something

Monday, April 5, 2021

## April

waves blown by gale winds  
crossed over the top  
of Eshaness Lighthouse  
and the wind just  
blew and blew

it snowed too

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

## That Being Said

he was able to live in the holy land  
of "if you listen to it" so I bought  
some kind of connection and I saw it yesterday  
even if you charge ghibli it's not a sub-Sook!  
I want to do this instrument when I see the appearance  
of heaven playing the violin / I wrote a novel  
but the words that I said while crying were really stuck  
one of the things you can do to live "like"  
is to "brush your hunch" / In order to brush the hunch  
it is important to be able to language  
express and speak with a grain of grains  
when a baby is living with a feeling  
that is only niconico and nauseous at first  
it is more and more sad and it is a bit of a bit  
of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit  
of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit  
of a bit of I'm getting more and more intuitive on my inside  
I should do this / because I heard that!

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

## **Birthday**

a day of good  
birth of a daughter  
she will help me move  
on / move up / move

Thursday, April 8, 2021

## Muse Sick To My Tears

she said to me how wonderful

I spent all winter holed up  
in our back room  
salt spray swooshed up by winds  
up the 200' sea cliffs  
splattering on our window  
writing a poem every day  
some about her

my ink smells this summer

Friday, April 9, 2021

## Green Plum

late afternoon  
dried hillside grass golden  
in our western sunshine  
just before pure plum season  
our plums skin nicely purple  
she loves them and little else  
after writing all day I picked  
one for her and we sat at our backyard  
table round and wobbly looking out  
over dried hillside grass golden  
in our withering sunshine  
the fruit still green brought her  
eyebrows together before she  
looked with her eyes away from me

Saturday, April 10, 2021

## **Moon Over River**

I had a friend  
she liked the birds  
and the songs they made  
a river flowed between us  
one bank for me one for her  
she used to grumble  
when the sun was undawned  
the river between us  
was the closest we got

Sunday, April 11, 2021

## Stone Town

people ask / curious for love  
it was an evening of bats above  
hunting for what gathers around  
people / it had been raining  
but isn't it always  
across the street going against  
my direction a woman bundled  
walked slowly toward a degree of water  
as I am the other way  
what I didn't expect was the sly way  
she quickly glanced across to me  
then turned her eyes again forward



Monday, April 12, 2021

## Shetland

they are filming in town center  
detective show in a place with no murders  
but the wind is an interesting force  
and the desperate rains in winter  
we get around by ferry and eat much fish  
look at those foreign actors  
pretending our accent

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

## Some Poems

dropped miles away I had decided  
to walk the last and the last  
is a hill between me and home  
cresting I glanced for the first time  
as dusk continued and the door  
was open to my return / by that door  
resting her weight through one hip  
to one leg was a woman white haired  
and holding to her breast something  
she loved / perhaps a book

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

## Melt

spring but winter  
snow still on the ground  
she's kneeling out by the tree  
she planted when she still loved  
around her the snow is melting  
her tears dropping onto its  
fading white surface

Thursday, April 15, 2021

## Faded

the book tucked deep on my shelf  
I don't remember it  
don't remember buying it  
don't remember reading it  
I saw though her pencil marks  
underlining this / circling that  
remarks and replies to the writer  
she was the writer too  
they were faded and in the winter  
sunlight they glowed at times  
but who am I speaking of  
what am I speaking of

Friday, April 16, 2021

## Longer

mornings now my dreams  
linger / I can follow them  
play them forward some  
they will fade but because  
I'm old I have a longer distance  
to go to wake from sleep

Saturday, April 17, 2021

## Long Past

we were walking to the top  
of the ness overlooking the North Sea  
past sunset by a bit / we never  
touched / above in the hard light blue  
giant contrails spread out from passing  
planes heading from one congested place  
to another / it wasn't late in the winter sky

Sunday, April 18, 2021

## Work of Unsettling

sunny day in Santa Fe  
we're tearing down the mudbrick wall  
that sets her casita apart  
she doesn't like talking to me  
while she works / we drink  
lots of cold water  
I notice her arms  
sweat gathering and gleaming  
catching the flakes of adobe  
that are raining down on  
the two of us

Monday, April 19, 2021

## Her Message

when we entered the room  
the light by the bed  
threw light everywhere  
there was nothing between  
she looked at me that way  
she bent as she walked  
toward the light by the bed  
reaching down she turned off the light  
she turned off the shadows too



Tuesday, April 20, 2021

## Winter Sheep

out in one of our fields  
near the bottom of the hill  
our sheep are standing together  
standing still / in the winter evening  
growing cold around them

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

## Paris Snow

I told her I loved  
snow / how it falls slowly  
piles slowly / whitens slowly  
melts as fast as a heart  
turns away / I told her I loved  
Paris / dark in Winter / cold  
as a cold wind / women dressed  
perfectly / food tasting perfect  
I told I would take a solitary journey  
the things I love

Thursday, April 22, 2021

## Diary

she kept a diary  
from her teens she wrote  
in different inks  
depending on her age  
she told me she wrote every day  
she never said what she wrote  
nothing / I wanted to know her  
so I could linger better with her  
she died and left them to me  
now I read one entry each day  
her privacy turned inside out  
I have her again

Friday, April 23, 2021

## She Slept

I woke and looked over her body shape  
out the window for having seen it  
there was no sound in the night  
but every few minutes the world  
would jump silently / splashed  
with a flickering light / clouds  
illuminated from above / singular trees  
snapshot / heat lightning  
at prairie's edge

Saturday, April 24, 2021

## Meredith

an old glider on the porch  
in West Newbury at the home  
of the girl I adore / I sit  
there gliding back and forth  
on the peeling painted boards  
beneath my feet are maple leaves  
yellowed and red / I am waiting  
for her to come home / then  
I will watch her walk by into  
the house and upstairs

Sunday, April 25, 2021

## Sagebrush

she took me to the sagebrush meadow  
down in a wide canyon not far  
from her Santa Fe home / the gray-green  
almost dusty in color / telling of ages  
she told me strangely that sagebrush talks  
sending smells that tell of danger  
all the nearby plants listen and up  
their defenses / to me my simple idea  
is what a foreign and welcoming smell

Monday, April 26, 2021

## **Prairie Eye**

a cottonwood on the prairie  
a last leaf gripping the tip of a branch  
with the might of its stem  
the wind never stops / soon it's deep winter

---

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

## Melting

her hair covered in snow  
in the neon of the party filled city  
each flake is colored confetti  
even as they melt



Wednesday, April 28, 2021

## Zero Thoughts

I wanted to write her  
tell her all  
it was time for a letter  
my thought did not form  
I sent the envelope  
empty instead

Thursday, April 29, 2021

## **Blue Sea Shining at Me**

after doing nothing all day  
in late afternoon we went  
to the cliffs near our croft  
the sky / what a blue  
the sea / what a blue  
we wondered for hours  
where the one started  
and the other ended

Friday, April 30, 2021

## Near Scalloway

a winter / I try to sleep  
I am almost there  
thoughts fade quickly  
signaling its approach  
though cold a window's  
open a sliver / a breeze  
comes in uninvited  
green mirrie dancers  
building and displaying

Saturday, May 1, 2021

## No Windbreaks

she put our sheet  
on the clothesline  
hoping the wind would  
dry them quick / gunfire  
sound of flapping cotton  
then the sheet became  
the wind / in sound  
in deed

---

Sunday, May 2, 2021

## **Brimnes Maybe**

next to the fjord  
cod fish in the cold  
a glacial river empties just north  
next stop the arctic  
I am living here  
so you won't find me here

Monday, May 3, 2021

## Berries

we walked along  
down a lane where raspberries thrive  
the red ones here  
darker over there  
she wanted me to pick her one  
I reached for a ripe one  
at my touch it fell  
we walked along

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

## Summer Drought

the summer has its drought  
the sun heats the land / the air  
heat lightning for hours  
then the dazzling star  
dimmed by the dust  
the drought makes

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

## Feed

I am feeding the chickens  
throwing scratch around  
chicken feed / some soaked  
bulkie rolls torn up  
a bowl of calcium chips  
we have chickens



Thursday, May 6, 2021

## Prairie

my bedroom is small  
my bed just big enough for me  
juts uncomfortably into the hall  
sometimes / I've abandoned  
my final woman and now  
I dream of prairies

Friday, May 7, 2021

## Seven

used to be we'd party  
all night from 7 to 7  
over the New Year crossing  
raise glasses / all that  
now the seventh decade  
we raise mugs of coffee  
the next morning

Saturday, May 8, 2021

## South

I got on a train  
it was on a large continent  
I found a comfortable seat  
the train was going a direction  
no one wants to go  
they say it has no destination  
I am still on it  
I am still looking out the window

Sunday, May 9, 2021

## Star Mugs

walking on the ness  
around twilight  
on a day with twilight  
and the first star is blooming  
walking past a low bramble  
of bushes a rush of sparrows  
mugs the star

Monday, May 10, 2021

## Don't Worry

a kid / I ran inside  
to tell my father  
the sparrows all flew up  
when I ran toward them  
he turned to look at me  
the light caught his hair  
I saw new strands of grey  
long ago and far away

---

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

## Worry Baby

in the woods sometimes  
the trees are tall and dark  
the sun is stunned by darkness  
and the air's grown cold  
even in all this sometimes  
a willow wren's small voice  
calls me ahead

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

## Together Forever

in a town that's old  
in a New England state  
they're holding a sidewalk sale  
of old things ready to be forgotten  
or remembered if bought  
on an old upright vacuum a stringed tag  
twist in abrupt wind takes off  
lifetime guarantee it said

Thursday, May 13, 2021

## Giving

we walk away we walk away  
we don't work well  
I feel a failure  
time to give up



Friday, May 14, 2021

## Foo

I've wasted months  
writing an essay  
I won't even submit  
and lost a friend  
as part of the bargain

Saturday, May 15, 2021

## Quux

his hints are subtle  
or blunt / I still  
won't submit / I am not  
a good writer

Sunday, May 16, 2021

## No Goodbyes

I drove her to the airport  
it's hard to be cruel  
I waited with her near the gate  
it's a small airport  
when it was time she went through security  
then I saw her walking toward the plane  
its stairs / switching to omniscient  
when she got to the plane door  
she turned to wave / switching back  
I was already in my car

Monday, May 17, 2021

## **The Posed Couple**

the calm walk down Bridge Street  
the hornets nesting way down there  
the quick run up Bridge Street

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

## Church

who can say what the strangeness means  
who would want to make the safe place  
others want to play it safe and who  
can blame them / who is the fool here

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

## Too

like a delicate flower  
I can't take much  
my age makes me nervous  
perhaps grumpy

---

Thursday, May 20, 2021

## The Ride In

the early simmer dim  
comes to Lerwick  
I'll never return there  
the only path is through a person  
who is permanently away

---

Friday, May 21, 2021

## Worry Baby

what happens when you lose your skill  
when what you've worked on becomes trash  
when the friends you thought you had remove  
themselves leaving you to wonder when the skill  
will return / will it return



---

Saturday, May 22, 2021

## **Alone Across A Bridge**

me walking across a Paris  
bridge near midnight  
lights on everywhere  
the water flowing blackly  
me in a heavy coat  
cold as is the case  
in a cold month

Sunday, May 23, 2021

## Summer Light

already the night never  
darkens / the dim light  
is like the end of hope  
when winter returns all  
can become as it should

Monday, May 24, 2021

## **Losing It**

as the ship sails in  
I am preparing to ship out  
my incoherence is catching  
I cannot drive a straight  
story forward

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

## The Moon is Red

the moon tonight  
is cupped in fog  
the night has not begun  
tomorrow they say an eclipse  
will render it red  
my words will remain  
in two plain colors  
with contrast enough  
to just make them out

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

## Pair Bond

nights by the Merrimack  
slither of water toward the sea  
who can guess who'll pair up  
what they will do  
when the sun comes up  
and the river still flows  
one way or another  
the pair will break apart  
at least that's what life is

Thursday, May 27, 2021

## **Traveling All Day**

sitting by the water flowing  
a warm day / humid  
reading or snoozing  
waiting for the day to move along  
will I ever do that again

Friday, May 28, 2021

## Swamp Thing

among the greats  
I rank with the washed up  
how far into that swamp I am  
I don't know

---

Saturday, May 29, 2021

## Backup Code

the plodding is discouraging  
not sure if I'm slower  
or if the task is simply hard  
better not brag



---

Sunday, May 30, 2021

## Shetland Cakes

the little girls bake their cakes  
I say little because it's true  
and girls because that's what they are  
but they make cakes like Tolstoy  
writes a shopping list

Monday, May 31, 2021

## Nope

too much truth  
hard to take  
can I ever work  
with her again  
more likely the moon  
would wink or the word  
wink would nod

Tuesday, June 1, 2021

## Universality

is there a place  
that is the farthest from here  
if there is  
what is the farthest thing  
from this very word

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

## **Lousy**

detailed programming  
is still difficult  
hard to deal with other things

Thursday, June 3, 2021

## Best Shot

the ideas come together  
and it's ok of a sudden  
last night I worried  
what it would be to spend  
what's left in a fog  
then I recalled that detailed  
working always had the badness  
to it / I thought of the rocks  
thrown up a hundred feetby North Sea waves

Friday, June 4, 2021

## Marriage Day

marriage is a clamp  
that holds two  
keeps them from wandering too far  
we were married on a warm bright day  
by the bridge that means more  
to me than any place or any thing  
it was all quiet  
the water was still

Saturday, June 5, 2021

## Skyrapt Found

finding the young poems  
but can't read them  
as in I have no software  
that will read them  
but a hack sort of does  
and I can reconstitute them  
with work / poetry work

Sunday, June 6, 2021

## Letter

your letter arrived by late post  
I hadn't expected it / I never expected  
you to send anything / fate is interested  
but there is no moon tonight  
and I fear your words / I turn  
on every light in my reading room  
I move some books to make room for reading  
your letter



Monday, June 7, 2021

## Sunset Legs

woman near sunset  
she's watching what she can  
me / I'm behind her a ways  
I can see her legs through her skirt  
she is more silhouetted than some  
would realize / but I know her  
and she knows

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

## Fine Sand

on an otherwise perfect  
beach whose sand is white  
and fine / whose sand sings  
when you walk with dragging soles  
one blade a grass has sprung up  
the wind has whipped it into circles  
and those circles make one fine  
circle in the otherwise  
perfect beach

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

## Vast

though short  
the summer night is vast  
holding both the day's conflicts  
and their resolution in dreamflux  
the summer day responds with smells  
drifted into the rooms for night  
the vast night is nothing else  
but fragrance

Thursday, June 10, 2021

## Cellar and Lilac

the lilac large  
on the rim of the basement  
the house long burned down  
now a trash heap  
stone steps in front  
in back the entrance gap  
to the cellar / the lilac  
the smell of it when I was young  
I still recall it

Friday, June 11, 2021

## Confusing

beneath our covers  
she remains undressed  
after a night I stand  
by the window and imagine  
her dressed and ready  
to go

---

Saturday, June 12, 2021

## **Merrimac Elementary School**

my childhood school  
Spring after many rains  
the industrial strength  
swingset stands unmoving  
in the morning / the swings  
still and ready over  
their mud-bottomed puddles

Sunday, June 13, 2021

## Saw Rust

the saw was new we thought  
the carpenter had left it out  
after a day of hard chewing  
through hickory and oak  
it spent the dewed night  
resting on damp grass  
under a starry drape  
now it's speckled with rust  
and ready to try a cut

Monday, June 14, 2021

## Bird Head

on my walk into town  
a woman bent over a bird  
dead on the street / perhaps  
too slow before a car  
I heard her gasp that started  
as a weep / on her head a hat  
with a single plume



Tuesday, June 15, 2021

## Addition

flowers in pots by headstones  
they've chosen them for their fragrance  
underneath / their family waits  
for their bones to emerge  
add these smells together  
you get nothing

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

## Left Behind

when she died we thought  
hard how much of her to know  
her letters / photos in concealed  
albums / her locked diaries  
where she told herself about herself  
in her bedroom her fragrance was fading  
her pale ink lingered / lingers / we  
still think hard

Thursday, June 17, 2021

## Hail and Bass

after the hailstorm the river  
was running muddy and mist  
was rising from the brown water  
this didn't stop the family  
on the stony bank casting  
for stripers and smallmouth  
I caught them fishing  
caught them with my camera

---

Friday, June 18, 2021

## Last Guest

the last guest gone  
the door has closed off  
the tragic winter wind  
the grate's ash has fallen  
into a white weightless heap  
the sound once in this house  
is a faded linen / quiet  
cooling / slowness / all  
mean lonely / lonely at last

Saturday, June 19, 2021

## **Over and Over**

strange books are written  
like the 41 false starts  
showing how to write  
in all its boring glory

Sunday, June 20, 2021

## Haiku, But Too Long

the informal roads  
through our woods  
made to get to stands  
of good trees  
one late fall I walked  
to the maple grove  
and there the yellow leaves  
on the dampened earth told  
their two tales in a single  
voice of smell  
death is here  
hope is here

Monday, June 21, 2021

## Evening Train

I was at the train station  
to pick her up / a trip  
she'd planned for months  
sun was long down / it  
had been snowing  
the train came round a shallow bend  
slow from the town just uphill  
its diesel engine and trailing cars  
still covered with snow

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

## A Long River

our barn seemed old  
when I was young  
only when I was old  
did I learn it was ancient  
soon the discrepancy  
will be negligible



Wednesday, June 23, 2021

## Two Crows

along on a limb  
crow croaking and bobbing  
soon a second crow joins  
they croak and bob some  
then stop

they fly away as one

Thursday, June 24, 2021

## Same Difference

the owl outside our window  
starting to spend the night  
awake and hunting while we  
start to spend the night  
asleep and hunting

Friday, June 25, 2021

## Snow Viewing

snow coming down mid afternoon  
snow somewhere between flakes  
and freezing rain / when it lands  
on leaves it hisses / I find  
a place on pine needles clear  
enough to make for a viewing bed  
I watch snow catch on branches  
even twigs / I watch snow come  
back to earth

Saturday, June 26, 2021

## Victoria Pier

the couple walking the piers  
at 6am are not there early  
they've been like the sun  
this far north up all night  
things shining / they look  
in boats / let the mist-laden  
early air dampen only their clothes  
and hair / when she decides  
to leave he responds with a pretty  
good kiss / I see it all and replay  
it from the webcam and its persistent  
remembering

Sunday, June 27, 2021

## How We Love Them

the barn is an alternative  
but the cows prefer the trestle  
shelter near the water tub  
when it rains they one by one  
gather under it / I placed  
a lantern there / hung it  
from a beam and in the wind  
that comes with this rain  
it slowly sways above  
the wet and silent cattle

Monday, June 28, 2021

## Torrid Sun

when in the woods  
under a torrid sun  
I follow one simple  
rule / walk under  
the arches branches  
make / this tunnel  
will supply all  
you could need

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

## Garden Corner

in the corner of my garden  
the wind gathered many leaves  
they huddled there  
they shuddered there  
they were all colors  
with the same shape  
then things changed suddenly  
after their meeting  
the leaves all left

Wednesday, June 30, 2021

## Riverside

I've parked my car  
this side of the river  
over there a small town  
some steeples above all else  
all else brick buildings  
simple clapboard houses  
a dark sheet of cold spring  
rain has decided to drain  
onto that town / I sit here  
windows down and watch  
that rain and the river  
make love



---

Thursday, July 1, 2021

## Minneota

out here on the prairie  
it's a fact the fields  
are generously green  
an eternal green  
in the distance  
a train roars past

Friday, July 2, 2021

## Depart

in an empty town  
in a flat part  
of the world  
a train departs  
a dusty station  
taking with it  
the long summer

Saturday, July 3, 2021

## Summer

resting in the woods  
the spring rain still  
soaking the rotting log  
takes me back to my  
first break up

Sunday, July 4, 2021

## Sheltering

the rain / a hard rain  
at first / cold but  
not so cold / at first  
I was under the sheltering  
eave with the loud rain  
pounding / then the cold  
came hard / the quiet  
came soft / snow

Monday, July 5, 2021

## Red Sunset

sitting on the edge  
of our big field  
grasshoppers and all else  
hopping and flying  
in low circles / the stone  
wall makes a good seat  
but hard and old  
it's late early autumn  
an Indian summer  
you wonder who I am  
the setting red sun  
across the field  
shifts with the branches  
and leaves me as nothing  
I am nobody

Tuesday, July 6, 2021

## Lightning

from far away  
lightning unloaded  
the river rocks  
in the dry creek bed  
flashed on / then off

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

## Career

after a long bout of writing  
I am wringing my hands as if  
eager or worrying / but  
it's just this  
the editor is waiting

Thursday, July 8, 2021

## Art Shit

a rich man asked  
me to write him  
a poem about new-fallen  
snow on his whitebark birches  
in his Vermont woods / for money  
shit / this is not art



Friday, July 9, 2021

## **Piano**

oh how it plays  
the sound of the piano  
as it leaves the piano  
other sounds

Saturday, July 10, 2021

## Shetland Muse

listening to radio  
60 North / I picture  
walking the pier  
while the sun's deciding  
what setting means  
that is / red or orange  
on the blue calm water  
in the harbor which is a strait  
I remember you walking here  
too once / is it music  
is it color / is it water  
is it the radio

Sunday, July 11, 2021

## Quick Fear

crossing Commercial  
I head toward the end  
of Victoria Pier  
where I plan to watch  
the ferry come  
and later go  
but my heart froze  
so far before dawn  
behind I thought  
I heard footsteps

Monday, July 12, 2021

## Summer Ink

holed up all summer  
I wrote small haiku  
meaning not much meaning  
with a keg of rice wine  
and sacks of flour  
I wrote all summer  
the smell of freshly dried ink

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

## Else

outside my door  
in a heavy snowstorm  
a woman is passing  
by slowly with the wind  
in her face heading  
past me / to someone  
else

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

## Hills and Dips

I wondered why we  
fell apart / but  
it brings to me  
the urge to walk  
the ridge lines  
even with deep dips  
and explosive climbs  
but it's not the effort  
that draws me to these hills  
it's their draining sadness

---

Thursday, July 15, 2021

## Color

pear tree blossoming white  
a woman reads a letter  
the moon shining down  
on both is yellow  
my mood tonight is blue

Friday, July 16, 2021

## Smoke Away

next door our neighbor  
was burning leaves  
it was long ago when  
burning leaves was part  
of life / the wind though  
blew the smoke toward us  
filling our hearts with tears  
of memories / then it turned  
and blews the smoke away  
our memories / our hearts



Saturday, July 17, 2021

## *Sabi*

I went to a party  
one Saturday in my  
most colorful clothes  
and full of happiness  
to listen to music  
to talk to women  
to be alive / but alas  
I am old / so all they  
could see was a tall  
slow sadness

Sunday, July 18, 2021

## **Is Doing**

outside the snow is falling  
inside the smoke is rising  
close to you the desire is going  
behind me our lives are fading

Monday, July 19, 2021

## Shallow

the sandy bed  
of a shallow river  
on a summer afternoon  
mostly under the sun

the structure is light  
the form is light  
like this our love  
is tentative

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

## Hesitate

one great poet said  
to speak quickly  
without hesitation  
when composing a verse  
perhaps because doing  
that in life will bring  
tear-soaked sleeves

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

## Renga Versus Haiku

what poet sings  
of birches budding  
the new spring sunlight  
what poet speaks  
of a birch fallen  
after death and losing  
its bark / which poet  
would you prefer

Thursday, July 22, 2021

## **Sky Hope**

sitting on a short wall  
watching ships come and go  
it's hope I'm watching  
and its promise

Friday, July 23, 2021

## Hollow

many trees have blocked  
my way / hedges made to force  
me back / there is one though  
that lets me pass with artificial  
ease / a willow green  
in its hollow sadness

Saturday, July 24, 2021

## Metro

from a flat in a tall building  
the city below is a field of lights  
many colors / shapes like windows  
what faces upward is the white of snow  
I moved here to write / like this



Sunday, July 25, 2021

## Sewing Silk

she was sewing in her workroom  
nighttime after supper / after  
others fell asleep / doors  
all closed and windows barred  
she felt two old foxes brush  
by her knees while she sewed silk  
their tails dragging low / how  
old they were / how close  
to finality / how did  
they get in / they left  
she kept sewing

Monday, July 26, 2021

## Angry River

we live across the river  
from each other / a swift  
river and tidal / we both  
fear it no matter which way  
it flows / we never shout  
to each other or even stare  
no birds fly between us

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

## Walking

walking when walking  
was the only way  
on my way to a famous  
meeting / I passed  
a woman walking my way  
slowly sometimes / sometimes  
fast / she was elegant  
in a clinging dress  
she swayed sensuously  
I would pass her  
she would pass me  
one place we forked  
I have written of her  
every day now  
for a full long year

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

## Such a Day

she gathered his ashes  
and walked up the hill  
he gathered her ashes  
and walked up the hill  
I followed behind after  
a sad to saddest reading  
under a copper beach  
we gathered again for  
a holy speech  
we placed everything  
slowly in the concrete  
box / later men would come  
and cover everything up

Thursday, July 29, 2021

## Full

today I bought  
my last Christmas tree  
I didn't think of it  
that way / but never  
again a live one  
for some years  
we will put it up  
then for some years  
we will not  
when the last thing  
I can write has been written  
the full darkness  
will arrive

Friday, July 30, 2021

## Hotel Steaks

the farmers bring their wares  
fishermen too / fruit / vegetables  
butchers / flower venders  
everyone meets here  
Saturday mornings but  
be careful you don't buy  
stolen steaks  
my father did / they  
tasted great

Saturday, July 31, 2021

## **Black Mustang 1966**

a beautiful woman  
drove past me in her Mustang  
California plates / black and yellow  
I was on my bike though old  
enough not to be  
I wondered where she went  
this was in West Newbury  
3000 miles away from her home  
I never found her / but yet  
I write of her every year

Sunday, August 1, 2021

## Night Routine

after reading a great line  
I looked up and saw her white  
neck / her fine hand holding  
back her gray and black hair  
outside a storm wind / hard  
rain / as always I do what  
she asks / when she asks  
with no words / I go to her  
stand behind her / unzip her



Monday, August 2, 2021

## Wall

by my desk here writing  
in California a white chunk  
of the Berlin Wall / taken  
from the East side / hardest  
concrete I ever touched  
I smacked it out myself  
with a giant huge sledgehammer  
the links are hard on everyone

Tuesday, August 3, 2021

## Erased

I waited until she had finished  
getting ready for the day  
in the bathroom / face / hair  
eyes / lips / everything  
to be seen and also not  
it turned the hot tap  
preparing to shave / the mirror  
fogged a bit then more  
a name written by a finger  
rose from the mirror  
I didn't recognize it

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

## Role

who was I today  
she asks / a quiz  
for me lying on her bed  
she has nothing on  
is standing at the foot  
of the bed / by my feet  
in her closet the hanger  
with her dress still swings  
the answer hangs there

Thursday, August 5, 2021

## Shetlandery

such a hard place  
boxed in a narrow band  
of temperature it offers  
singular rains and winds  
ultimately long days and nights  
there aren't enough people  
to make beauty / but warmth  
will do when the wind's in the voe  
and the peat's burning slow  
and the dark is raging  
and the books are all read

Friday, August 6, 2021

## Carved

I've ordered my tombstone  
I asked my friend to design it  
how strange to have something  
that personal designed by  
only a friend / I suppose I could  
have loved her / instead we placed  
the tokens of life my parents loved  
on it and under it they now rest  
in urns together in a capsule  
with a memorial I wrote and read  
in it too / if only I could revise  
it

Saturday, August 7, 2021

## **Tex**

I spent the day helping  
someone when I needed to study  
need to stop that

Sunday, August 8, 2021

## Graveside

their lives made rocks  
the rage / when he died  
many mourned / some wondered  
whether she did / she still  
cooked his meals to the end  
he still washed all the dishes  
well / we buried him and after  
the casket was lowered she  
walked past to the lip of the hole  
her shadow fell on him

Monday, August 9, 2021

## None

in the church the nun  
is queen / torrid beauty  
is her habit / no lipstick  
she stuns me / but I have noticed  
she never sees me



Tuesday, August 10, 2021

## Sunshade

we woke early and I made  
my coffee before you scrambled  
out of bed / into the tub  
spring I suppose was one reason  
I went outside to sip  
listen to the warm wind  
fly toward us / when you opened  
the door the sun caught  
you hair like the prow of a boat  
coming into view

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

## Prairie

she spoke often  
of prairie eyes  
and woods eyes  
Bill Holm / the prairie  
laid out from here  
to the Rockies  
vast / the wind  
that comes East  
from the Rockies  
vast as the prairie

Thursday, August 12, 2021

## Shut It!

close the icebox  
why don't you  
she yelled  
at me across  
the small kitchen  
arms full I took  
a kick at the icebox  
door / missed  
it closed anyway

Friday, August 13, 2021

## Summer Rain Up North

on a summer night  
in a northern country  
the rain started down  
after we sat to read  
each our own books but then  
she asked me to shut  
off all the lights  
so we could better hear  
the rain

Saturday, August 14, 2021

## Typing

I was writing today  
snow was falling too  
white dropping down  
white rising up  
strangely I made progress  
and needed to open  
a box of typing paper  
at that point  
everything froze

Sunday, August 15, 2021

## Books

we were out walking  
she was in a literary mood  
the night made us into drowsy birds  
every house we passed  
had reading lights but one  
she reminded me  
tv blue on the lawn

Monday, August 16, 2021

## Day

she always warned me  
when she went up  
to bed / that if the writing  
got good I'd look up  
from it to daylight

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

## Something Then Everything

I followed the Merrimack  
down from Haverhill  
past West Newbury and Merrimac  
where the rocks scraped everything  
still the Merrimack under the green  
bridge / I paused on its shore  
to let the tide come in  
when it turned I returned  
to the Merrimack past Amesbury  
then Newburyport and Joppa Flats  
finally the river was no longer  
the Merrimack / it was the sea



Wednesday, August 18, 2021

## Cross Kirk Cemetery

I walked more distance  
than I needed to the graveyard  
she arrived somehow earlier  
she sat on a bench cleaned  
for the burial / two men or three  
had dug the hole / clods to one  
side / dirt then sand the other  
I stopped to read one headstone  
“he was a peaceable quiet man  
and to all appearance a sincere  
Christian” / it rained  
after the stranger was lowered  
to the bottom / we stayed to watch  
the two men or three / I can't  
recall / refilled the hole but  
some was left over / we thought  
is that where the soul goes

Thursday, August 19, 2021

## Berlin Leftovers

on my shelf  
the smooth white concrete  
chunk of Berlin Wall  
a bad luck charm  
toughest concrete  
I ever held / I bashed  
it out of the Wall myself  
with john henry's sledgehammer  
all my bad writing was done  
within three feet of it

Friday, August 20, 2021

## **Year of Two Summers**

we met Indian Summer  
on a far north island  
we were not well suited  
but there was no one else  
our affection was slim  
but Indian Summer / urgency

Saturday, August 21, 2021

## Anger Or Like It

we had a spiky day  
but we needed to dine  
together / so far  
she said no words  
I watched boats in the harbor  
she took a glass of red wine  
I don't know wines  
after while the sun setting  
caught her glass / sediment

Sunday, August 22, 2021

## Numbers

in a prison graveyard  
in the South / even though  
the headstones of 100 years  
ago still stand all we know  
of the people buried there  
are their dates of death  
and their prisoner numbers  
what use are names

Monday, August 23, 2021

## Lobby Life

we sat in the lobby  
for hours waiting  
for something important  
to come our way or at least  
for an idea of where to go  
sitting silently we heard  
the elevator doors open  
no one was inside / after a bit  
the doors closed

Tuesday, August 24, 2021

## Third Date

third date / I took  
her in my yawl  
to the middle of my home voye  
we wore good clothes  
imagine some time passing  
then picture the yawl  
drifting with the tide

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

## Time of Rain

she remembers it this way  
outside autumn is sliding in  
with it a rain starting warm  
soft against the windows  
draining down to the meadow  
pushed up against our place  
the telephone blurts one ring  
just one then almost silence  
the rain soft against the windows



Thursday, August 26, 2021

## **Tender is the Night**

on such a winter's day  
she removed her glove  
to stroke the side  
of my teared face

Friday, August 27, 2021

## Stories

when she was old my  
mother would tell  
stories about me  
as a kid and none  
of them were true  
I could tell she  
wanted them to be

autumn / I let her

---

Saturday, August 28, 2021

## One Another

her hair pulled back  
all night when we could  
have been / instead  
she sang and I read  
then we reversed

Sunday, August 29, 2021

## Past

she sat and read  
by our cast iron stove  
warming our small croft  
as evening came up the hill  
from the voe / and with evening  
the late summer fog that considered  
the darkened landscape and replaced it  
with a white clean slate which is the future

Monday, August 30, 2021

## **For Love**

forever I believed  
I was smart and would love  
only the smart / her grammar  
was bad / her hair blew quick  
in the wind / I grew dumb

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

## **Late Fall**

the trees leaveless  
have gathered around  
to mock the thoughts  
gathered in my usually  
empty head

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

## Travel

the morning paper  
comes with breakfast  
but before it unfolds  
at my table I'm never  
certain what language  
it will reveal

Thursday, September 2, 2021

## Watch

I have one of those  
pocket watches that can hold  
a photo / my grandfather's watch  
I'm told / in it a photo of a woman  
her hourglass shape in high contrast  
her hair bunched up on her head  
I tell people she is mine  
but she was his / now both  
gone



Friday, September 3, 2021

## Eshanness

we watched waves down below  
we sat among tough stones  
thrown up this ridiculous  
height to land as benches  
one wave comes in and lunges  
the cliff face / then a lull  
where birds and nothing happens  
then the next / like us

---

Saturday, September 4, 2021

## Family Men

I swung the axe first  
splitting a candlepine in two  
then my father  
splitting a candlepine almost in two  
then my son  
splitting the axe handle  
nearly killing us

Sunday, September 5, 2021

## Ma

my mother hated death  
hated the work of taking  
care of its work  
she left me that work  
in the form of my father  
in the form of her  
she planned all this  
I got the stone  
with help designed it  
with help chose my poem  
insisted it be hand carved  
planned the memories to be spoken  
watched the process to the end  
I think I hate death too

Monday, September 6, 2021

## Like A Shetland Night

wet evening / dreary conversation  
we spoke without connection  
I supposed one of us would change  
point of view but neither did  
I remember she laughed louder  
and longer than I'd ever heard  
before but cannot recall over what  
wet and dreary

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

## DMV

after studying for a hundred hours  
for a written test and another  
hundred hours for a practical  
followup test / both were waived  
one at a time / weeks apart  
at least I know more  
and am well trained

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

## Romance

the cliff never moves  
no matter the battering  
of waves turned upon it  
from the mind of afar wind  
the water though flows  
around every spike and into  
every cleft / is this  
like us

Thursday, September 9, 2021

## Romance 2

we finished our supper  
one lobster apiece  
one could wonder whether  
we will make it  
we left two plates behind  
lobsters tails aligned

Friday, September 10, 2021

## Were We

we walked out Victoria Pier  
in drenching fog midwinter  
we wiped the bench  
with our gloved hands  
sat listening to small waves  
watching for sporadic lights  
the late boats returning  
to anyone passing  
we looked like lovers



Saturday, September 11, 2021

## Onions

on a night made for forgetting  
I cut onions and started sautéing them  
I was waiting for your call before  
I started / the air turned from pungent  
to sweet while I kept waiting

Sunday, September 12, 2021

## Lap Hands

my hand in her lap  
by the river after dark  
late autumn / I struggled  
to find words to end  
our silence / at the same time  
her fingers explored mine  
one by one

Monday, September 13, 2021

## Wool

in the wool shop  
shopping for mittens  
and gloves the clerk  
who watches us calls  
you my wife / until  
we leave the store  
we let that be true

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

## View

she wanted to see  
the ocean rage  
late December  
we went to the cliffs  
standing by the edge  
in the spray surging upward  
I thought the ocean angry  
she thought romance

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

## **Again**

on the ferry  
from Yell to Unst  
standing at the back rail  
only sky / only water  
you

Thursday, September 16, 2021

## **Blast**

another gig in mid-fall  
Gondolyn is the name of the house  
around our feet cords connect  
guitars to pedals and pedals to amps  
to speakers / or mics etc  
no matter the care at the start  
by gig end the scramble of cords  
are like melted notes of frantic music  
plus a ballad

Friday, September 17, 2021

## Arrivals

the morning paper arrived  
in the box by my door  
it slipped quietly into my life  
the stories / the pictures  
something of life came with it  
one morning you arrived  
by the box near my door

Saturday, September 18, 2021

## Word Field

surprise / you at the far  
end of a long field  
just coming out from a trail  
me at the other end  
sitting on a bench reading  
many words / when I see you  
I think of all the words  
that could fit between  
me and you / right here  
if you'd just look up  
and see me



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Sunday, September 19, 2021

## End

between us that bad night  
the word "good"  
a stretch of short questions  
a stretch of short answers  
the word "bye"

Monday, September 20, 2021

## Ugliness

she asked me  
what does it mean  
when a beautician asks you  
have you ever been  
to a beautician before

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

## **Straight Road**

this hill means much to us  
past it the road is direct  
immediately to the sea  
we stop there to wish  
things were more complex

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

## **Hotel By A Lake**

alone in my bed  
hoping for her call  
the phone next door  
rings and rings

Thursday, September 23, 2021

## Love

all the leaves have fallen  
the mountain spring once angry  
is stilled by emptiness  
strewn here and there  
rocks and broken twigs

Friday, September 24, 2021

## Inlet

a great artist painted  
a picture of you by the window  
looking out over the inlet  
it is my favorite / it preserves  
what I find most constant  
in you / in it your face  
is turned away

Saturday, September 25, 2021

## Wasn't

a woman of wealth  
asked me to write  
a poem of snow  
her fond ideas of Shetland  
I did and was paid  
well enough to stop  
another woman said  
too bad it wasn't art

Sunday, September 26, 2021

## Good Night

a short night  
in the best season  
we fell in love  
in Spring but Summer  
stopped us even  
with our pants  
down / how does love  
thrive over a short  
night



Monday, September 27, 2021

## Your Island

your world is on  
the other side  
you don't like  
talking like  
this / is my  
face too old  
for you / too  
sad / on my map  
you're only  
inches away

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

## **Train Line**

the train rounding a bend  
after leaving the station  
a hill just starting right there  
the train swaying slowly  
on the tracks even when the rail bed  
is solid / autumn / it disappears  
like that / she is on board

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

## Shetland News

autumn and the moon  
knows it / the road  
past my house is muddy  
in the struggling darkness  
watching and watching carefully  
I see no one walking by

Thursday, September 30, 2021

## Twilight

north twilight  
hills to the west  
between me and sea  
dark as teeth  
biting into our sky

Friday, October 1, 2021

## Harsh Love

I asked her what she meant  
by the deep still silence  
of her love of a harsh place  
she said it was like the sound  
rain makes after it's turned  
to snowfall

Saturday, October 2, 2021

## Love And Fish

we've parked at the top  
of the city hill above  
the harbor and have started  
down / the lanes are stone  
and narrow / houses around us  
with lights on / a winter evening  
on a chilly island / dinner  
awaits and as we get closer  
to the bottom / closer  
to the waterfront / our noses  
sniff finally the welcoming  
smell of frying fish

Sunday, October 3, 2021

## The Return

the town where I grew up  
wants to welcome me back  
but hesitates when it realizes  
it doesn't know me any more  
I cross the line from next town  
to this and at first I feel  
the warmth of a rainy welcome  
but then the snowfall takes charge  
and I am coldly alone once more

Monday, October 4, 2021

## From Aberdeen

the ship rounds the point  
between harbor and open sea  
the long journey is about to end  
the woman I wait for should be  
on that ship rising from her cabin  
bunk / perhaps a breakfast awaits  
perhaps a long talk



Tuesday, October 5, 2021

## Short Stories

walking through the old cemetery  
the sun asking me to read carefully  
the tombstones carry stories  
the shortest ones possible  
sometimes two are linked  
by death one place / by marriage another  
the stories grow a little  
but remain still / short

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

## Dream of Perfection

I decided the best place  
was the edge of the field  
across the road from our house  
the overgrown stone wall waited  
for me for fifty years  
the sun had practiced going down  
behind where I'd sit first then  
lie down / I did the big loop  
from this farm my long passed  
family made and grew / I thought  
I was special and would do special  
things / no / the best thing was to bring  
the poetry of perfect endings  
to this modest field / to this modest  
wall / to this modest twilight

Thursday, October 7, 2021

## No One Can See Me

outside the demonstration city  
in the old DDR we stopped at an empty  
factory and storehouse in March  
we stopped by abandoned tracks  
where fat flakes fell / later  
the girl with intensive red hair  
stood in front of me / I knew then  
nothing more could happen

---

Friday, October 8, 2021

## Left

the storm last night  
blasted yellow autumn  
leaves onto a brick wall  
by our house / now  
that the sun has made  
its way here it is warming  
the wall / dropping the leaves

Saturday, October 9, 2021

## City Snow

the city beset with snow  
which fell for days  
has disappeared from our understanding  
streets familiar now outshine  
our eyes in the day and orange  
lights paint puzzlement everywhere  
the city we knew has gone  
we are all that's left  
that we can understand

Sunday, October 10, 2021

## Cold Bed

I passed by her house  
while snow was falling  
outside her door a van  
was stopped and two  
men were unloading a mattress  
snow fell on it while  
they waited for her  
to open the door  
later everything  
would be warm

Monday, October 11, 2021

## Pause

the crow cawed twice  
she put our fish in a pan  
over a weak gas flame  
butter melted and fish  
dipped a bit in batter  
our kitchen window open  
to make a path for the smoke  
after a while she flipped  
them and soon we had them  
at our table the crow cawed  
twice more

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

## Lonely Ness

our guests have left  
they're on their way  
through a deepened snowfall  
that'd come up sudden off  
the Atlantic / the flames  
in the fire grate have burned  
the oak down to white ash  
except for her / it is lonely



Wednesday, October 13, 2021

## Dry Leaving

at the edge of a field  
the second half of autumn  
from inside the woods comes  
the crushed sound of fallen  
leaves being walked on  
I stand / something moves

Thursday, October 14, 2021

## **A Walk**

the harbor is near empty at dawn  
the clouds and fog have closed in  
the water is flat and sheens  
here and there soft lights burn on  
in this calmness they blaze

Friday, October 15, 2021

## Preacher Man

from inside the abandoned church  
roofless and water-stained  
as we approached from the sea  
we could hear the sound of a preacher still  
at work / stating wisdom  
drawing faith / as we drew closer  
the preaching resolved  
to the caw of an insistent crow

Saturday, October 16, 2021

## She Saw It

she pointed it out  
but I couldn't see it  
we were in a hardwood forest  
with leaves down everywhere  
big gaps between the trees let  
winds pass through with passion  
it was one leaf above all others  
tripping along pushed by the wind  
over the bed beneath it of dry leaves

Sunday, October 17, 2021

## **Rain Rain Go Away**

the spring rain came dropping  
and droning down on our metal roof  
it came from some town West of here  
and will go to some town East of here  
and I have the hills to prove it

Monday, October 18, 2021

## **Train Horn**

they said they could hear the train  
couple times a day curving  
around their farm in a loop  
from Haverhill to Merrimac  
a train's horn loud different  
times of day / it signaled  
nothing special / just  
time passing

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

## Arrivals

we rarely wake before dawn  
today we were waiting for Winter  
by our house the road  
passes through a tunnel of trees  
the sky was lowering as dawn  
came up / then we waited for snow

Wednesday, October 20, 2021

## A Winter's Day

I remember as a kid  
putting on a heavy coat  
and boots / going out and across  
the road to our big field  
with the stone dead center  
I crossed over the stone wall  
between two shag barks  
then went counter clockwise  
past the hayrake and side delivery  
down a slight slope to the double  
stone wall with a forgotten path  
between the walls / then to the back  
stonewall / then the apple tree  
then more wall until finally  
a left straight to the pear orchard  
then out the main gate  
and back into the over warm house



Thursday, October 21, 2021

## **Red Sunset**

the red sun at sunset  
decided to take many things  
with it / included was  
my name and my fondness  
for you

Friday, October 22, 2021

## Spring Pools

after a rain the yard  
in front of the cow barn  
glinted spring skies  
a patchwork of pools  
of puddles made from hoof  
prints filled to their brims  
with fresh rain water  
everything in its place

Saturday, October 23, 2021

## **Moonstones**

the moon made the night warmer  
the road was lit profusely  
as I walked from my house  
toward the water and I was surprised  
the effect the moonlight had reflecting  
off the rows of headstones in the now  
familiar cemetery I always walked past

Sunday, October 24, 2021

## Swamp

the farm was covered  
with swamps / in Spring  
when it rained and I was walking  
one of the cow trails  
I could hear through the thickets  
from the midst of underbrush  
a small spring trickling / water  
entering an invigorated swamp

Monday, October 25, 2021

## Vernacular

on the darkening road  
out of Faywood into the wild  
we passed several towns  
with no names filled  
with trailers and mobile homes  
some with houses tilted up  
against them and all with pickups  
with their hoods up and men  
hunched over them

Tuesday, October 26, 2021

## Storm Night

as the hurricane lingered  
we sat around an iron stove  
with kerosene lanterns all around  
the smell of it burning  
pushed suddenly with the passing wind  
it was too dark to read  
too dark even to talk / instead  
we took turns adjusting the logs

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

## Out of Sync

on one of our cold nights  
the stove ticks as it heats  
a potbelly we bought dozens  
of times ago / at the same time  
the large clock we bought  
ticks loudly as an old clock must  
and the spirograph of those ticks  
changes forever

Thursday, October 28, 2021

## Mirror

Sunday afternoon  
she is cleaning in her undies  
while she wipes the mirror clean  
her hips signal the watchers



Friday, October 29, 2021

## Dead Croft

we stopped to consider  
an abandoned house / a croft  
I suppose by its form  
we were exploring roads  
as we usually did Sundays  
this one had a collapsed roof  
with Russian vines growing  
over it and fallen leaves  
piling in the rooms  
the roof came low you see  
and the windows and a door  
let light in / we admired it  
walked around it / made plans  
for it / drove away from it

Saturday, October 30, 2021

## Ferry Crossing

she meets me at the dock  
ferry just in early morning fog  
she says nothing / greets me  
like I'm a job / we drive miles  
to a cold house / the wind gales  
the smell of salt air is upon us  
she is good with tasks / always  
on time / this time was the last time

Sunday, October 31, 2021

## Halloween

this date arrives each year  
many times I've been playing  
gigs around now / these days  
I am happy to be able to write  
to write code / to read / to walk  
around / I am this time of year  
I am this weather / this darkness  
I've watched them all one at a time  
walk away / turn away / drift outward  
where I'm headed is the place of Stephen  
King stories

Monday, November 1, 2021

## Walking Home

I am walking home alone  
after a night sitting in a bar  
the moon is a thin sliver  
hanging silver where the sun  
will rise / it's lonely  
I'm cold / I'm lonely  
it's cold / the bed  
that awaits awaits alone

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

## Ranch View

the lights come on  
while the air grows cold  
I sit up here on the rise  
in my car / below it's a town  
in the flat part of the country  
where they grow everything  
in the distance a coyote  
in the distance a train  
running west / I read a story  
about this place once

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

## The Letter

write me a letter  
sit at our old table  
outside the kitchen  
tell me things that could have been  
true / describe the sea slamming  
up against the sea stacks  
we used to watch at sunset  
use the pen you used to write  
your goodbye but fill it  
with blue ink not black  
look up to the clouds  
before you sign  
but sign

Thursday, November 4, 2021

## Sudden

wind fills the valley  
combs the lake's skin  
our fire's smoke wrinkles  
then bolts away / the fire  
just hot orange coals  
up on the ridge it must be worse  
the aspens' leaves show silver  
the white bark as snow

Friday, November 5, 2021

## Widow View

after rounding the bend  
the hill makes in the road  
from shore I see the widow's  
housetlights just coming on  
a sort of yellow from lantern  
light or the low flame of her  
candles / but above all  
is the wisp of white smoke  
from her single chimney  
rising from the center  
of her hearth



Saturday, November 6, 2021

## Summer Rain

summer rain the day  
she came to my place  
sat at my table while  
I made tea / she said  
she'd walked past the graveyard  
where all her people lay  
and mine too / we lived  
here so long and they  
she said it was a young man  
she saw walk its paths  
walk them and stop to read  
stories unfolding by summer rain

Sunday, November 7, 2021

## **Snow Climb**

a layer of snow up  
on the mountain we hoped  
to ascend / so snowshoes  
came out and we tried it  
our dogs bent hell around us  
we made it to the ridge  
where we watched the lake  
grow closer as the sun went down  
we pitched our tent  
we cooked / we slept

Monday, November 8, 2021

## Wet Fish

across the river  
from the eager fishermen  
throwing their lines with hope  
a sudden heavy downpour  
is adding to the wet

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

## Gone

I ran to tell her  
come out and see  
I know it's cold  
but over there  
over above that mountain  
just one star  
a bright bright star  
just one  
only one  
she came out slowly  
where is it she said

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

## **Eshanness Today**

the waves were crashing  
over the wide sea stack  
crashing a hundred feet  
or more / black sea / white  
foam / gray clouds / high  
winds / spray up to us  
we watched until our eyes  
hurt / until our fingers  
couldn't warm no matter what  
the waves kept crashing

Thursday, November 11, 2021

## Dumb

in the village houses huddle  
together they make a small pile  
we've visited it often enough  
to know the streets used to be mud  
this time of year / spring  
we heard some people in their kitchen  
saying the dumbest things  
will this stupidity spread  
house to house like a fast fire

Friday, November 12, 2021

## **But It's God**

church bell loud in the crook  
of the valley / cows look up  
when it starts / we're just  
walking down the road to the voe  
to watch a tide / the Drongs  
the church bells remind us  
it could have all been designed  
much better

Saturday, November 13, 2021

## Touch Me

the dry soft autumn wind  
as I watch out our bedroom  
window hardly lifts one red  
dried leaf and sets it down  
gently on a yellow

she in a depth of sleep  
turns over away from the window  
the frames a morning life



Sunday, November 14, 2021

## What We Left

years after we left  
our place in the north  
even though it was mostly  
stone one cold winter day  
let out a creak loud enough  
to make mice scurry as that house  
settled a little bit more  
into the understoned earth

---

Monday, November 15, 2021

## Under Pressure

it started as a cloud  
almost in late autumn  
then it descended as all cooled  
squeezing layers of fallen leaves  
down to the yielding earth  
signaling the pressure of time

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

## Stranger in Town

we lived for a time  
on the town's main street  
40 50 years ago / far  
from everywhere  
I still remember the day  
the strange stranger  
walked slowly into town  
pausing by a church tower  
looking at its clock  
then walked just as slowly  
out

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

## Rustling Up

I opened the window  
autumn fully cooling  
it rustled her papers  
strewn on the table  
she was working  
on poems for one friend's  
wedding and another's  
funeral

Thursday, November 18, 2021

## Harboring Boats

the harbor open  
to many boats  
sometimes harbors  
cruise ships  
bringing the ugly  
and tedious to a land  
stark and lovely

Friday, November 19, 2021

## She Laughed

outside reading  
I laid down my book  
open since noon  
when the sunlight  
overtook the beech  
then I noticed  
the fern brushing  
in a silky breeze  
the side of my leg

Saturday, November 20, 2021

## Or Blue

we sat on a wood bench  
each warming the other's  
hands / December after Christmas  
the wind so cold / so hard  
the sky had been chock full  
of gray clouds just above  
the mountain top / while  
we watched that wind cleared  
them away to a sapphire sky  
that same wind froze the lake  
before us / still

Sunday, November 21, 2021

## Captured Rain

above us it's clear  
that rain is falling  
high up / the wind  
responding mists it  
and nothing touches  
the ground / we watch



Monday, November 22, 2021

## Winter Wind

in the midst of a winter snowstorm  
she remarks all is white / one color  
even at night we hunker in this color  
nevertheless / it's the wind

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

## Looking

first day of spring  
we drove ten miles  
to the coast / a little  
island joined by a bridge  
and the Atlantic there  
we watched birds arriving  
and felt a warming wind  
she stood apart / studied  
the waves and ripples  
standing back all I could think  
of was the last day of autumn

Wednesday, November 24, 2021

## Drowsy and Sore Eyes

driving west through Kansas  
the sun gone down no longer  
an eyesore / we were hungry  
and needed to sleep soon  
seeing a motel we'd first  
check it for okness then  
vacancy / cable and internet  
not needed / a nearby  
restaurant would help / we  
settled on Wheat Lands / then  
it was steakhouse or Thai

Thursday, November 25, 2021

## Sleeping

I wake from sleep  
our village is sleeping  
deep in winter  
the stream flowing  
past our small house  
has a drop just past us  
and all I can hear  
is falling water

Friday, November 26, 2021

## Meaning Love

sitting alone in the dark  
after reading then dozing  
I woke when she came in  
and lit my candle with hers

Saturday, November 27, 2021

## Poet Work

I walked with the poet  
through field and forest  
we were seeking the most  
conscious place to sit  
and stir until it was time  
to write / we found a spot  
near a tiny almost dry stream  
that hoped to flow to the sea  
but then our words couldn't rise  
and what we wrote went down  
like stars into the horizon

Sunday, November 28, 2021

## Winter Snorkeling

with snow piled to the roof  
we unpacked all our sleeping bags  
unzipped them and piled them  
like the snow / on top of us  
on a bed we placed all our down  
quilts under us to form  
a sandwich of just we two

did I mention we ran out  
of peat and logs

Monday, November 29, 2021

## Essence

summer rain  
gurgling down  
my drainpipe  
reminds me that time  
needs us  
to notice it



Tuesday, November 30, 2021

## Moonlight Letter

I saw her sitting  
outside in the moonlight  
on a stone wall that separates  
house and road / nearby  
a cherry tree waits for fall  
to consume it / she sits there  
reading a letter from an old lover  
she never looks back toward  
our house

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

## Gates

there is a gate  
standing between the house  
and the sea / warmth  
and motion / sometimes  
I look to the sky at midnight  
and wonder whether around some star  
a world spins with oceans moving  
like the one past my gate  
whether there is a thing like a woman  
waiting for a thing like a man  
to join her in warmth / up there  
or what is a gate for

Thursday, December 2, 2021

## Facebook Friend

I am sitting here watching the fire place  
thinking of things that happened around Christmas time  
and in the 80s it was actually cold and snowing  
around here with Ice in the river and one night  
around Christmas I was with my Brother Billy sitting  
around keeping the wood stove Going and just then  
the police station called on the radio Kca865  
to The Harbor Master and I could hear it in his voice  
something was really wrong and he said a Girl  
had jumped off the Basiliere Bridge so Billy and I  
grabbed the Truck and our Airboat and went  
to the Bradford Landing on ferry street  
and there was snow on the ground so we slid  
the airboat off the trailer right on the snow  
and was wearing a t shirt like Billy we didn't have time  
to dress properly flew down the boat ramp  
and out on the river that had big chunks of ice the wind  
was out of the north west about 30 and I quickly thought  
the current and ice was moving fast down river so I knew  
she had to travel a good distance so we went down river  
towards the Boxboard and Billy was operating the search light  
as we got close to the Hales island Billy screamed  
there she is quickly pulled her in the airboat and operated  
the airboat right up to Shannahan Ambulance she recovered thank God  
the Fire Chief Dickie B came the next day to thank me and Billy  
and he told us that she was a Daughter of a Fireman  
And all these years later she is my friend on Facebook

Friday, December 3, 2021

## Clarity

it rained today  
again / it rained  
yesterday / when  
my father's last days  
were upon him nothing  
felt wrong / I suspect  
though don't know  
each day the rain lessened  
then the skies cleared  
then the last day  
a clear day

Saturday, December 4, 2021

## December Winds

the strong wind that blows  
the ships hard and tightens  
the mooring lines is tunneled  
through narrow streets to the town's  
Christmas tree in Market Cross  
where it threatens to tear  
off ornaments or topple cheer

Sunday, December 5, 2021

## **In Pairs**

the empty hole of a house  
long gone / burned down  
where I played as a child  
now the lilac next to it  
once always covered in Spring  
with panicles light lavender  
has grown old

Monday, December 6, 2021

## Women Come and Go

the one with gray hair  
accepts the embrace of  
the one with brown hair  
as if they'd never met  
as if they've always met  
mother / daughter  
drifting

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

## Light Reading

by the river  
flowing past  
under a willow tree  
I sat quietly reading  
a book about strange things  
all I could do was absorb  
it like lotion I don't want  
on my skin / when I sat down  
I intended to stay only  
a little while



Wednesday, December 8, 2021

## Because Mystery

suppose the world  
does not exist  
but is a construct  
of my mind / then  
I would know all  
there is to know  
about the world  
and looking deeper  
would reveal nothing  
if I could not imagine  
it / but the world  
is a mystery and when  
I look I see more  
revealed / therefore  
the world exists

Thursday, December 9, 2021

## On Tuesday

as usual on a Tuesday  
we sat by the river  
under an oak and near  
a birch / on a bench  
with lunches and books  
in Autumn / the mid part  
and instead of eating  
instead of reading  
even instead of talking  
or kissing we watched  
the leaves fall into the river  
to be drifted out to sea

Friday, December 10, 2021

## Tender Buttons

tender care of a mother  
long ago / I remember it  
eagerly but memory's lover  
is imagination / being held  
to her breast / was that springtime  
or was it a mixtape of sentimental  
poems

Saturday, December 11, 2021

## Rhythm Café, Merrimac

the café was in an old  
bank / barely sixteen tables  
the kitchen right there / all of it  
just one room / not a big one  
every entrée's aroma  
added its distinctiveness  
to the atmosphere / every meal  
added its moisture to the air  
she ate with me there just once  
in a cold November and she said  
it was a real place / now gone  
and the good places are down  
by one

Sunday, December 12, 2021

## Safe

I live in a hut by the sea  
in a bay / my stone hut  
just feet above high tide  
usually / I work at writing  
not a noble task like fishing  
or farming / I sell some of it  
enough to eat / who needs more  
every year a king tide comes up  
nearly entering over the sill  
my writing desk is heavy and high  
my life is sage

Monday, December 13, 2021

## Short Nights

when nights are short  
we spend it thinking  
about sleep / when light  
creeps in we hear  
a small shop opening  
not far away in the village

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

## Laden

she spent the day  
driving toward an ocean  
but spent the night  
dreaming of desert

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

## Grumble

she would grumble at me  
every night after our meal  
Summer / Winter especially  
I never knew the reason  
I'd need to pay attention  
to know / one night the moon  
though was bright enough  
for the two of us but she  
had gone out into town  
I missed her then



Thursday, December 16, 2021

## Tourist Office

the window I watch  
lit strange times  
curtains hard to make out  
on a webcam showing a town  
north of sixty degrees  
it's never cold there  
not for sixty degrees  
but the rain / the gales  
a place I could hide

Friday, December 17, 2021

## The Path

in the small valley  
leading to my mother's  
hidden grave young  
maples in Spring ring a deep  
deep dark red / they will  
last all Summer / into  
Autumn

Saturday, December 18, 2021

## **Bark**

ten poets came to visit me  
once / I put them around the room  
in a circle like a circle of foo dogs  
they clamored to spout lines  
I gave in but only to the tune  
ten poets one song each

Sunday, December 19, 2021

## Covid Days

pausing while writing a note  
to me in the chat window  
on Zoom she fingers her hair  
back with one hand

---

Monday, December 20, 2021

## **Time of Year**

what a night / the harbor  
calm / the water a mirror  
this happens mostly never  
for Christmas the light's  
blue and the pier accommodates  
I wish she were like this

Tuesday, December 21, 2021

## The Fog Day

the fog heavy clinging  
to the sounds I hear  
around a corner or down  
the street / I listen  
as vigorously as I can  
and the sounds start  
to form a shape and the fog  
still clings and wets  
my optimism / finally  
the shape is a half  
circle of giggling  
school girls

Wednesday, December 22, 2021

## **The Swarm**

my swarm doesn't work  
need to figure out why  
has to do with work  
stealing / very hard to debug

Thursday, December 23, 2021

## Endings

swarm fixed and understood  
my team loses and the season's  
lost / cold out and still  
worthless work to do



Friday, December 24, 2021

## Sea and Snow

a deep snow before me  
fallen last night and keeping  
me from the sea / the sea  
that refuses the cold's force  
the snow a concealing drapery  
I can stand only here  
on a slight rise above the edge  
where small waves vibrate  
the snow is around me / you  
far off

Saturday, December 25, 2021

## Dawn Bell

one morning I climbed  
the spiral stairs to  
the church bell tower  
looking out I saw our home  
distant and serene  
I brushed my fingers  
on the bell and it softly  
called back / next morning  
at cold dawn a bell woke us  
was it the same bell

Sunday, December 26, 2021

## Only the River

one day the river froze  
solid down where the ocean  
pushed in like a groom and nothing  
of that river at that place  
moved / the pack so dense  
and unyielding / ice like this  
made the river calm  
the calmness of frigidity

Monday, December 27, 2021

## Gentle

the wintry river  
flowing hard to the sea  
ice in small piles  
along for the ride  
from my writing desk  
above I see a wide white  
straight-edged blot  
a newspaper open wide  
along for the ride

Tuesday, December 28, 2021

## Hands

in the cold in front of all  
she rubs her hands together  
to warm them / a thousand  
time she rubs them together  
ten thousand times / this is  
she say her right as a woman

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

## Glassless

at dusk a woman  
walked by outside  
my window which  
stood open to the oncoming  
night air / I could look  
directly at her without  
the intercession of glass  
we were almost together

Thursday, December 30, 2021

## Blue Lantern

I bought a paper lantern  
once in Taos while hoping  
for a woman / a blue ocean  
painted on it reminded me  
of a place she and I could  
be / the candle must have fallen  
because when I turned back  
the ocean was tinged  
in a flame red / love

Friday, December 31, 2021

## Tonight After Dark

tonight I watched the webcams  
at Market Cross hoping to watch  
a celebration of a year  
no one / not a one / some walked  
by and some woman looked alluring  
a calm night and so far from here  
tonight I learned Betty White died  
it meant death never loses  
almost a hundred / I looked again  
and the rain had started

I thought then of walking by the water  
dark in the harbor / the air around me  
dark / the sky above me dark  
the winter dark dropped into the water  
darkening it / every bit of darkness  
made even the darkness darker / or  
so it seemed to me



# **Nothing To Inscribe But Stones**

Richard P. Gabriel

January 2, 2023

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Saturday, January 1, 2022

## Lover's Bell

inscribed on the church bell  
is my lover's name / spot-welded  
on by my closest friend one weekend  
every Tuesday three minutes before dawn  
I climb to the belfry on a ladder  
and sound the bell just once  
the sound's beauty starts with  
the name on the bell / the name I love

Sunday, January 2, 2022

## Cliff Ends

the end of this island  
is a steep hill ending  
with a sharp cliff  
many lovers no doubt  
have ended here too  
to get there you walk  
miles up the long hill  
sometimes you pass  
three tall stones  
they are there  
for your wonderment

Monday, January 3, 2022

## Sunless

I imagined her in her  
swimsuit tanned rough  
by the sun over weeks  
of Summer / I imagined  
her stripping off her  
bottoms and tops whiteness  
her sunless skin  
the same white skin  
as the day she was born

Tuesday, January 4, 2022

## Big Poetry

I wrote in brushstrokes  
the poetry of forgetting  
the tip of my brush small  
in beginning firelight  
later that night  
as the fire grew my poems  
became fat and furious

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

## Cleaved

in frosty mountain country  
she stayed in her cabin  
while painting her memory  
of Spring day after day  
while clouds basked above  
one morning the sun arrived  
heating the southern face  
of her cabin and she decided  
to open / the door to face the sun  
her kimono to warm her hidden self

Thursday, January 6, 2022

## Site of Mirages

she got in her car  
one desert morning  
she had packed and prepared  
and the car was full  
of every thing  
on the road away  
heat waves rose and her car  
and she became for a time  
mirages / as if never happened  
she / her car / every thing



Friday, January 7, 2022

## Night Ball / Haverhill

in 1960 the first time  
I saw a baseball game  
played at night over  
in Haverhill the field  
was lit from three directions  
by panels of lights held  
on posts / the light was unreal  
as many things artificial then were  
and the light on the players and field  
formed a mystery more alluring  
than the game itself

Saturday, January 8, 2022

## Grief

after she died I fell  
into grief spending  
each day in a chair  
looking out and each  
night in that chair  
looking out / one night  
someone walking by  
stepped on a withered  
branch and the dull snap  
of it deepened my already  
immeasurable sadness

Sunday, January 9, 2022

## Hedge

along the road to town  
a rose hedge sat low  
and when I rode by each day  
the roses would redden  
my day / but come night  
heading home the low hedge  
was invisible / only stars  
above and redness below

---

Monday, January 10, 2022

## Ice

our small home  
small pond next it  
we next to the sea  
in Winter once  
a thin skin of ice  
on our nearby pond  
the sea nearby  
was too vast for ice

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

## Softness

I visited once / alone  
a shrine near Nara  
in Winter when every mouth  
is hungry / just inside  
a woman stood with her hands  
over a charcoal fire used  
usually for cooking but that day  
it was reflecting the fire  
onto her soft hands held over it

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

## Too Beauties

the wall runs east to west  
the peach tree grows flat  
against the southern side  
the sun shines on the tree  
as it warms the bricks  
behind the tree the warm bricks  
themselves warm the peaches  
on the tree / it has a slightly  
dozy quality / the tree carefully tied  
to grow flat against the wall  
warming the bricks  
the peaches growing in the sun  
the wild grass growing  
around the roots of the tree  
in the angle where the earth and  
roots and wall all meet

this marks a radical break  
from traditional composition  
and perspective / five naked  
women made of flat splintered planes  
faces inspired by Iberian sculpture  
and African masks / the compressed space  
they inhabit appears to project forward  
in jagged shards while a slice of melon  
in the still life at the bottom  
teeters on an upturned tabletop

Thursday, January 13, 2022

## Floor

her bedroom was upstairs  
not allowed up there / you see  
one night when she was out  
I wound my way up her spiral stairs  
cold up there / always cold I think  
she had a rug on the wood floor  
there to help keep her room warm  
even with the rug / I was cold too

Friday, January 14, 2022

## The Chief

on the Southwest Chief route  
across withered wheat fields  
in Kansas / the sun ready  
to set / looking out the window  
I put my hand beneath it  
holding it up I thought  
if the wheat fields could  
they'd laugh



Saturday, January 15, 2022

## All Nighter

we sat up all night  
waiting for the aurora  
clouds came instead  
clouds left sometimes  
we thought we saw some green  
but perhaps we had simply dozed  
we sat with my arms around her  
the sunrise was dull full red

Sunday, January 16, 2022

## Clappers

we were staying in a foreign city  
our night stove was going out / coals orange  
turning red / we heard wood clappers clapping  
up the way / louder toward us  
softer away / next day a passerby  
told us men with clappers went through towns  
warning people to tend their stoves  
their fires so the town would not burn  
we stared

Monday, January 17, 2022

## Night Train

night / a railroad bridge  
across a black river  
a train crossing reflects  
off the river / reflects  
on the river / who rides  
the train

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

## Wind Drift

wind comes down from the north  
over a mountain famous for grit  
then by farms and houses like ours  
down the river valley that ends in sea  
that wind never returns / once ours  
it's now yours

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

## Change of Place

when she lived in Arles  
she was a French woman  
lovely under a slightly  
northern sun / dressed  
in weak colored fashions  
when she lived in Boston  
she was an American woman  
sweating in Summer / shivering  
in Winter / wet in the rain  
roasting under the sun  
in a lesser latitude in undesigned  
outfits / eating bad food

Thursday, January 20, 2022

## **Moon White**

in that other place  
drinking tea and eating slowly  
the moon was happy to intrude  
its light washed everything  
satin white / our host  
thought to close the paper doors  
sliding them together so that  
the moonside doored wall was solid white  
but for a black stripe  
drifting down its middle

Friday, January 21, 2022

## Level Plane

when she was old  
with her hands filled with trembles  
for Christmas we'd always  
have a rare soup and I'd worry  
the soup she'd bring to our table  
would spill shaken onto the floor  
but she insisted on carrying bowls  
as she always did / the level bowls  
were her way of delivering Christmas spirit

---

Saturday, January 22, 2022

## Chocorua

the top of the mountain  
granite of a pile  
lakes below and cars on roads  
my feet might not make it down  
my legs feel fine / how  
many more times can I do this



Sunday, January 23, 2022

## Carver

a carver's shop where  
he sculpted beauty from hard  
wood / it seemed the road  
outside was snow covered  
instead it was shavings  
and curled

---

Monday, January 24, 2022

## Milk Vetch

worried about milk-vetch  
and what poets know about it  
three-sided fields are lucky  
to have it / not all plants  
save such fields from bad luck

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

## Who

we met on a lonely trail  
near the treeless hilltop  
from Iceland she said  
with her close accent  
without saying much  
we stayed together all  
Spring / the story  
of it has little detail  
curiosity I suppose  
catching hold long enough  
to make for forgettable memories  
her name had several accents

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

## Crabs

I sensed the danger  
Winter in the cold  
with a companion similar  
my thoughts were of quilts  
and stews / writing and walking  
hers not sure / near shore  
I'd watch crabs coming to our town  
when danger snuck up / into  
a drainpipe the crabs would go  
how simple

Thursday, January 27, 2022

## Bus

alone in my row  
I doze in and out  
across New Mexico toward  
Texas / all the x names  
lined up / the night  
is a desert night  
and the Greyhound flows  
from town to small town  
looking for any sort  
of everything

Friday, January 28, 2022

## **To: rpg**

I wake and open my email  
dozens or even more notes  
some silly some selling / some  
from friends and one special  
you might call my software  
organized mailbox clean  
I find it cluttered  
my mind is at ease

Saturday, January 29, 2022

## Readers

on the island we sat  
each reading what we could  
nightfall / too dark  
to read more / she said  
too cold

Sunday, January 30, 2022

## Sadnesses

the news was sad  
news is / I worked  
my way into the woods  
where my father had cut  
down trees and found a stump  
around it / sawdust / good  
place to meditate  
and forget sadness altogether



Monday, January 31, 2022

## No Contest

I stopped to watch  
outside the library  
running up the steps  
two young women  
wearing shorts on the right  
type of day / the books  
inside nudge closer together

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

## Clouds

after we woke and did all  
our morning things / we stepped  
outside / she shrugged  
such an ocean of blue  
once all those clouds  
pass away

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

## Door

gone from the croft  
morning / my woman friend  
after a warm near night  
gone like a cloud  
near the door  
my lonely shoes

Thursday, February 3, 2022

## **Worm**

the book did not let go  
it was its own dream  
when I closed it finally  
and rubbed my eyes looking  
out the window / dawn

Friday, February 4, 2022

## Waker

staying at her place  
quick visit / no point  
I was staying downstairs  
on a mattress on the floor  
she up spiral stairs  
every morning not a rooster  
not a clock / not traffic noise  
but her loud moaning yawn

Saturday, February 5, 2022

## Quest

on a boulder on a ridge  
watching below the pines  
move through a mist just up  
from the valley and the two  
lakes lurking down there  
where is she

Sunday, February 6, 2022

## Never Mind

the house next door  
hunkered vacant for a year  
while the warmth and cold  
came and went like Eliot said  
we were then comfortable  
with its ignorant darkness  
but one night a light  
then several and smoke  
from the chimney / new  
neighbors we thought  
no other theory came  
to mind

Monday, February 7, 2022

## Ear Training

slipping down two stairs  
to Nana's rooms then down  
two more to the piano room  
cold but I light an oil furnace  
the piano is a parlor grand  
I play it quietly and over months  
and years I got a little better  
but the songs crept low  
the room warmed a bit / I played  
an hour / this was the year  
I didn't speak



---

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

## Sparkling Lights

October night on Bressay  
lighting a peat fire  
boiling water on the Rayburn  
book of long poems by my chair  
the lights of Lerwick  
across the strait / a ferry  
crossing

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

## **Barking**

the evening playing out  
calm and mild / the last  
cloud behind a tree that looks  
like a barking dog  
and then the neighbors  
inventors of dimwittedness  
start to argue

Thursday, February 10, 2022

## Dim

it made no sense  
at first / the sun  
growing dimmer over  
the afternoon while  
I sat by the harbor  
a last time with her  
then foghorns jumped in  
the fog jumped in  
she did not jump

Friday, February 11, 2022

## Fresh

nothing but sitting  
early in the morning  
by the harbor / reading  
and smelling the wind over  
the waves / near a small church  
soon to become redundant  
this didn't stop the priest  
who rang the bell like a reunion  
in hell / the day's calm dispersed  
and the catch was fresh  
in on the docks

---

Saturday, February 12, 2022

## **Bait**

the moon rests in the bare  
branches of autumn trees  
they wave freely and the moon  
is on the loose / across the street  
a jail

Sunday, February 13, 2022

## Super Chief

lying in bed next to her  
the horizon around us vast  
and distant / the night  
the same / I heard a train  
horn distant to the east  
in a while the sound of it  
hard and harsh / but what  
I noticed most was our window  
rattling

Monday, February 14, 2022

## **Train Of**

clouds overhead / overheard  
as they flash past / where  
they go is a stop on everyone's  
train ride / eternity

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

## Grainy

in Kansas grain elevators  
are seen 20 miles away  
gray silver silos nearby  
the roads lead to them  
trains pass by them  
we fill them with grain  
they fill us



Wednesday, February 16, 2022

## Windless

I didn't see it  
a leaf dropping  
from a rich maple  
swirling because of itself  
and the air / not carried  
by wind / a windless night  
my dream of change

Thursday, February 17, 2022

## Mountain Spring

in Spring I sat by  
fast water coming down  
from melting snow  
on my favorite mountain  
it looked cold so I waited  
to cup my hand under a small fall  
then I drank / everything smelled  
wet and new

Friday, February 18, 2022

## Wet Night

sitting in my car  
by the river  
after a rainstorm  
under a tree  
at dusk / a puddle  
to my right still  
under the tree  
the river sloughs by  
just before too dark  
a single drop drops  
rattles the puddle

Saturday, February 19, 2022

## Emily Departed

what would you leave  
at Emily's grave  
some leave small stones  
others pencils  
more extravagant / pens  
books I think / I left  
a laptop with a special  
large key for her angled dashes  
and the right font too

Sunday, February 20, 2022

## **Firestorm**

red on the horizon  
not the sun but a fire  
smoke blowing away from me  
house or forest  
disaster

Monday, February 21, 2022

## Missing

the radiator's hissing  
staying in a stranger's  
house in a snow storm  
no where to go because  
you can't get there anyway  
far away a bride is waiting  
for a car to take her here  
through the snow / toward  
the hissing

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

## Alone

alone / in old clothes  
in an old house / by  
a hot stove / on  
a rainy night / near  
a surging sea / without  
a book to read / under  
a false impression / with  
a woman near by who hates me

Wednesday, February 23, 2022

## Stone Street

across the narrow town street  
I can hear a woman / a sob  
and some words / my couch  
is by the front window  
one story up / from sitting  
on it sideways while reading  
it's become untidy or rumpled



Thursday, February 24, 2022

## Driven

a simple road straight  
through a string of fields  
trees every 30 feet spaced  
evenly on both sides planted  
after the war and in Summer  
the leaves make a gentle tunnel  
it seems to lead everywhere  
the sky makes its promise  
and the trees do as well  
but a road is a road  
we drive

Friday, February 25, 2022

## Standing There

I've made my plan  
I like making plans  
when the moon's lower  
edge passes over  
the power line's upper wire  
I'll call her

this plan is like my others  
the outcomes all the same

Saturday, February 26, 2022

## Cold Thoughts

after years of waiting  
I went into the woods  
to mediate / I left  
it was too cold

Sunday, February 27, 2022

## Blur

the hills here are smooth  
though steep / covered only  
in peatish grass / the cliffs  
are vertical and daggered  
here I'm walking hand in hand  
with the universal schoolteacher  
through a valley the hills make  
it is morning and the mist  
blurs the world and me and her

Monday, February 28, 2022

## White Trees

I stand before these birches  
having come back from a lifelong  
journey that took me everywhere  
but only as tourist / others  
spent their lives building lives  
and people loved them everywhere  
where they stopped was a sunshining  
place / instead I stand before  
these birches / the ones that waved  
goodbye / they are my consolation  
prize / you went / you didn't stay  
you came back

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

## Long Distance

I hitch hiked across America  
to you / I should have written  
first / my hands neck and hands  
now leather from sun and rain  
who picked me up you could ask  
I'd tell stories / and lots  
but you were not home  
the day I knocked

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

## Mail

on a rainy night  
the postman was late  
the toilet window blazed  
across the street a cat  
was hiding / somewhere  
someone was knocking  
on a door / sometimes  
she wore pajamas / not  
tonight / the rain

Thursday, March 3, 2022

## Bird

a blizzard was just  
starting / the wind  
from the West / snow  
from above / she told  
me to scatter some stale  
bread before the snow  
piled up for birds  
needing to hunker  
I did / there was  
just one



Friday, March 4, 2022

## Sea Horses

I thought farther north  
would be too much  
60° as some would say  
the place / the temp  
all of it too concise  
for Spring

Saturday, March 5, 2022

## Leaving

we strolled High Street  
in a northern city  
town more like it  
Autumn of course / the air  
a little frost / a little  
sea foam / there were no  
trees about but we saw  
Autumn leaves all orange  
and red / we saw them  
in the display window  
of a dress store / she  
laughed

Sunday, March 6, 2022

## **Borealis**

aurora from Unst  
we didn't need to wait up long  
the greens / the violets  
the cloud embossing it all black  
a ship out at sea  
sounds of sheep / and a breeze  
we lay there on bitter grass  
undulations

Monday, March 7, 2022

## Hail

where I live is in  
the cloud business  
supplying cover year round  
& with it rain and snow  
the place makes different sorts  
in more colors than you'd believe  
the ones that people remember  
are black on the bottom  
the ones that kill are green

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

## Pleasure Bay

in the bay by South Boston  
when I was a kid  
the pier that went out by  
Castle Island / not an island  
was just pieces left over  
from time / we'd walk there  
after Thanksgiving meal  
there wasn't anything to see  
everything was gone  
everything is gone

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

## Costains'

the party downstairs  
in red or orange light  
teenagers dancing various ways  
or kissing on couches  
around the place / why  
was I invited and my buddy  
upstairs on the piano  
we played heart and soul

Thursday, March 10, 2022

## Bored

the aurora flairs  
above the compound  
above the inlet  
to the North Sea  
we waver as sheep lie  
about and a power pole  
crosses my vision

Friday, March 11, 2022

## Damage

one day I stopped to watch  
unseen a man sharpening his knife  
he was bent and stooping  
grinding and whetting with a wheel  
then a stone / over and over  
he ground / he wanted a sharp knife  
his sleeves became tattered  
with sandpaper of different grits  
he was working scary sharp  
he bent and steeled the knife  
with a honing steel / the edge  
coming straight / a sharp knife  
his hair turned white / his face creased  
the sound of his work / I listened  
he stooped and stropped with a razor  
strop and then a buffing wheel  
the man was sharpening his knife  
not more than bones and a heavy sigh  
and I watched and I listened  
and he kept at it  
kept at it



Saturday, March 12, 2022

## Dismay

her voice behind me / a far away place  
she is persistent about things  
she can no longer see  
she can not speak words / only torn letters  
in drenched paragraphs / what she can see  
will one day be mine / she is still filled  
with love / but her place will cure that  
I turn to her and turn

Sunday, March 13, 2022

## Facing It

without ending  
the snow will fall  
bringing with it  
a broken down scarecrow  
its face like straw  
popping out of a sack  
over this scene  
a tumbled down sky

Monday, March 14, 2022

## **Kiss**

I close my eyes and the world  
goes away / all that's left  
is the weight of her lips  
and theory

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

## Weeds

so we walked through the field  
the weeds grew in contentment  
as time went by weeds' shadows  
made their way away from us  
as time went by weeds grew  
our legs disappeared  
the weeds grew in contentment  
we walked through the field  
again and again

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

## Found Blue

I stood there where the blue sky  
like to taunt me about hours  
and felt I had lost my important idea  
next to a ditch so I went  
to the nearest lost and found office  
and found the day had been lost  
and I filled brim with distress

Thursday, March 17, 2022

## Faces

the harbor was getting bright  
but a brightness wet as moonlight  
when a song is reverberating  
through the streets behind  
those whose turn is waiting  
the wind disturbing the sea  
has brought faces here / faces  
dead from their long journeys  
pale as the light on the harbor  
they come at me / they come by me  
they pass and their sea smells linger  
they pass on into the streets  
I wait there for something

Friday, March 18, 2022

## Bridge

the bridge crosses  
an undecided river  
the sky above at night  
is an ocean of wounds  
one side is not the future  
one side not the past  
the bridge crosses from this shore  
to that / a man filled with age  
and a woman just coming down the hill  
meet with confidence and casually  
hug / the night wind is cold

Saturday, March 19, 2022

## Lights

the light bathes us  
we sit on a boulder thrown  
up by waves and the moon  
lights us too and cars  
on the far hill / we  
are chilled and kissing  
when the beat of darkness  
comes / before the next wave  
of lighthouse light



Sunday, March 20, 2022

## Speak, Cow!

in our barn a cow  
is eating all the time  
moving its mouth and making  
sounds / the roof is like  
a sky and the lofts  
hold more hay and enough hay  
all day the cow eats  
all day the roof is like a sky  
the cow's mouth moves all day  
the cow says nothing all day

Monday, March 21, 2022

## **Moon Walk**

full moon and mid night  
my hands and head in brightness  
I am walking on and on nowhere  
the grass is moving in this light  
if she were with me we'd be walking  
as if by accident / touching her hand  
we have each told lies

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

## Autumn Comes

autumn doesn't like insects  
so it buffets them with wind  
chills them to paralysis  
autumn loves scarcity  
so takes everything away  
puts it all underground  
autumn hopes for remorse  
but will settle for regret  
autumn will accept the excuse  
of forgetting

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

## Sadness In The End

the first thing you write  
when you are free to choose the thing  
is the form your soul wants to achieve  
you might take side trips  
side trips one by one after another  
on the day you die / at that moment  
you will recall that lost manuscript  
it's the you you never were and  
all it will do now is make your last  
moments moments of tears

Thursday, March 24, 2022

## Riverside

a river bank / a willow row  
in a boat going down that river  
rain going down too  
to keep dry I keep to the bank  
instead of drops the willows  
drop on my shoulders

Friday, March 25, 2022

## Web

we walked out toward the sea  
a day after a suffering rain  
going up the small hill  
a set of tracks / perhaps a fox  
a dog / something like that  
she said to me that now that  
we can see the prints we can know  
what that fox / that dog was thinking  
what was left behind

Saturday, March 26, 2022

## Passing Eyes

beneath oaks and eucalyptus  
women are passing by and I watch  
their eyes are dark from the place  
they're from / those once looked  
down but summer tells them  
look ahead / look up

Sunday, March 27, 2022

## Scholar

on a walk an older blonde woman  
asked if I was a scholar  
we had met by randomness on a hill  
no one had ever asked me that  
I looked at her while my brain crashed  
she was older as in not a fabulous babe  
but young next to me / from Bavaria  
we kept walking for bit up the hill  
then we went different ways



Monday, March 28, 2022

## **White Blur**

the moonlight of birches stuns  
the fenceposts though are in fog

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

## **True Death**

who will mourn me  
I suppose I don't care  
I'll write the story of it instead  
and think of that as the truth

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

## Rain

I am standing in the rain  
she is standing with me in the rain  
everyone I met today is standard there too  
all my ancestors are standing in the rain  
all the world is there too  
everyone who ever live or will live  
is standing in the rain  
what is rain?

Thursday, March 31, 2022

## **Puzzle**

I am distracted by hacking  
thinking about problems  
around me fans are humming  
I am puzzled by the puzzles  
there are no solutions  
just corners to look in

Friday, April 1, 2022

## Oiks

a woman I know became invisible  
behind a ridge / behind a hill  
a woman I know grew silent  
the hill a damper / the ridge a hinderance  
a woman I know stopped looking  
the sky was like a sea / the clouds  
were like an ocean / she told me once  
the clouds sometimes were coulds

Saturday, April 2, 2022

## Sceptic Tank

a lot of work for a page  
but it makes it complete  
who cares that it's critical  
of an important man / I  
am always the sceptic

Sunday, April 3, 2022

## Woods

what is possible to be  
where to live while doing it  
my dreams shrink in scope  
but blossom in realism  
now there are people I know in them  
the prospects are narrowing  
I stay alert to regress  
I loved the pine trees in our woods

Monday, April 4, 2022

## Tone Arm

music coming at me  
from a turntable more expensive  
than a decent house in Illinois  
playing through among other things  
tubes older than I am / but the music  
is just a drone while work on work  
and my ears are not good any more  
the music is like a light massage  
after the wrong turn



Tuesday, April 5, 2022

## Nostalgia

I long for the drive around Merrimac  
and Haverhill and Newburyport  
the old-time food / the wet warm air  
mowed grass / lilacs / ocean air  
river air / but when / never?  
not soon? / pushback

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

## Discarded Horse

the discarded horse roams  
the hills behind here  
watching it I feel loneliness  
thinking about it I am agitated  
who would discard a horse  
horses have served us for centuries  
at least / I have been discarded too  
but I deserved it

Thursday, April 7, 2022

## Discards

I wish to discard melancholy  
perhaps after turning the corner  
that leads to the florist  
where the windows are colored  
the color of the flowers behind it  
if I were sad I'd wander this shop  
find flowers to give to the source  
of my down / instead of discarding  
my melancholy perhaps I could turn  
away from the shop so the linkage  
breaks like dawn after rain

Friday, April 8, 2022

## River Wrong

the river mouth is open to the sea  
when the time is wrong storms  
surge upriver as far as the first bridge  
where we first met and at last  
the water forces pushing in and pulsing  
out balance the way we never did  
as all do eventually you found  
the paths in me too faint to follow  
too unlikely to go anywhere

Saturday, April 9, 2022

## Wet

I brought in the wet newspaper  
the words and letters and characters  
coming off on my hands / on my fingers  
the paper was below my blooming cherry  
and the pink or white petals coming off  
on my hands / in my fingers  
at the kitchen table she watched  
before her a plate of eggs  
the world was blending into an argument

Sunday, April 10, 2022

## Experiencing

carrying a pack full of groceries  
up the hill to home from the stoned town  
the moon at my back drilling my shadow  
to the ground so that I can experience  
walking over myself

Monday, April 11, 2022

## **Alone All Night**

I watch them upstairs  
silhouettes nothing more  
up late they watch tv  
outside rain / sometimes snow  
a small third floor flat  
alone

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

## Old Ways

I visited a strange grave today  
in a cemetery high above the main road  
way up in back a set of headstones  
from a string of families now side  
by side and down / one was new  
a plastic flower plugging a vase  
I got here by train and a walk  
I wanted everything to be the old way  
cedars and golden straw



Wednesday, April 13, 2022

## Leaning

the fire is peat against a stone  
I am sitting at my table either  
writing or learning / the peat burns  
and then burns down / I learn / I write  
after enough time has passed she brings  
in a new brick of peat and leans it on  
the fire still holding on / the fire  
warms me again as I write or as I learn

Thursday, April 14, 2022

## **Naked Woman**

she stripped while I waited  
for a minute she was naked  
while I was nearby / you  
would think we'd do more  
but naked was all she would do  
as she doffed her summer dress  
and donned her autumn dress

Friday, April 15, 2022

## Carla

I wrote to her and it was a silly note  
I wondered if she ever knew I wrote it  
we were in junior high / a year later  
she moved away / it wasn't her looks I liked  
not sure what though / she died near me  
15 years ago / that would have been our story

Saturday, April 16, 2022

## Bell Stop

the ringer has stopped with the bell  
I know that from sound and counting  
the rings no longer coming yet  
the bell sounds don't stop  
won't stop as long as there are no  
leaves to keep the echoes away

Sunday, April 17, 2022

## Big Horn

the places where they fell  
now topped by stones as if  
a national place of mourning  
reluctantly far away from their mothers  
I tell this story though I didn't die there  
I didn't fight / neither side  
some say none should tell it but them  
it's a matter of craft

Monday, April 18, 2022

## Cancel

there is a fleeting reluctance  
to tell it / to turn away from it  
some say I have no right to write  
the lives of anyone but me  
because to do so is to elevate class  
and my class is not allowed

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

## Wild West

they blame technology  
but the urges are in person  
blaming things always safe  
some tell a pretty story  
and they believe what they can  
someone deep in the spirit  
is drinking many lines

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

## All I Want

will my energy leap one last time  
will the few who love me be asleep  
when it does / will the long black  
of before be the long black of ahead  
I did what I could but I was lazy  
and simple things took too long  
to perfect / I was not much



Thursday, April 21, 2022

## Road Curve

the road heads to the past  
curving through the present  
both sides a deep forest  
the past is a river or ocean  
everything below and a reflection  
blocks every view / you might  
have thought I was talking about the future  
the future is the pothole of imagination

Friday, April 22, 2022

## Long Corridor at the Airport

the corridor seems to narrow  
behind me doors close  
I hope they will open again  
what's ahead is dark because  
the lights are set to sense  
behind me echoes bound toward me  
the floor seems tilted

Saturday, April 23, 2022

## Frozen

cold / the pond is frozen  
edges of the stream  
the ground so hard it hurts to walk  
this is all outside  
in here there is cold  
inside us is cold  
as hard as a click

Sunday, April 24, 2022

## Boundary

our back field was the border  
between commonwealth and state  
walking back there I'd cross  
and not know / no marks  
I thought the maker of the farm  
could have put in a stone wall  
to show the boundary but didn't  
laziness / one day I'll die

Monday, April 25, 2022

## Up and Out

the laughter next door ate through my walls  
when I was trying to be sad enough  
I went upstairs and made lunch  
the coding went poorly  
the laughing continued

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

## **Bad Hacking**

what a kludge / what a hack  
tomorrow or sometime I will fix it  
or explain it in notes  
sheesh

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

## You Are Everything

rain on boats  
tied up in the harbor  
seems to move the boats  
up the street is up the hill  
the upper floor flat's lights  
always on late in the rain  
we watch the rain / we watch  
the boats / we watch the hill  
the lights / the cascades  
down the harbor / there are things  
we don't watch

Thursday, April 28, 2022

## Roads Etc

the river road knows cars too well  
the river knows about love in cars  
the road knows the river hates it  
the lovers know about river roads



Friday, April 29, 2022

## Wedding Along

they danced their wedding dance  
it was the kind of love that requires  
stupidity and slight education  
but he was in a fashionable tux  
she in a bone dress and blonde  
her hair was dancing and their teeth  
were solid white / I needed to sleep

Saturday, April 30, 2022

## **Blur**

things once sharp blur and blend  
until what once was something  
is now everything / he sadly said

Sunday, May 1, 2022

## Helpless

someone pretending to fake a world  
spent early hours taking spikes of slate  
carving foolishly onto them then  
hammering them into the side of a hill  
covered hardly with oaks and spread thin  
later a crying woman came by  
and labeled it a cemetery / why not

Monday, May 2, 2022

## Goodbye US

it's a rare treat to be alive  
when a proud country turns sour  
when an era is starting to end  
today I heard again that this is up  
now it's time to think  
where to live

Tuesday, May 3, 2022

## Movie Times

a movie of us climbing a mountain  
the music of hard hiking  
they were stronger than I was then  
and they were stronger than I am now  
granite and green lichen  
lakes below and a road  
but it's a movie

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

## Translation

we sat down to translate  
a poem from Dutch to English  
I spoke no Dutch / she spoke  
no poetry / it's hard to tell  
whether the translation improved  
the original / she made tea

Thursday, May 5, 2022

## Juice, Red

my clothes've been washed a hundred times  
all the tags are still in place  
cuffs / neckline / elbows / hem  
all fringed and falling to pieces  
I've had it years / I'm looking  
for a connection / a metaphorical  
connection between my clothes and my life  
instead I've started a hunger that only  
tomato juice well salted can staunch

Friday, May 6, 2022

## Poemless

new in town one year ago  
I stopped writing and now  
a year since a poem  
the town's changed since then  
me too / the empty poem notebook  
though remains / town's made of stone  
local and as a foreigner it's  
time to write



Saturday, May 7, 2022

## Grind

the puzzle loves complicating  
the lives of solvers who cannot  
try as I may the revealed facts  
like to spin / the computer won't  
help / it likes to puzzle too  
far away someone is watching birds  
though they don't like birds  
there is something to distance

Sunday, May 8, 2022

## A Story

a story of love on an island  
the shuffling walks / the lipsynced meals  
we wondered where the trees went  
the smell of long wet dirt  
the story involved love but not romance  
one side to the other we sought wet  
the sun didn't like to set so it mostly didn't  
when we returned home I pulled the string  
holding the words together and the story  
in return dropped away

Monday, May 9, 2022

## Midnight Diner

the smell of the alley  
invades the soup shop  
it opens at midnight  
closes when no others  
the food is soup and noodles  
if someone asks the short  
order cook will make do  
many people start loving  
here / and some wake up  
I prefer the overpolished counter  
and worn down spoons / the  
thick cloth curtain that is  
the door helps

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

## Rubber Tip

I made everything  
here into a word and forgot  
or never knew the idea  
of grammar / every thing  
a person could think or do  
and every story that can be told  
is said in one word / a new one  
every time / I bought many  
erasers

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

## **-Soul**

the sacrifice can be made  
even after we're dead  
the lumps of us left behind  
matter

Thursday, May 12, 2022

## Under That Tree

we stopped near the sea  
under a willow waiting  
for passion to stop and stay  
beneath it / I raked my fingers  
through her black hair hiding her cheeks  
and above through branches and leaves  
maybe a moon but all this so far  
away what's the point of memory  
and maybe it is just a story  
who can tell / she can't because  
her hair is no longer the black

Friday, May 13, 2022

## Carpets

we found our ways  
to a blanket by a hill  
above a sea in a country  
filled with emptiness and sheep  
houses made of stone because  
what else / I believed her  
hair black but instead  
it was what's left / we  
skirted the blanket then  
down onto it / the wind's air  
the water's sea / the soil  
of deepness / we wavered

---

Saturday, May 14, 2022

## Secret

I amaze myself  
by how little I noticed  
when young / the town  
where I lived was rich of stories  
I saw none of them / my mother  
hid everything / tremors / trembles  
her secrets became my ignorance



Sunday, May 15, 2022

## Evil As In Eve

Chekov's hint is a dread  
you see it and push against it  
you seek an undercut or postmodern reverse  
instead of briar you clutch thorn  
the cliché hurts when its engine appears  
and the caboose is destined  
you hope the pretty Irish redhaired girl prevails  
and an ending can appear sometimes

Monday, May 16, 2022

## Islands

such a lonely place  
clouds / rain / wind always  
the roads are small  
dark all winter  
summer is dim  
the water's cold all around  
hard to be hardy

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

## Her

standing in the rain in a garden in Florence  
waiting for inspiration to overtake everyone  
the buildings and streets are carved from stone  
statues hold their hands in their hands  
the women who are beautiful cover their hair  
I'm leaning back against an abandoned door  
I'm thinking there is someone to love here

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

## Zippo

we learn slowly to make one  
hand wiggle with the other  
work as one even though two minds  
are involved and a small pipe  
focus on the thumbs / so strong  
but to work together they need  
humility / need to back off  
ask a piano player

Thursday, May 19, 2022

## Doorway

the rain is puddling around me  
the yellow lights down the street  
streak up to me / in the distance  
a highway whishes from tires  
I had just heard a brilliant man  
make a stupid statement thinking  
all ideas are secondary to his  
I was waiting for a girl like you  
but instead it's you who pauses  
under my doorway's lintel and you  
who like yellow light approaches from afar

---

Friday, May 20, 2022

## Call The Breeze

her clothes are flapping  
in high wind / they will dry  
soon / but to the west it's rain  
the clotheslines might not hold  
sheep could be watching but chew  
instead

Saturday, May 21, 2022

## The Drum Part

suppose the oldest thing  
happened for the first time  
just now / you pick  
would the ripeness stand up  
would there be a question  
things would speed up  
only two pieces of art  
the solo would be too long

Sunday, May 22, 2022

## Summertime Thing

over stage left the woman  
in a blue country dress white belted  
and dark haired danced in swerves  
while we played and played / she  
didn't mind the long leads  
which we played to keep her there  
so one of us could figure  
out how to keep her



Monday, May 23, 2022

## My Woman

I bought some feed  
brought it back in my pickup  
she was making flapjacks  
I chugged some cider  
it was Aunt Jemima but they  
changed the name / the chickens  
liked the feed / I liked  
the hotcakes / buns

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

## Elementary

my elementary school had slopes  
in winter they'd freeze forming slides  
we would slide down one  
try to climb the other  
through bushes and small trees  
what for was a question  
still is

Wednesday, May 25, 2022

## Poor Ideas

I'll tell you what's wrong  
everything is falling apart  
all safety valves blown  
I am scared and miserable  
all the time / I want someone  
to take over for me

Thursday, May 26, 2022

## Want

when the sun is out  
good thoughts seek shade  
I've found my way to this age  
and all my memories are putting  
on a show / I wish I could  
stop the silly work and get  
to whom I am

Friday, May 27, 2022

## Cellar On A Hill

when a great building  
drops down the past has decided  
to take a bow / we had a cellar  
perched on a small rise / filled  
with trash / a garbage can  
I never knew and never asked  
what it had once been instead  
imagined a story / a wrong one  
I have no picture of it

Saturday, May 28, 2022

## Clear Air

nothing like the clear air  
that roots out relief  
I can watch shoots of grass  
blow circles over earth  
it's a sad song that goes on repeat  
while listening to the air brush  
by our window I read about color  
how to dial it back from garish  
and produce something livable

Sunday, May 29, 2022

## When We Play Our Last Ones

when I arrive I'll picture a story like this  
a guitar man loses his bass player in North Dakota  
the gig trail links ahead across the northern tier  
like last year tonight it's Wolf Point  
a new bass will fly in from LA / he learns fast  
the guitar man in his motel room restrings his Strat  
new strings each night / snow flurries outside and he wonders  
is the gig on / North of there a tiny but chubby dyed blonde  
hurries through her laundry / she idols the man  
from last year / she plans to wait 'round back  
the stage area for him to stop but he won't  
he'll play on for his lost bassman who's flying  
out to LA to be sprinkled off Ventura  
while the guitar player and chick singer drink beers  
all day in a stinky room at the Tip Top Motel

Monday, May 30, 2022

## Wolf Point Montana

in a stinky room at the Tip Top Motel  
the guitar man is changing out his strings  
Blue Steel 10s / he's put them through  
the back of his Strat and is winding them up  
with his tuning wrench / outside the light  
rain has turned to heavy snow / he doesn't know  
if the replacement will make it today  
if the gig's still on tonight / he's been dozing  
all day / next door the singer's wondering why  
she's in her own room / on the North Line she shares  
two days ago they lost him in Stanley ND  
flew him back to LA on runway 27 / aortic dissection  
the MD said / done tuning he plays the bass's favorite  
licks / the singer dozes / up North just a bit the wife  
who's waited a year is finishing her laundry / ready to fold  
about to attack the cosmetics / she's a dreamer



Tuesday, May 31, 2022

## Scobey Montana

about to attack her cosmetics / she's a dreamer  
a little chubby since marriage she likes to horse  
around outside her home / she saw them down in Wolf Point  
last year a warm year with a warm light west wind  
sliding through Scobey / then / through Wolf Point  
she liked him standing still behind the band  
but holding them together with springy rhythm strokes  
and finger-pick-like textures / she's no critic  
she liked his white streaked flowing hair  
his odd wah tone on leads / she liked how obvious  
the singer's passion / how unaware her husband  
must be / she wants to see him play tonight  
the heavy snow though starting up and the timid bar owner  
maybe she'll miss them / just one night / next day Havre  
just too far / she reaches inside her waistband  
her husband is out at the Brendis barn cleaning stalls  
that upward chord move still lingering a full year later

Wednesday, June 1, 2022

## Pillows

that upward chord move still lingering a full year later  
she has the tape she made and plays it over and over  
most days / she never clutched the truth of the singer's passion  
thought it part of the play the group made around the choice  
of songs they played / the story they told to fit the songs  
together aside from their flaws and mistakes / they were a party band  
not a concert band / in the room next door the singer wondered  
how hard the death would hit the band / hit the guitar player  
she loved him sometimes / years ago on a tour / a decade later  
on another / now the North Tier and here in the Missouri Breaks  
she held a pillow between her legs she thought because of the cold  
that came with the heavy snow and the wind from the West that wrestled  
the light into dusk / she wished his arm over her side and cupping her  
he did most nights and most mornings / instead if she listened hard  
she could hear the plain song of the strings through the door between them  
not fully closed / she knew it was closed / the guitar man had tears  
the band was his and the bassman's / the new guy'd be better  
he knew because that's how agents worked / he needed to know the songs  
right now / the bass the only guy who never stopped playing  
he waited for the phone and soon it rang / he let it / then the phone  
next door / she would get it and fate would follow on / up North she took hope  
over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive

Thursday, June 2, 2022

## How True / So Tough

over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive  
to the Wolf Point venue / like a cliché in her pickup / empty rifle mount  
on the rear window / he bends the strings hard so they settle into their tuners  
the under-window heater pops and flits out dust smoke from an idle season  
he thinks he's been in this room before / he connects to the weak wifi  
finds Living on a Prayer from the 12.12.12 concert / looks for the bass player  
whose role is a simple bottom / his ringing ears hear the grumbling interplay of a heavy  
rhythm intro / the bass's constant low line / the drummer's dear downbeat shades like mistakes  
the women in the front row love more / the guitar man remembers from Wolf Point the woman  
who stood off stage right eyeing his fingers / a player he thought but it looked wrong  
she didn't sway the way women do who lust for guitar men / she studied his fingers  
what the left hand did quietly on the fretboard / what the right hand did for rhythm  
the bassman would be to his left in front by a little / the bassman sang so stood forward  
the singer would wander / her knees deeply forward and back cranking her hips / he listened  
for the sounds of his vibrato / how deep / how wide / how like the same kind of smear  
passion makes in the right bed / how he knew all these things well forgotten / how true  
the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bed to bath / the red door locked to the outside

Friday, June 3, 2022

## Preparations

the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bath to bed / the red door locked to the outside  
from the next room it's on / we leave in two / the phone's answer / their rituals  
begin / hair body fingers stretching planning the meal / no bassman / the replacement  
will meet them at the gig / he knows it won't be the same / he props his suitcase  
lid open / does what he does / up North the woman prepares her story / the snow worries  
the details so she invents different ones / her husband is cleaning his boot treads on the boot brush  
nailed to the porch / after hearing her story he loads four bags of cement in the truck bed  
he works his boots with a hoof pick / they live on the res / the singer strips and washes  
everything / none of her is faked / she wears close black stretch pants and a loose black  
tunic / she begins her warmups slow and low / the darkness coming on / wakes her up  
fully / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready

Saturday, June 4, 2022

## Quiet & Still

full / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready  
for what matters / up North she breaks free of the ranch / heads into the flaking future  
she doesn't let herself think it but she loves the guitar man / has read all the online  
blogs & tweets / grocery store checkout-line rags / she's read reports of trysts and  
but the singer is too extravagant for him / she can hear that in his playing / different vibrato  
her singing / the guitar player and bassman together every band and she can hear  
the bassman in the guitar's twisting licks / they are the couple / she's read it too  
they rouse the drummer / he likes it late / their manager loads them up minus one / they head  
to town / whiteness in their way / multiple nights in a town they mark the best places / tonight  
it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her mightily / the cement bags hold

Sunday, June 5, 2022

## Care Crystal

it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her might-be / the cement bags hold  
her mind to the ground / this time she'll talk / ask him to take her / wherever  
he goes / she will wait till the last echo of his last note lingers off / she's packed  
small things / later they can buy her more / she'll say she can sing / the guitar player sits  
on a fixed seat too close to a fixed table / the burgers are dressed with mayo and options / the fries  
cut in spirals / the bassman hated all such fixings / he called them fixtures / he pronounced  
odd words wrong / read words didn't sound in his ears / when leads went on he counted  
measures / mention a song and note names came to mind / differential note strides  
aphantasia / the singer is sullen / she's been unnoticed since she found him in his  
bath / I thought he was alive / I touched him cold / five gigs canceled / the snow outside  
can't care / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down

Monday, June 6, 2022

## Last Tumbleweed

can't care about anything / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down  
on the road South to Wolfe Point / the woman grips the wheel like reins on a bull / he is not  
a mistake she thinks over and over / says over and over / the cement bags thump / at the café it's  
sundaes for all / the drummer arrives late / waffles his thing / they jot a set list / the guitar  
player wonders what the new bass can do / the singer lingers her hand on his wrist / outside  
the last tumbleweed bounds past / a snowplow scrapes by / the guitar player wonders whether tonight  
they will too / the bassman's back in LA heading for... / dead to the world / nervous  
for nothing / snow has made it to six inches / the chill to 24 degrees / won't snow much colder  
up North or down here they are all anticipating and regretting / they are wondering about the next ceremony

Tuesday, June 7, 2022

## Warm Air

up North or down here they are all wondering and regretting / they are anticipating the next ceremony  
a sundae each on the cold night / they stand for leaving and the singer clutches the guitar player  
outside they walk and slide to the manager's van and hope the cold's not torqued the guitars too much  
he idles the van till the heater blasts warm / the van makes it slowly toward the venue  
the snow's been crushed into wet ruts whose sides are splashed onto parked cars as they drive past  
up North the roads are worse / no plows yet so the pickup is hub deep in snow / she's used to it  
she pictures clutching him / the heater blasts warm / they could make it to the coast  
in two days / set up a home / listen to tunes all day / wrap all night / it's better  
than it's ever been for her / at least her dream is hers / the world near her is good  
at changing the rules / good at burying her upward glances / in the distance she notes the flickering  
home lights / meals being cooked / fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up



Wednesday, June 8, 2022

## Tens

home lights / meals cooked / over fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up  
her windblown window / if she recalled the stories she read in plains books / if she paid  
attention to movies made up in men's minds / the bassman didn't talk much / played  
too much like himself / no one else can see / he saw feelings in others and rejected  
them / overlays and ambiguity suited him / he knew words he couldn't pronounce  
so involved in his own mind / he dropped suddenly and it seemed he could get  
up if he wanted / he didn't want / he never played with his back to the band / with his back  
to the dancers / shut up and dance he told them once / the woman up North knew  
he was tied to only the guitar player / not the black-leggings singer / she dodged  
a curve in the road her dream covered over / she missed what she never had / she would grab  
that all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel 10s

Thursday, June 9, 2022

## Overlays and Ambiguities

all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel tense  
the song's new end / bass and guitar always together / they learned together  
their musical strangeness power the band / the singer just a warm thing  
on lost nights / tell me of the towns he once said / the worn out towns  
the flash flood of gone money / the great photos of plains America display rusted  
tractors / caved in roofs / peeled off paint / tilted silos / old men / old women  
hey baby it's the fourth of July he sang / last slow song of the set / she cries in the dark  
lies and greed he always said / the band's feelings / how that messed them up  
the new bassman arrives motel-side / unloads luggage / tells his ride take me to the venue  
he will use his own bass but the old bassman's rig / he's a pro / he rides slouched  
snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold in parts / hot in others / sad

Friday, June 10, 2022

## Wrong Then Right

snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold / she is hot / she is sad  
she pulls over upstreet of the dance hall / snow's risen on the parked cars / she  
the other one/ wonders if the last time he pulled her down onto the bed was the last time ever  
the singer always waited patiently undressed under the covers while the guitar  
player hunched out the motel door to tell his kids goodnight / sometimes tell a story  
he memorized or makes up about the flat expanses of old railroad land stretching  
toward the foothills / the long miles of dirt road disappearing into twilight fog  
the mist / he tells his wife he loves her / and he does / he also likes densely written books  
the singer's a light read / they are destined only for sweat and expulsion / she feels  
his leads are for her / the words to the songs he picks or writes are for her / she  
this one / is a romantic / the new bassman arrives / the van he's in slides stopped  
he's dressed in boots jeans T-shirt and a leather barn coat/ he owns two cowboy hats  
but didn't wear one for this trip / the woman frozen in her own North world steps  
to the side of the venue / peeks to the parking lot / sees the wrong bassman / news  
doesn't travel sometimes / it's not them her head drops / she sees his bass case  
it's not a Fender / later a half mile away slipping slow the singer and her temporary man  
will become a tangled pair / the North woman has slipped back to her truck / she will make it  
to the coast in a day or two / she will find the sea as blue as hopeful films imagine / hope

Saturday, June 11, 2022

## A Thin Cup

someday the coast / the sea will be a quiet blue but not quite silent / like hope  
his brothers / who knew? / will get in their kayaks by Ventura Pier near sundown  
the moon a thin cup above / the pier marching piles / if you were on shore watching  
the sky would start black above / turn yellow green under the pier / fade through red to black  
one will carry a box by his feet / the other a bag of bagels / pelicans will linger by just  
above the slight curls / once far enough they will stop and say something people brought up  
by religion would say but mean it something else / then ashes will slip to the sea  
and a bagel last meal / the brothers will not cry because they have forgotten everything  
the guitar man will turn away from the singer in the Hi-Line Motel after Box Clubs at Boxcars  
the North woman / her bags of cement her only grip on Earth / will be parked on a beach  
in La Push / another res / a different song / a puzzled man behind her / ahead / the same ocean

Sunday, June 12, 2022

## **Alone**

I am sunk deeper than ever  
I cannot see how it will improve  
I am humiliated beyond repair  
what will it take

Monday, June 13, 2022

## Harbor

sitting by the harbor  
her legs dangling in the water  
trembling / we watch the ferry  
approach from across the harbor

Tuesday, June 14, 2022

## **No Birthday**

I wish I could write with joy  
instead the black dog's still  
on me / I spend my days  
trying distraction

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

## The Unrelenting Hands of a Clock

I am fully not ready  
for casual discussion  
I am like a fog nagging  
the coast / I am shriveling  
is it a premonition of death  
the shrouds that cover mysteries  
are not always made out of a tarpaulin



Thursday, June 16, 2022

## Angst

alone / afraid  
a long road trip  
fear of living  
revert to the child  
someone to watch

Friday, June 17, 2022

## Leslie

writing is about ideas  
a computer scientist tells YouTube  
words are important / a little / he says  
another says structure trumps appearance  
for poets trees and lakes  
are symbols for words

Saturday, June 18, 2022

## Sheesh

a million iterations and the endorsement  
is finished / written for an audience  
I don't get / one I've failed with over  
and over / I will post it tomorrow  
see what happens / finish another paper  
then worry

Sunday, June 19, 2022

## Row of Lights

in the distance a row of lights  
just atop a flat of water  
I stayed up all night  
watching the lights sometimes  
sometimes reading a sad book  
I wanted to sleep but my restless  
legs wouldn't stand / for it was only dawn  
that shook me unconscious / I still sleep  
in the distance of a row of lights

Monday, June 20, 2022

## Bridge

there is a bridge to cross  
finally / but either I'm on it  
or it's out of sight

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

## Off

the power was off  
we live with unreliable power  
hot night / sweating all night  
then in the morning things  
not working so well  
work

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

## **Fruit Gone**

we bought great fruit  
put it in special bowls  
on the counter / I waited  
for her to go first / she me  
in the end I was the one  
who tossed it all out

Thursday, June 23, 2022

## To Catch

slowly I started a fire  
in my father's wood stove  
its metal chimney going up  
a stone chimney where the porch  
used to be / I built a teepee of thin  
oak over a few crumpled newspapers  
and up it went slowly / small splinters  
catching first / when it was going  
we'd sneak under the covers  
she was surprised my urges were slow



---

Friday, June 24, 2022

## LaTeX

what if I took a paper designed  
for one Latex template and then  
applied a different one  
oh what fun that would be against  
the stodginess of the academy

---

Saturday, June 25, 2022

## Natural

the hills above us are not gentle  
they slope too much and rain hurdles  
down against the back of our house  
it's stone of course but the rain  
gets under / I mean to say it gets damp  
and the wind burst upon the hill  
we grow anxious and often afraid

Sunday, June 26, 2022

## Worn Eraser

I have trouble with words  
I think of writing them but nap instead  
or I start with some letters  
then scratch scratch them all out  
worst / for every word I write  
I erase two

Monday, June 27, 2022

## Bags

when she makes tea for us  
she searches for matching cups  
and maybe saucers / spoons just right too  
but it's always bags and the fabric  
of them remind me of antifreeze  
and the way she tightens the string noose  
around hers and the spoon reminds me  
of commitment / at least the water is hot

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

## Budapest

we've walked by bays and along canals  
on or by bike paths through regrown forests  
held hands without passion in the DDR parts  
of Berlin / snacked on pastries throughout Europe  
but not marzipan / once or a few times  
we tried kissing but her energy was too much  
the important part is that her flat in her European  
city's got a dull yellow door with faded stains  
and rubs of wear / that's how I remember her

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

## NE

the way to ice cream  
is through any town  
big portions / strange flavors  
I get frappes and sometimes  
a small if I'm famished  
the fish / the books  
the muggy weather

Thursday, June 30, 2022

## Oceans

I found my way once out of place  
from oceanside to plains and grew  
to love it / from plains to bayside  
and grew close to loving it  
the landscape I love is a character  
in someone's play and I want to grasp  
it before waste washes over

Friday, July 1, 2022

## Waters Logged

the past has a face like rivers  
rushing past / boats gone by  
just memories but it's strange  
that in flat waters you can read  
past wakes of ships like tracks  
in sand being blown over  
water is more like us than we can think



---

Saturday, July 2, 2022

## The Grump

I wanted to read my way  
to the end / or perhaps  
into a small café with someone  
bright maybe pretty / I  
don't deserve more than that  
having grown grumpy these years

---

Sunday, July 3, 2022

## Costain's Basement

she found him his shoulders stuck  
to a wall his legs out like a triangle  
in the basement where children under orange  
light danced or kissed / I call them children  
but they knew kissing / she wondered whether he leaned  
there to attract conversation or repel admirers  
so she watched while the rest danced or kissed  
he stood braced against a wall / where  
were all the other walls I wonder

Monday, July 4, 2022

## Giving

when there was time to give up  
give in / give out / the old man  
decided to fall over then fall  
asleep / his response was deliberate  
no response / by studying him we knew  
of the river and its bridge so we thought  
up stories to fill out gaps or maybe make  
them / I didn't know what I was doing  
when I suggested the weak line break

Tuesday, July 5, 2022

## Sad

I am sadly not the writer  
I dreamed of / youngest first  
best second / now just ok  
I am sadly not anything  
I feel it

Wednesday, July 6, 2022

## Twelve Hour Ferry

after twelve hours  
the ferry arrives just in time  
to show tired travelers  
a full day to wait and waste  
until they will be permitted  
to sleep

Thursday, July 7, 2022

## Now What

a wedding reception 51 weeks late  
because a virus took control of lives  
a friend who was at my daughter's birth  
attended with her long-time husband  
with physical troubles / they left  
at 8:15 / the husband tired / his wife  
my friend put him in his rolling chair  
but a bump threw him back-of-head first  
onto the sidewalk / four days later  
he died while I watched and listened  
to her cries / she had to decide to let  
him go / his body shutting down / his brain  
wrapped in a coma / now what / now what

Friday, July 8, 2022

## Peaceable Man

it's all so fragile  
a bump / a cut / even just  
a bruise can fell  
a mistake of decimal point  
the world collapses  
our blunders save us  
because all that kills  
might / for now / cancel out

Saturday, July 9, 2022

## Outcomes

finding my way home  
a challenge of luck  
I would wander as always  
but by the time it's time  
wandering might be out  
the princess pines in autumn  
await and the heavy oaks  
wading among pines and maples



---

Sunday, July 10, 2022

## Trying Times

the wandering lines  
trying to get tone right  
I vowed to try hard  
tried to make a little  
bit of sadness among the waves  
of facts / I tried

Monday, July 11, 2022

## City of Fog

there's a fog over the bay  
turning white the contrast of details  
on a hard pier a taxi loops to wait  
for lovers or quarrelers / it's always something  
his lights on lowbeams and wiper on go  
he switches radio to a sad station  
or at least a song to bring in closer  
the cloying fog and its reminder  
of happy and unhappy endings / it  
was sunny before

Tuesday, July 12, 2022

## Fire

why is there a fire nearby  
midweek as loners grill outback  
of their homes on porches  
meant for lively living  
why a fire when the rain's as robust  
as winter in midwinter when  
dust is driven under snow  
I smell meat rising in air  
smoke lilting like leaves in spring  
something is so wrong

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

## Place to Go

under the road roots  
bumped up the asphalt  
mounds and lines of them  
I'd slow down there  
on my way her place but  
what matter when she'd  
never come down and  
I'd never ask for her  
in the living room I'd talk  
with anyone around / later  
going home I'd slow for the roots

Thursday, July 14, 2022

## Gloomy

you called it gloomy  
I said melancholy  
a sadness / you said  
get rid of it / I said  
it's home / all left  
we suavely parted thoughts  
you seemed melancholy  
guess me

Friday, July 15, 2022

## Done

I have had it  
I will from now on  
answer only / never  
initiate a conversation  
writing only

Saturday, July 16, 2022

## Cohesion and Coupling

all writing is a set of cohesive  
units coupled with different types  
and strengths of links as couplings  
like floor plans of rooms or open floor  
plans / in doing this we ready ourselves  
for our final projects

Sunday, July 17, 2022

## **Lousy**

why can't things go right  
I mean just once and for  
a little while / too fatigued  
to write anything coherent



Monday, July 18, 2022

## Gloomy

it's hard to think gloomy  
when the air's sweet and blue  
when the grass pops it odors  
past pines and tar roads  
such days set your baseline  
and all above are flord  
all below are melancholy  
not gloomy

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

## Death Departure

we passed through a small bunch  
of mourners reading stories on posters  
and taking in pictures of their loved one  
at the funeral home where we went  
to pick up Chris's ashes and after getting  
them we asked to depart the side door  
because mourners have enough to contend with  
and passing by the door to the final room  
we saw the flowers and an electric guitar  
on its stand and I thought how fascinating  
his little box was heavier than I expected

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

## **Wander With Me**

the return to the islands is off  
in a future of a different timeline  
I am certain of the loss and even  
if I go how can I see what it leaves  
behind / I am a lonely wandered  
none wander with me

---

Thursday, July 21, 2022

## **Bother**

why do we find our ways  
with bother and strife  
the lake we return over  
the long road of repetitions  
I want it to be clear that losing art  
is a way of life / an end of life

Friday, July 22, 2022

## Details

I find my grumpiness increases  
finding ways to hack Tex drives me bats  
lots of ways to do things  
all nuts / thanks Don Knuth  
when I wonder whether I'm losing it while programming  
I remember the days at the AI Lab  
when I had the same problems  
details

Saturday, July 23, 2022

## Gualala Unfolded

the long road to Gualala  
bringing his ashes  
but the machine setup struck  
and I struggled to fix it  
but only enough for now  
I left sad

Sunday, July 24, 2022

## Lives and Deaths

we can wonder of the pain  
of lives long ago lived  
and who could deny suffering  
we surprise ourselves by  
imagining that people lived  
years ago while we weren't here  
and also lives will be lived  
years ahead while we're not here

Monday, July 25, 2022

## **Kamloops**

they hung childrens' clothes  
on crosses spiked into the dirt  
by the side of the road in the north  
in the midst of weeds and dried brambles  
coming upon them at sunset the reds  
and yellows of the clothes hung  
over the yellows and browns of the brambles  
and sharp light drew us to melancholy  
the clouds behind were dark because rain  
had passed / someone mentioned a noticed  
rainbow but we turned our backs



Tuesday, July 26, 2022

## Tex

rain is in the wind  
my worries are wrapped in both  
people remember what they want  
not what was / setting things straight  
worries duende and upsets just so stories

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

## Helpless

sometimes at night  
at the end of our living room  
when wind is helping itself to us  
she'll take our her guitar  
play it with deliberate hesitation  
start to sing under her lithe red hair  
quietly under the twangs and thumps  
she doesn't ask / she never backs down  
it is she who is pushed by the tune  
I do my job / listen to her  
to the wind / sometimes the rain

Thursday, July 28, 2022

## Glue

in the small diner  
off the small alley  
near a side street  
only six people can sit  
gathered around the chef  
who chops and boils and fries  
before them as if a priest  
a small town in Japan  
rice always ready / in winter  
the air from the diner is wet hot  
and the stories we can ascribe  
stick like rice to cooling bowls

Friday, July 29, 2022

## Sure

every store hotel home  
in Alaska has a stuffed  
grizzly standing upright  
just as every store hotel  
home in Mississippi has  
a Confederate battle flag

---

Saturday, July 30, 2022

## **Pursuit**

when something tells  
you no the other answers  
pop up like weeds unwanted  
some are pretty / I tend  
to tend to them as I would  
a new lover strange and warm

Sunday, July 31, 2022

## Blue Morning

the light says everything is blue  
the streets are stone slabs  
for women to walk pristinely on  
were I to walk out that way  
the harbor would greet me flat  
sea birds waiting for time  
to tell them to dive for fish  
a woman I love is supposed  
to be heading to meet me there  
she is warm I suppose in her wool  
her hair tied back has fallen loose  
in places / what food awaits us

Monday, August 1, 2022

## Rain At Light

rain is for sadness  
washing it away from  
one to the nearby / when  
we notice the words jumping  
to the page it's like a marine map  
of the world / interactive  
and always looking

Tuesday, August 2, 2022

## **By The Bay**

sitting by the bay  
sun hot on our faces  
cargo ships arriving  
and passing under the bridge  
an old man and a young woman  
who found things together  
sitting and talking  
but never sitting too close



Wednesday, August 3, 2022

## Champbana

just think / 1973 we lived  
in a brick house in Champaign  
a luxury house of sorts  
1974 in a shack in Urbana  
an ever narrowing range of life  
and circumstance / things  
were getting worse

Thursday, August 4, 2022

## **Coupled**

when all's in front we flow freely and sing  
when all's behind we weep and weep

Friday, August 5, 2022

## **Aha!**

sometimes the crystal hard edges of myriad details  
precisely delineated on the clearest of days  
throws off its cacophony when fog and mist  
wash in and the clear wholeness and life of it  
blurs sharply in a flash into focus

Saturday, August 6, 2022

## A Book

we sat under old trees on a blanket  
your head against my neck  
part of our legs touching  
you dozed while I read / book like a narcotic  
later when we were old you didn't recall  
that same later I did / in between  
you got in a car while I stood on the porch  
waving goodbye

Sunday, August 7, 2022

## After

how the sadness creeps up  
onto the marriage bed after  
a dozen / two or more years is  
the mystery of why love lasts when  
all that's at stake is death

Monday, August 8, 2022

## Glue

the important topic of wood glue came up  
which had the best wood to wood grip  
the context was Baroque pipe organs  
restoring them so they would sound good  
in 400 years / there was the question  
of making it easy on restorers 100 years  
on / for them a simple glue to wash off  
for lasting tightness Titebond / an answer  
sounded in unison

Tuesday, August 9, 2022

## CHM

asked and the answer's no  
but how to say it when the asker  
asks in front of you  
I released my unofficial thoughts  
as a chart drawn pre-Tufte  
the asker balked and I decided  
I didn't matter to her etc  
in all there were three winners  
three losers / and some I don't cares

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

## Where

we've moved past crazy to insane  
the right is steaming / soon  
we will have a different country  
and where will I go



Thursday, August 11, 2022

## Slow Whirl Day

from one side of our little farm  
to the other we cannot see for the fog  
it will rain soon and the air's cooling  
inside I've stopped reading and have turned  
on the Hammond and soon the Leslie will sharpen  
things up / one could say I'm lonely but  
it's just one day / another one of those days

Friday, August 12, 2022

## Escaped

what if no one could find me  
if I could live out by writing  
I am worried for everything  
but some good news appears  
I am lonely now with no one  
people will worry because  
they cannot find me

Saturday, August 13, 2022

## Nagasaki Standing Boy

a boy about ten carrying a baby on his back  
had come to this place for a serious reason  
wearing no shoes / his face hard / behind him  
the little head tipped back as if in sleep / the boy  
stood for ten minutes / men in white masks walked over  
quietly began to untie the rope holding the baby / I saw  
the baby was dead / they held the body by hands and feet  
placed it on the fire / the boy stood there straight unmoving  
watching the flames / biting his lip shining with blood / the flame  
burned low like the sun going down / the boy turned around  
the boy walked away silently

Sunday, August 14, 2022

## Skips

a favorite place since the 90s  
opening two years before me  
closing in two weeks forever  
not the best / but a comfort  
a snack bar / hamburger specials  
Hellmans mayo / Suzie Q fries  
heavy lobster rolls / large lemonade  
no ice / picnic tables under shade trees  
big field trending north / a reliable  
bathroom / the exquisite Bonnie

the accents untamed and worries mixed  
never again

Monday, August 15, 2022

## Ashes Whose Ashes

in the box we carried  
first out to the car  
then while driving that car  
in our trunk  
then into her house  
the ashes of her love  
who could say whether  
man or woman or how  
the person spoke / what  
script he would have used  
she would have used / but  
we knew it was her husband  
except once after my mother died  
and we had her ashes the cremation man  
called and said oops

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

## Blue Done

the camera says it's strangely blue  
with a sailboat heading out early  
6am at 60° north but  
sail's not up and the clouds are blue  
harbor razor flat like sharpened clips  
sometimes I hope the beautiful woman  
would not have walked away

Wednesday, August 17, 2022

## Project One

she liked to read all day  
in the library where I wrote  
I loved her but never approached  
I decided to write a book of essays  
about a man loving a woman in a library  
but never meeting her / I would publish  
it but get the publisher to print only  
two copies / one for a reviewer who  
would throw it away / one for this library  
once catalogued and about to be shelved  
I'd take it to the burn pit  
the faint drifting smell of that book  
would be how she knows me

Thursday, August 18, 2022

## **Fish**

a fishing boat comes in / docks  
usually / from its cold hold it bursts  
fish of some types and smells of fish  
I ask to buy some and am sold some  
it will be fresh tonight and if  
I come tomorrow it will be fresh  
tomorrow night / nothing is surprising  
it's hard to play along with this any more



Friday, August 19, 2022

## The Undressing

I suppose while getting ready  
she had to undress / wash and powder  
some makeup not much  
I wondered whether she thought  
of contingencies / what might  
and how it would look / feel  
was it old / was it new  
was it ready

Saturday, August 20, 2022

## The Waiting

I spend all day waiting  
for the light to fade  
in winter this happens quickly  
I don't wait long  
the sky's always low and even  
the rain drops are lonely  
once near dark I start to read  
then sleep in my armchair  
my dreams are of rain drops  
fading sky / the night  
and waiting

Sunday, August 21, 2022

## Market Cross

from my spot the tv's too low  
across the way at 4:16am  
all I see is light and dark moving  
across the top rows / a person's head  
wavering for reasons not visible  
I wonder who lives there / third floor  
I'm lower / lights in windows light  
the square smooth in stone  
the blue light of dawn behind it all

Monday, August 22, 2022

## Just When

you think they are all gone  
two of them pop up again  
there is a chance to learn  
more of my family / if only  
Judy can hang on / and if only  
they didn't change their names

Tuesday, August 23, 2022

## **Zahoruiko**

my family was cut off  
from the rest / my mother's  
mother's side was very social  
they shunned us / only unstated  
theories approach

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

## Drive

a drive / a trip  
perhaps some meals and sleep  
to look and experience  
I write plainly but all deteriorates  
what about repetition and echoes  
is beauty just bringing the mind  
to rest and reflect

Thursday, August 25, 2022

## Suggestions

if you want to travel together  
travel together / don't suggest it  
then question whether it's ok  
after a proposed trip / we've  
done it before and survived

Friday, August 26, 2022

## Alexandra

when I look at her photo now  
how young and nervous  
short on a chair / her feet  
just toes touching the floor  
and slight / she is not the woman  
I knew just way too many years later  
and if I were the man who was her husband  
I would have lamented but left  
Kalyna behind



Saturday, August 27, 2022

## Sharing

what about two people  
in the same room overnight  
in a motel off a back road  
in a high desert with no  
full moon / does it always  
mean love or cannot be prudence

Sunday, August 28, 2022

## A Trip to Skip's

there is no more Skip's  
the food and bathrooms  
of my wanderings / but  
nothing can last even  
something older than me  
there is only lament  
and the search for replacement

Monday, August 29, 2022

## Oatman

on a back road with tumbleweeds  
skirting across we pull into a cafe  
no é for a bite of breakfast  
we look old and are / we look together and are  
not / predictable / but there is a familiar scent  
we give off while we struggle  
with decisions / trucker's usual or crêpes

Tuesday, August 30, 2022

## On 66

opened in 1980 Roy's  
was the only stop to find gas  
a hot dish and a bed in the area  
I stopped there at 11 with my hot dish  
and we hoped to soon hop in bed  
I'm talking bungalows

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

## Coupa Woman

today I saw beauty and age  
working together / the hair

in particular

so soft / so gently blended  
from corn to white / the face  
of wrinkles disappearing on sight  
animation / life / I watched  
her more than anyone

Thursday, September 1, 2022

## Good Motel

what would a good motel  
look like if you're not  
on the interstate  
a sign for TV  
a sign for internet  
an attached café  
big rigs parked out front  
a neon sign with an arrow  
pointing at the motel  
perhaps / the sound of crickets

Friday, September 2, 2022

## HIDECS

nothing good / perhaps  
my long project going nowhere  
it's too long / too hard to read  
will anyone like it

Saturday, September 3, 2022

## Way Home

the way home will be obscured  
as what was is bulldozed away  
road widened and repaved  
the river cleaned up and expensive  
homes built / can we rely  
on the cemeteries in which  
the people there are slow  
to change / quick to lie still



Sunday, September 4, 2022

## Green Lights

cold night  
rainy  
wind coming hard into the harbor  
yellow lights on in windows  
buildings of stone  
I was ready to explore  
when the aurora started up  
the promise of warm skin  
and touch  
took second place  
or third

Monday, September 5, 2022

## Statues

in Amsterdam they have big ones  
I of course am not invited  
they walk by in particular manners  
as it were  
when they speak to me / never / it's  
like bulldogs and pork bones  
I cannot get them to say sexy things  
despite all I want is to hear the sounds  
not believe them  
it seems we're surrounded by water

Tuesday, September 6, 2022

## CA Celebration

she isn't invited  
so I must step back  
if Jo isn't either  
I will stay home  
an intense discussion  
I hear

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

## Rabbit

there is suddenly a truth  
after a well-hidden set of quiet  
that an intellectual love  
perhaps expanded / at least  
on one side / how will I know  
what kind of question can yield  
answers / am I on the end  
of the very same thing

Thursday, September 8, 2022

## Were You Good

she has kept her secret  
I guess I suspected by only  
her answer no / when I could  
have been taken as rude instead  
they knew she could keep a secret  
now to keep keeping it

Friday, September 9, 2022

## Asleep They Said

onto the ground I went  
tired beyond description  
a soft spear of pine above  
wind in the needles a good sound  
darkness was rising all around  
soon the darkness would be upon me  
then there would be no last line

Saturday, September 10, 2022

## Back Roads

a backroad is a forgotten place  
a place that was once  
a road from one no town to another  
a path for people of the past  
made of shredded asphalt  
with worn out sand shoulders  
the shrubs and low trees beside it  
wait for their thirst to subside

Sunday, September 11, 2022

## Smearing

life's a smear when it gets old  
what can't be remembered must be  
reinvented / when I think of love  
it's a song I half remembered  
and half made up / and either its  
melody or structure is gone  
soon going back will never work



Monday, September 12, 2022

## Request

if I asked a question would things  
be better / would it make  
it different if I asked it at the start  
or at the end / regardless there  
will be tension

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

## Rain And Walking

up the street and I mean up  
she in her tight skirt  
walked away from me after  
seeing me look long at her  
in the rain now we are both gone

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

## Not Dead Yet

I once was a great musician  
the other players who came to see us  
watched me / I was great because I  
was different / played like only me  
they said / he carries the band

Thursday, September 15, 2022

## Off They Go

the best place to eat / gone  
the nest best place / gone  
my difficult school / gone  
wife number 1 / gone  
wife number 2 / gone  
mother and father / gone  
I need to make some stories  
to make up for evaporation

Friday, September 16, 2022

## Still Small

somewhere between the barn and house  
an old apple tree bumped up against  
the stone wall / too young to know  
I later saw / many years later / the wall  
was two walls of large rocks with small  
ones packed between / a little stream  
went by that started under the barn  
where cow piss drained down / I remember  
jumping over it / the smell / the small  
mcintosh apples / the stone wall like a bridge  
my small life on a larger but still small farm

Saturday, September 17, 2022

## **The “Poet”**

time to face it  
you suck

---

Sunday, September 18, 2022

## Lousy

it will take a while  
before I can write again  
with enough verve  
to make poems that aren't  
just feeling sorry for myself

Monday, September 19, 2022

## Those Trees Are Gone

the three trees in our frontyard  
two oak and a shagbark  
across the road two shagbarks  
it was our road / our farm  
either side / when the sun  
was going down in winter  
the barren trees across the big field  
were backlit and it was the west  
out that way / the big trees  
nearby were big blocks and I'd  
sit on the brick fireplace hearth  
looking toward the sadness  
that one day would be me



Tuesday, September 20, 2022

## Mystery

sitting down to read  
a tartan wool on her lap  
a sumo orange just peeled  
on her plate / she picks  
up a murder mystery  
as women always do  
and wonders at the cleverness  
she warmly and sweetly  
aspires to

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

## Carly

imagine / after a ferry  
to the Island and in what  
counted as a bistro an ash  
blond with a rasp voice  
reading a soft paged book  
saw me not looking at her  
a quick meal and a walk  
then a night until midnight  
out the door and on her steps  
she said to me you have no  
idea who I am / do you

Thursday, September 22, 2022

## Bisbee

up the canyon road  
a bookstore / a general store  
evidence of a copper mine  
everything is colored old  
or covered in dust / the town  
proclaims nostalgia / if it  
weren't for uncanny nothing  
would ever come here let alone  
live here

Friday, September 23, 2022

## Lily

are you the one  
who figured out  
the program / Lily asked  
then it seemed as if  
she meant my essay on Notes  
she said people need to know  
how her father's ideas evolved  
but just for a few seconds  
I believed she loved me

Saturday, September 24, 2022

## Age

the bathroom walls are glass  
the shower stall within it  
is glass / two beds to watch  
from / the hotel made for sex  
is not made for us

Sunday, September 25, 2022

## Rejection

the road reads less pretty  
plans make the open closed  
will this end the idea of going  
I'm feeling down  
the walls feel up  
need to decide quick

Monday, September 26, 2022

## Dessicated

every place beautiful  
has something old just  
off its center / a leftover  
from earlier / worn down  
past rusted and into disintegration  
but easy to overlook  
happy to be unnoticed  
without this all is a pun

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

## Man In Love

he died to love another woman  
because she didn't love him  
enough or he believed  
her body unlike his was tattooed  
everywhere / she looked  
like every woman he loved  
he made his life  
about finding himself  
or the truth  
whichever came first



Wednesday, September 28, 2022

## Gravity

in the end gravity wins  
the stonewalls standing well  
when I was kid on our farm  
are now near flat without any help  
from people / gravity is working  
on me now

Thursday, September 29, 2022

## Port City

the city is old on a river  
in Europe that empties  
to the cold sea  
every building on that river  
is stone or hard and the streets  
are narrow of stone and hard  
looking up I see small balconies  
with metal railings and prickly  
spikes holding clotheslines  
and on one clothesline  
a woman's underclothes  
underpants and lacy tops  
yellow in the gloomy sunlight  
or from age and use and a pair  
fresh I guessed from a night  
she will remember until the river  
is forced to make her forget

Friday, September 30, 2022

## Watcher

I watched her one morning  
on our long trip  
washing her clothes  
in the bathroom sink  
using plain soap and wringing  
when she got to her underwear  
I spent a minute deciding  
and because we never did  
I didn't

Saturday, October 1, 2022

## Is Waiting

soon I'll be 73  
but the thing about soon  
is that time needs to pass  
and somewhere not far  
the embodiment of the end  
is waiting

Sunday, October 2, 2022

## Looping Back

the road is a loop  
starting where someone  
else chooses / ending  
when something else  
chooses / we can choose  
where we rest but not why  
or anything

Monday, October 3, 2022

## Lasting

boosted / roughly ready  
nervous for the trip  
will I be able to stand well  
will she be too fast for me  
could this be a last thing

Tuesday, October 4, 2022

## Distance

where I would live  
is getting cooler and  
the nights sooner  
the mornings later  
a little rain every day  
but I don't live there  
there's no way to experience  
the place and who would join  
me / no one proper

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

## **Terrible Woman**

we are as ready as we can be  
but I will be doing most  
of the driving / she hasn't  
driven for years / it shows  
tomorrow is the worst day  
years since I've left home  
yes / I'm scared



Thursday, October 6, 2022

## First Day

driving / the central valley  
is dying / the feed lot is gone  
Mojave the town is ghostly  
the food where we are staying  
just across the CA/NV border  
is awe inspiring for insipidness  
and now I am dead on my feet

Friday, October 7, 2022

## Hers

the fantasy of peat fire  
in a croft on a cliff  
looking over the ocean  
with wind any time of year  
any time of day with a vague  
man who is me

Saturday, October 8, 2022

## **Inside Scoop**

she is wary and I  
need to calm her  
she tries to organize  
but is not effective  
once there I will  
be alone

Sunday, October 9, 2022

## **Crap**

a close call  
not recovered

Monday, October 10, 2022

## Hopi

Hopi not what it was  
cover shutting it down  
many deaths / masks still required  
no sit-down food  
all the galleries gone

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

## Morning in Hopi

morning at the Hopi Ground Cafe  
Storm and her father / she  
made the coffee / he the chorizo  
burrito / Tom there too / the men  
me and the old woman under the juniper  
a deep canyon narrow and dripping  
from a spring below / he lectured  
we ate

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

## Chama

she of course jumped  
when I touched sides  
to move her / she saw  
me move to her back  
and still she jumped  
now sleep

Thursday, October 13, 2022

## Self

a woman who does  
not pay attention  
takes my fork because  
it's closer than hers  
who leaves the car  
door open / unlocked  
when she takes her  
things into the hotel  
perhaps because I  
had opened it before  
she arrived there  
what do you call her



Friday, October 14, 2022

## Monk Life

the monks have their way  
of making food  
they chant with meaning  
but in bored tones  
all but one or two are old  
they paused between lines  
in each stanza but move to the next  
like enjambment  
they underline syllables to emphasize  
they mark the line break of a too-long line  
with a downarrow  
... means say the rest of the prayer silently

after all  
they're buried under simple crosses  
under the down-blazing sun

Saturday, October 15, 2022

## Unfortunate

we drive  
she repeats her questions  
then complains  
when I answer  
I've lost my voice  
from the dry air  
I am here in Santa Fe  
to talk

---

Sunday, October 16, 2022

## Rain Road

a storied career  
there are lots of stories  
one of them goes down  
a road from highway  
to divided to two lane  
to gravel to clay to dirt  
to two ruts / then it rained

Monday, October 17, 2022

## Tired

I am tiring  
the trip is wearing  
I'm not a friend  
things are piling up

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

## Casita

watching her it's clear  
she's home and friends  
live here / I am nothing  
to her / the warmth  
flowing to and from her  
the colors of her house  
she is home and I'm not  
welcome

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

## **Waste**

I am falling apart  
physically and otherwise  
what I want can never happen  
I gave a talk today and boy  
it sucked / I need to do  
something when I get home

Thursday, October 20, 2022

## Don Diego

Santa Fe light through two windows  
facing west / outside turned trees  
and surrounding walls / we sit side  
by side on a small sofa / she is jittery  
but the light's alive and warm over  
a cool breeze / all we did was sit  
for an hour building a memory together

when happiness happens it happens  
behind me

Friday, October 21, 2022

## Walk

we walk / you and I  
past the river that has sworn  
to kill me / we don't hold  
hands / we are like two separated  
but the wind too cold / can't decide  
which way to go so it follows  
the water



Saturday, October 22, 2022

## Repulse

I find again  
that I am repulsive  
and so again  
I will hide

Sunday, October 23, 2022

## Go

she thinks / she thinks  
I feel and the feeling  
is run

Monday, October 24, 2022

## Racks in Ely

in Ely we eat early  
the woman with fashionably  
torn jeans serves beer  
racks of antlers every wall  
a waitress brings warm marinara  
I dip Jenny's spinach pizza  
to help out / out

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

## Down

she rips me and I stop  
under I go / and a long  
tiring ride right  
into the setting sun

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

## Peer Amid

the words are kind  
of fun when they echo  
a subtler sort of rhyme  
said a poet who lived before  
me / today is a day for mothers  
my mother for instance who is dead

Thursday, October 27, 2022

## Understand

if a process can create  
a thing that doesn't mean  
that process did create  
that thing / if a writer  
describes a character's  
past overlaid on present  
the character might not  
in the story perceive it  
hard to understand  
easy to understand

Friday, October 28, 2022

## Path To

there's a path / narrow and faint really  
from the bridge to the sea / you know  
where I mean by now / it moves along  
by the river never far from its sight  
with dirt and rocks and roots abounding  
one day not long from now / soon enough  
I'll start my wander from one end  
to other / watching the river deciding  
which way / when the end appears before me  
the water will welcome me / whatever  
time of day it happens to be / it's  
that kind of water

Saturday, October 29, 2022

## Wiper Book

so after the trip I lament  
the result of long drives  
too much talk / not enough  
liking / odd meals  
she delighted in spouting hate  
like little love bites  
I snapped / back and to pieces  
I recall the monastery where  
a nice monk gave permission  
to visit the cemetery and a poet  
gave me the smallest book of poems  
under my wipers



Sunday, October 30, 2022

## So Long

I said I was once  
exciting and unpleasant  
now boring and unpleasant  
she agreed and stopped talking  
everything about us is opposite  
being friends was fun but  
things end

Monday, October 31, 2022

## **Birthdays**

dark colors / light gone early  
the sadness of late October  
what kind of love exudes this  
when I drive or pretend at night  
the sun cooperates by shying away  
the water draws cooler / the women  
who come and go whisper as they leave

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

## Holcomb

after finding the place  
the writer paced in circles looking  
his companion knocked on doors  
introducing topic and writer  
but he just looked in circles  
at the landscape / the houses  
the people / these were characters  
events he would write about were not  
they were just the coat hangers on which  
coats of rare colors hung

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

## Jerky & Jumpy

she's in her bubble  
just her / the rest circle  
she is a pure event horizon  
she likes to walk away  
her own pace / the rest  
on their own / she asks  
questions and demands answers  
explaining your loserness  
is easy for her / no wonder  
everyone is nervous

Thursday, November 3, 2022

## Turn

what we saw didn't make a difference  
the sage / the dry but green brush  
juniper trees / behind all that the canyon  
red and limestone cliffs / beneath  
it all her joy and my melancholy  
riding side by side / our earlier travels  
only mockery of what came later  
we walked by a river / we could have talked  
could have drawn near but she kept on ahead  
of me / turning away

Friday, November 4, 2022

## Christ in Desert

after sitting outside my monk's cell  
I stood when she came out of hers  
inside the walled garden our cells  
abutted / a doe and fawns grazed  
while the sun negotiated past cliffs  
more red now than when I first sat  
we walked slowly not looking at them  
so they could graze without their fears  
she opened the gate and walked fast ahead  
I closed the gate and followed behind  
slowly / the path passed by the stations  
of the cross but we neither stopped  
nor noted their meanings / where time  
goes to grow old

nearing the simply crossed cemetery  
here men dedicated to the silence  
from words lie under a hard soil pan  
we turned to the yellow streak of cottonwoods  
marking the Chama / all the rest bathed  
in dark green in bowls of red cliffs and limestone  
behind us / then the church pushed against rock  
and colored the same / inside the monks broke  
silence to chant hoarsely / I drew inside to browse  
my sadness and memories / she went into the dining room's  
antechamber to worry her joy

Saturday, November 5, 2022

## Near Ghost Ranch

she craved that one place  
a bridge over Chama and the fields  
beyond where / she said / you  
could walk for days / the meadow  
though was all she could hope  
for / I saw / the sun / the brush  
the sky trying hard to blue  
the river as green as young girls  
hoping to never age

Sunday, November 6, 2022

## Quick

what's amazing is how little  
she seemed to notice that I  
was squirming under her gaze  
then when it was time to commit  
she flew home



Monday, November 7, 2022

## Southwest

the past of love is unlike  
the hot days of dusty driving  
along the back parts of reservations  
and places where only decay survives  
we stop to snap the homes that look  
only like houses / old cars out front  
skinny dogs rushing around / she spouts  
I hunker and tremble / we are nothing  
like a pair

Tuesday, November 8, 2022

## Southwestish

places of mostly stone  
are places where time  
goes to grow old / what lives  
there fears encounters with red  
rocks and sudden rain / me  
I fear the dirt road to the monastery  
in case of rain or in case of spiritual  
discontinuity / but shh / the quiet  
is a silence filled with faith

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

## **It Is Finished**

how to say it / the work of silence  
is wind carving stone / silence  
as predator stalks in plain sight  
the long walk is merely prelude  
but if you choose it silence  
will brush back the hair that once lay  
over your eyes / the autumn cottonwoods  
now yellow will brown under the gaze  
of silence / one must be alone under the sky  
a man once said for beauty to do its work  
to bring about completion

Thursday, November 10, 2022

## Should Be Silent Prayers

sitting in the pews  
the prayers shouted out  
for help for the lesser  
teared my eyes while the prayer  
makers moved on from one  
to the next without feeling

Friday, November 11, 2022

## Remarks

in my foolish head I believed  
something could happen  
that could not / when I wondered  
what she meant by resisting I heard  
her say just listen and keep  
on listening / understanding  
will come by itself

Saturday, November 12, 2022

## Stations

the beautiful path begins  
nowhere but ends where everything  
ends / up in the sky a passel of bird-  
like being flutter like angels  
but there are merely revering  
the path which begins near their eggy  
starts and ends at the ends of their wings  
who can beat that

Sunday, November 13, 2022

## Algiers

in Algiers the women  
were once beautiful and spread  
themselves at Camus' favorite  
café in summer under a Mediteranean  
sun / dark hair / dark eyes avoiding  
every man in and out of sight  
I watched them drinking heavy coffee  
and chewing slowly their mbesses  
I wondered of the writing outside  
made of letters made of water

Monday, November 14, 2022

## A Fantasy

funny how when the mood is silent  
the hate smuggles under the flap  
and no one notices any undertow  
years go by / but the stress  
of a long trip can rip it like sweet pants  
a flood / a whisper / a tangle  
the roads below the seaside cliffs  
are tonight and every night red



Tuesday, November 15, 2022

## Van Get Out Of My Way

we lived in the same city  
it turned out I learned  
for a dozen years and we  
were perfect for each other  
if only I knew of you  
or you knew of me  
but during that dozen years  
of time you came to hate  
who I came to be / when we met  
finally at a museum of conceptual  
painting we tossed our looks other ways

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

## Other Than Parents

I park across the street  
in a dirtied spot under some trees  
around 8 in the dark in November  
I cross the street and knock  
Mr Martin comes to the door  
after but first I spend 10 minutes  
with Mrs Martin in the dining room  
then an hour with Mr Martin  
in the living room / I tell  
him my progress and he teaches  
me stories / he's gone now  
she's gone now / one son  
is gone now / their daughter  
is strange and far away / the other  
son with less of his leg  
and now I sit in the dark  
and type in things like this

Thursday, November 17, 2022

## Riding

I rode my bike there almost  
every day in high school  
across that bridge to friends  
I still have / I try to remember  
or even just fathom the loneliness  
those rides represented / now  
at twilight I walk the hills  
round here but alone and with varying  
breath / I sit in my chair and read  
but sometimes I fall asleep  
how little things change / the ride  
was 5 miles each way / 10 per day

Friday, November 18, 2022

## Beautiness

the beauty of sadness  
is that it's in the eye  
of the sufferer / not like  
the sadness of beauty  
which is sitting there like  
sharpened hardened steel

Saturday, November 19, 2022

## Crofty

I decided to depart the croft  
not saying my bye byes  
I had no reservations  
neither ferry nor plane  
I took my chance and knew  
I might need to duck  
I was hungry but could wait  
I needed a drink / don't we all  
now she's still asleep

Sunday, November 20, 2022

## Her View

I wish I could one day  
sit by the river the way  
we once did / but instead  
of her being along I'd be alone  
instead of her not remembering  
anything I would remember everything

Monday, November 21, 2022

## **Santa Fe Sun Low**

we sat on her couch  
watched the sun low in the sky  
a warm day in Santa Fe  
it could have been special  
but it was ordinary  
the most ordinary any two  
people can have it  
not a trace of more

Tuesday, November 22, 2022

## Hopi

the hotel was down and out  
the kitchen open but only  
for takeout / the adobe walls  
all cracked / up on this mesa  
the wind was our enemy / the village  
just as jumbled as before / all  
the jewelers were gone / she  
regretted the choice to stay here  
our road trip not going well  
what once was friendly was now forbidden



Wednesday, November 23, 2022

## Social Suicide

whitewashed / once a five and dime  
just on this side of the border  
where paint once relaxed now flakes  
drop but with the sun in our eyes  
the low building seemed a gate  
to past's hell / where we parked  
the salted ground had been punished  
to fine dust that longed to paste  
onto our boots & into our car  
close to sunset this was no place  
to linger / we had secrets to repair

Thursday, November 24, 2022

## N Street

in Boston Nana's flat  
there was room for nothing  
I was not with it enough  
to bring a book so I watched TV  
or looked outside to the street or rested  
on her bed or went to the bathroom  
just outside the door or examined  
the closet with its stuffed hawk  
or looked outside to the backyards  
two stories down / Thanksgiving  
with turkey and sauerkraut or a cabbagey  
version the family made and Brazil nuts  
my Father and I would walk to Castle Island  
which back then was unmaintained and unsafe  
once we drove to a closed model train shop  
no one suspected me of ever growing up

Friday, November 25, 2022

## National Old Trails Highway

the best parts are the abandoned roads  
built once as surprises of invention  
through vertical sided canyons  
down dried riverbeds / with hand dug  
cuts through kicked rug ridges  
with icon food like cheeseburgers  
and spiral fries with coke  
toll houses and motels to stay in  
train tracks following wagon trails  
but all burned down or flooded out  
or nature reclaimed with spot roads  
ditching off from the new roads  
that scream of tires

Saturday, November 26, 2022

## Or Less

I didn't know my role  
was driver / she had her plans  
and I was infrastructure  
any time she could have taken me  
into account she didn't  
didn't apologize for it either  
in Santa Fe I was on my own  
to think I spent years believing  
in more

Sunday, November 27, 2022

## Desert Away

the quiet is disturbing  
even with wind and far off  
bird noise / the river sloughing  
by and all of it echoing  
between unflat cliffs  
I admit to waiting for her  
to come with me or speak  
but she was off far away  
walking because her leg  
muscles liked it / I liked  
the idea of close discussion  
she kept her arms up

Monday, November 28, 2022

**(Me)**

I watched a movie  
it once horrified me  
now it seems sweet  
it's the story of a man  
who sets people adrift  
on their worst day  
he is a parenthesis  
an escape / he is above  
it all and all his wishes  
are emptied

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

## Beech

why can't there be a way  
to glide past cemeteries  
itching for company / don't  
stop a seer once told me  
they feed on you / by the copper  
beech I wait my turn for  
the stories are hard to hear  
let alone tell / my sight  
my hearing / my sense  
all long for passing by

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

## I, I, I

I looked out the window one morning  
the snow was up to the bottom of that window  
I wondered how I would shovel out  
the woman who slept by me had a story  
I needed the full day to listen to that story



Thursday, December 1, 2022

## Like A Song

I walked behind her  
oh what a fiasco  
first she started to outpace me  
then she farted / but ladylike  
she folded her arms behind her  
my passion drooped  
into the West the sun was setting  
I couldn't see her  
I still can't

Friday, December 2, 2022

## **A Bird's Fear**

home alone as a child  
in a trailer in the woods  
inside a fence on Cape Cod  
with a dog / doesn't matter  
the fear was what a bird must feel  
perched back to the world  
on a hanging bird feeder  
scared who's behind and why  
doors locked / all the lights on  
all night

Saturday, December 3, 2022

## Give Wonder

my view back then of romance at Christmas  
was Chanel N° 5 / anonymous gift  
yes that little / I had no models  
I had no references / history stories  
but nothing for my age / my place  
I never executed anything like that so  
I didn't hinder the lives of women  
only made myself heartsick

Sunday, December 4, 2022

**(Me)**

after covid eveything for me  
closed down to nothing  
places closed in the town  
where I grew up / there is  
no reason to go there now  
I stay home or nearby  
I am as a statement  
written (in parentheses)

Monday, December 5, 2022

## Words

less full now but still full  
of words I note people in my generation  
taking their final fives and my plate  
of projects is growing / the revisions  
of all including me are painful lessons  
in exclusion and addition / my writing partners  
are on the fence

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

## Words in My Arms

how do you snuggle with words  
make them cuddle you back  
a warm bed / good technique  
or the wet of sweat as you work the pen  
most of them are sharp and their touch  
hurts so love is bloody  
same as any

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

## Her Hips Too

while she sits in her louche  
living room reading highbrow tomes  
I am sipping tea with the fake  
blond who tips her head in seduction  
of the disco-like version of a sad  
but love-ish song / everywhere

Thursday, December 8, 2022

## **Curiosa / Inconstant**

when things pop up they attract  
my mental connections / like  
an aura that surrounds them  
and me / like sunlight  
on my body but not on my face  
like walking through a labyrinthine  
city with streets like mysteries  
like Venice when all you see in the canal  
before you is the very prow of a boat  
next to a humped bridge / these all  
pop up



Friday, December 9, 2022

## Earliest Sunsets

every late afternoon / December  
the light disappeared and our habits  
of silence and isolation opened up  
in service of unknowns from unknown  
pasts / sunset behind barren trees  
across the big field was the beacon  
I'd follow / I never figured out who  
I was / I repeat all of it / and the cold

Saturday, December 10, 2022

## Her Dream

rain rips hard against the cliffs  
seeming to bleed red in the night gale  
above we sit in the quiet of a croft  
a fire rising orange from peat  
while we sit reading at far ends  
the only talk is do you want some tea

Sunday, December 11, 2022

## Even Sleep

the snow like onset of sleep  
cushions the mind and ears  
everything grows muffled  
warmth grows warmer  
even with this calming  
she makes me nervous  
we draw away

Monday, December 12, 2022

## **Feeling = Nil**

for favors she still  
asks / once complying  
forever a second fiddle  
this requires no friend  
feeling / just do this  
help me / I who she insulted  
in my home which she hated  
I complied

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

## Amen

who is the narrator of my story  
it isn't me because my vision  
never wide grows less  
my hope is to put it in the hands  
of words and let them steer  
like a poorly made knife  
I can't cut it

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

## Over

she is asleep / a fairy tale  
with chilies / I never expected  
her to be aspergers or something  
like it / no filter on her remarks  
but she is asleep / fairy tale out

Thursday, December 15, 2022

## Roads

the only way to look  
is back / ahead is short  
she has more room ahead  
so she borrows from me  
without affection  
without grace

Friday, December 16, 2022

## Everywhere

her cue was leave now  
she booked flights and flew  
off / just then some sadness  
but that gradiented to dislike  
or worse / why use the words  
in books I read / big thoughts  
written down by someone who also likely  
faced dislike / or worse / but kept  
on / kept on / in a diminished voice  
she'll fly away some more gathering  
distance and then she'll be like  
gone for good / I must write this



Saturday, December 17, 2022

## Aghast

lights and still snow  
a car far away  
the warmth of heavy quilts  
smell of meals cooking  
or coffee arriving  
a fragment of song recorded  
years ago / the voice of a lover  
who has forgotten / rings  
on fingers to signify  
watching water called a river  
crossed by a road called a bridge  
my mind wandering light and still

Sunday, December 18, 2022

**(me)**

I passed a headstone / stopped  
read its short message summing  
things up / a biography with start  
and finish and the most important  
fact / yet I wonder is any of it true  
and if it isn't who is the joke for  
the mystery of a life / of me for  
example / so many turn away  
I am (parenthetical)

Monday, December 19, 2022

## **Franconia**

she started the trail strong  
with expectation / young and experienced  
hiker but the snow and cold trapped her  
they found her without shoes  
age 20.9 / a mystery

Tuesday, December 20, 2022

## December 20

I made my way to the pond  
now frozen over / taking my skates  
I pu them on sitting on a rock  
and then glided across to near  
where the stream came in and  
the ice was thin / I could hear  
loud cracks and below me was black  
like many things I was a lousy skater  
could not stop / go backward  
start quick / but the sound  
of a steel blade cutting ice...

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

## Rez

she asks the same questions over again  
waiting for the same answers or not  
she gestures out the window  
what's there is scattered desert  
at the base of a long line of cliffs  
rumble houses and hogans / hoopdys  
telltales she might say / above I notice  
the sky is darkening blue as if haze  
were out of style / not a bird  
not a snake / no lizard  
it seems like a long way to sleep  
or find good / she asks / not a snag

Thursday, December 22, 2022

## Burrafirth

sitting here / above the aurora flashes  
behind it stars / the dipper  
to the right the North Sea  
to the left the Atlantic  
not a warm night but a long one  
under piles of quilts and blankets  
I'll stay warm and she will too  
before bed I'll pack more peat  
which will burn long and with a smell  
outside we might hear sheep startled  
not far the waves caress the shore  
as the lonely songwriters have said  
it is everything

Friday, December 23, 2022

## Coasts

they say marriage starts it all  
I've known people married before  
and still are / 49 years ago  
I gave it a try / my ambition  
killed it I guess even though some  
said it was perfect / that I was lucky  
we spent times together others  
would have spoken of as perfect  
instead she's far away  
I am too

Saturday, December 24, 2022

## Wrong Roads

all for her / I was vehicle  
revolting is the word she was thinking  
she uses / now to escape  
the land though was lovely  
the sky with it / the road  
different and difficult  
the agenda though not so clear



Sunday, December 25, 2022

## **This Way**

out the bedroom window  
lamps swaying rising falling  
growing larger headed toward me  
how many are coming / why  
news or accusation  
friends with gifts  
old lovers out for revenge  
I could use some rain  
wind and a storm

Monday, December 26, 2022

## Burra Firth

near the entrance to our voe  
a ship seeks shelter  
according to MarineTraffic.com  
its track a scribble  
likewise we sought shelter  
at the other end  
sadly a hatred is upon us  
the peat fire's warm though  
and we still sleep entangled  
and piled / the ship though  
shudders

Tuesday, December 27, 2022

## Faked Love

I never asked her  
but I suppose she knew  
silly love at that age  
her results were bad  
she should have relented  
I never even talked to her  
for a long stretch  
what a coward I was  
I still have that habit

Wednesday, December 28, 2022

## **In Prague**

instead of ordering a meal  
we decided to write some sonnets  
but instead of some good rhymes  
we chose 7 syllable words to end  
each line / the waiter waited  
when we were done we each  
had 14 glasses of robust beer

Thursday, December 29, 2022

## Santa Fe

she walks away arms folded  
behind her / time was not  
her friend / her secrets  
stabbed back and how could I  
compete / resist / resort  
to the flyaway and this time  
next week she will be farther  
away and easier to forget

Friday, December 30, 2022

## War

embers fly up into a leaden pillowed sky  
the dogs that celebrate death have stopped  
barking / under a dim light firs  
are lit by snow / the calm face  
of one recently dead will not smile  
a picture of a woman standing by her daughter  
in his breast pocket and in his hand  
the lace remains of the one he last loved

Saturday, December 31, 2022

## Lerwick

tonight I watched a couple  
and a small group photographed  
by a man with a big camera  
at Market Cross / he took down  
their names it looked like  
and when they all were gone  
he picked up his folding chair  
propped against the Grinch  
and walked toward the Esplanade

though not much this was more  
than the two years past  
when no one at all was there  
however / I watched

# **The Lace Remains**

Richard P. Gabriel

December 31, 2023



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Sunday, January 1, 2023

## Off Path Diner

the diner hold a mixed crop  
seed caps and ball caps  
denim is common / sheepskin  
above shoulders / work boots  
and the women old or fat  
everything so ordinary  
you wonder what ordinary is  
ketchup / tabasco / the name  
Don't Go This Way

Monday, January 2, 2023

## Rude Warm Place

behind our house  
in my secret clearing  
a tiny pond no bigger  
than a kid's rubber  
lawn pool / its water  
just the water table  
of the swampy area about  
under a thick pine  
near a long boulder  
I built a teepee  
it looked ridiculous  
in it I buried a tin  
with secret stuff  
nothing worth writing about  
but still secret

Tuesday, January 3, 2023

## Eva

gorgeous woman traveling alone  
with her dog down long dirt tracks  
with her camera and drone and 4-wheel  
carrying everything for all outcomes  
she has been everywhere / her looks  
likely invite problems / the lone  
woman alone everywhere

Wednesday, January 4, 2023

## Roadisms

the small task of the walk  
down the road to where my place  
ends / it's a narrow road  
not lyrically paved / the shoulders  
are oiled sand pounded to powder  
almost / there are anthill spots  
on each side a ditch because drainage  
is poor / when you drive by fast  
none of this is noticed / it takes  
special eyes and a kind of torpor  
to see everything / everywhere

Thursday, January 5, 2023

## Merrimac Walks

the rocks / the timothy  
the long lost urges  
I would walk the land  
and even now I walk  
the corridors when bored  
or too worked / the cold  
and damp are on top of me  
the stone walls are still  
high and filled like tacos

Friday, January 6, 2023

## Helen Said

beyond the windows at the Lab  
when I worked all night  
to have more of the machine  
some nights the wind or rain  
or both blew and rattled  
I remember thinking I was not  
much and even though I tried  
to alter that I didn't  
now no longer aspiring to  
bon vivant it's more like  
bon voyage

Saturday, January 7, 2023

## Route 39

strange amount of bad affairs  
and road remarks over  
and over all the same repeating  
I wonder how to write a scene  
that makes you cry without  
sentiment / can thought be  
far behind / I made my mind up  
long ago to skip the niceties  
and still I keep it up  
memories fade and desire



Sunday, January 8, 2023

## Scipio UT

we liked a town in Utah  
though everything about it  
was unpleasant / how to explain  
the houses were just enough  
and the trees worked well too  
I suppose it was real in the sense  
we were searching for / after  
that we decided we didn't like  
each other

Monday, January 9, 2023

## **Alison & Vera**

but that night all this was unknown  
sadly so / Vera did not come back  
not her / not her body / still  
in the crevasse / still roped  
to Alison in her red jacket

months later when we knew / I recall  
walking just before twilight up  
the short slope toward Felt Lake  
and watching / for a while / the fog return

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

## John McCarthy

we chatted a little more  
he grew tired / got properly  
into bed / last time I saw him  
he signed the book at the top  
of page 13 above the definitions  
of eval and apply saying  
I used to understand all this  
I'm sure you can

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

## Writerness

great writers say things  
plainly / little or no  
decoration / but they say  
a lot / and surprising things  
too / it takes a lot of nerve  
to drop the clutter put all  
around to hide your privates

Thursday, January 12, 2023

## Pathways

roads along the river  
same ways / same directions  
trees slumped over roads  
the leaves / we leave  
the ocean is deciding which  
way to go / the bridges  
nearby are thinking of falling  
down / people live here  
they spend the heat and cold  
together / I visit where I  
used to live / driving by slowly

Friday, January 13, 2023

## Her

the restaurant is airy and quiet  
the lights are perfect / she takes  
off her wrap as she sits and her eyes  
go to him and her thoughts to her  
polished skin and lightly made face  
she is wrapped in a fantasy of love  
and a womanly future / while I on  
the other side of the room wrap  
my head in how many days are left  
and what of the cosmos / her  
thoughts seem small at first  
but then on second thought  
mine are

Saturday, January 14, 2023

## After Talking

after our cold sit  
by the river in my rental  
we ate at Rainbow Café  
where the in-room kitchen  
fogged the windows and the place  
was loud with remarks yet  
we sat quietly at a corner table  
eating heavy meat meals  
and sometimes speaking some more

Sunday, January 15, 2023

## **Puffin2**

everything is not working  
at Jan's / my old admin  
and Chris had set it all up  
as a mystery / she can hardly  
talk to me except in riddles  
and private nouns like "Puffin2"  
as if I can understand / but  
150 terrible miles separate us



Monday, January 16, 2023

## **I Want To Be With You**

snow drifts down empty  
covers what ground has laid  
in the room where we have always mingled  
the yellow feeling of dimmed lights  
gathers the way flowers sparkle  
beneath oaks / we pour small drinks  
hot and sip them and sometimes  
we mumble like memes from the past  
later we know we'll tempt the snow  
to record our passing or perhaps more  
will fill in the gaps we've already made

Tuesday, January 17, 2023

## Ely

we never had a simple dinner  
on the backroads / everything  
was too unsubtle maybe brazen  
she was not share-y and I hung back  
once when there was ice outside  
the door I held her hand to keep  
her upright / the only simplicity

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

## Darkening

out the window just after twilight  
as a night of rain gets ready  
the oaks are black rivulets  
the sky is purpling clouds  
the lights / what there are of them  
are spotting yellow and orange  
it's a view that pushes me to think  
where have all the loves gone wrong

Thursday, January 19, 2023

## **Three Lines For A Former Lady**

she walked far ahead  
I stopped to consider  
falling back even more

Friday, January 20, 2023

## Merrimac

Skip's is gone and I'll miss it  
ok burgers / ok fries / but  
good bathroom location and shady  
picnic tables / owners I'll miss  
almost no reason to visit  
just the river and farm / always  
there and a plot of land

Saturday, January 21, 2023

## Islands

I visited what could be  
a favorite place with a woman  
who came to dislike me and she's  
now away / the spiritual tie  
for me between her and there  
puts a smudge on my love  
for the place / I likely cannot  
therefore ever go there again  
and there's no time anyway  
why did she?

Sunday, January 22, 2023

## Spiral

I sit by some moving water  
watch for minutes or hours  
bubbles spiral upward  
eddies make slight sounds  
I choose this over chats  
I choose to write over speaking  
water / moving water

Monday, January 23, 2023

## Storm

a good storm scrubbing branches  
then coating them / streets needing  
sand and plows but packed down instead  
people walking shoulders hunched and eyes  
down tending to slip / the river swallowing  
it all and dumping to sea / my cast iron  
stove showing red



Tuesday, January 24, 2023

## Maples

our swampland filled with maples  
some of girth / my father taps  
them with homemade taps made  
from copper and hooks buckets  
on them in the Spring / with only  
ten buckets he renders it down  
on our potbelly stove in the basement  
and after days we have a pint  
only twice did he tap the trees  
two years in a row / it seemed  
to him a good idea / was it?

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

## Rhododendron

she planted a rhododendron  
when we moved here / small one  
but so far north it grew just  
barely each year and I made a vow  
to stay here with her even when  
hell has loosed / and leave only  
the day when its trunk becomes long  
enough / thick enough for a walking  
stick / & from it made / then I'll walk  
away looking only forward

Thursday, January 26, 2023

## Walking Stick

wintering indoors I lean  
against a bounty of pillows  
while fire frets / hope to see  
my winterlost friend / a poet  
comes toward my stoned up hut  
leaning heavily on his walking  
stick made too far ago from wood  
of a withered tree / as we both

Friday, January 27, 2023

## **Jerky Clouds**

(this minute a cloud)  
I stop my boat's headway  
(next minute a cloud)  
up river by the shore  
the clouds reveal breaks  
in my moon gazing parable

Saturday, January 28, 2023

## So She Left?

stone laird's house  
roof off and floors caved  
all white from winter showers  
snowy mornings / tracks leading  
up to it / no / tracks leading  
away from it to the unplowed road  
leading to the quay where a now  
storm tossed ship makes slow  
headway to a place far

Sunday, January 29, 2023

## Light of Ground

moonlight whitefloors the ground  
I need to go but outside the cold  
is so bright I need to go out outhouse-like  
except to stand by a stunted tree and lap up  
the distance / the presence / the absence  
one of many stillnesses

Monday, January 30, 2023

## Robotic Love

everything around her  
the clouds lifting the distance  
the sea like feathers on a crow  
the timothy wrestling with wind  
the blossoms filled with poachers  
the stone hut built with past passion  
her bed an empty womb just waiting  
the robe loosely placed on her shoulders  
and me standing over there

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

## Or Lavendar

dawn and a purple lingers  
near the horizon seen from  
a straw-thatched hut where  
an old man lives alone  
always has



Wednesday, February 1, 2023

## Cold Story

the floor of my hut at night  
the moon in the shape of a square  
when I tell about that very night  
my lips / my tongue / my mouth  
grow cold with the passage of words

Thursday, February 2, 2023

## Returning Or Going

returning home I paid  
a last visit to one  
I might have married  
approaching I smelled  
herbs in a garden behind  
a fence / and on her grave-  
mound a violet / a single  
flower / growing in the center  
of a sprig of dewed sunlight

Friday, February 3, 2023

## Felled

the sawn end of a freshly  
felled tree gazes like encircled  
eyes to the sea beyond the hill  
or perhaps is looked upon as moon  
flinging light on ground clover  
or the face of a lover who stormed  
clover of a moonlit night  
on her way to the sea beyond  
the hill to a place of many trees

Saturday, February 4, 2023

## **Strewn**

seeing on my way from her  
a hundred years of leaves  
fallen on the lawn  
taking on the color  
of an old woman of wonder

Sunday, February 5, 2023

## **Moon Lost**

unlock the door  
so we might watch the moon's  
passing / though rising  
was easy now clouds bar  
the way / tea time

Monday, February 6, 2023

## River of Forget

the river of forgotten things  
starts with forgettable  
I drag for poems in that river  
someday when poems stop  
I join the throng in that river

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

## Leaving

out walking I found  
a fresh leaf just fallen  
from a brush with wind  
taking it home I plan  
to use it to wipe  
your last tears  
from your eyes

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

## Seeing Off

the backs and shoulders  
of those seen-off / loneliness  
in the foreground / the being  
seen-off grind hope into their chests  
what I see / what the seen-off see  
are two ways for the autumn wind to chime



Thursday, February 9, 2023

## Remembrance

between two maples rocks  
sharpened by breakage  
a being smoothed by a withering  
wind from ocean's doors  
meanwhile I've prayed for a bed  
and I now I rest with my head  
toward the beach and my feet  
by the rocks and trees

Friday, February 10, 2023

## Scorn

walking away bitterly  
after scorn and a wave  
she took to the train  
leading across bare land  
to the ferry that made her  
sick / it was that bad

Saturday, February 11, 2023

## Southwest

funny how things break  
as if someone were rolling dice  
can't explain / and why  
would someone I knew for years  
turn out to hate me after nothing

Sunday, February 12, 2023

## **Asleep On My Horse**

clouds and rain / mist  
the passed storm embraced  
hundred year old oaks  
dregs of my dreams mixed  
with smoke from charcoal fires

Monday, February 13, 2023

## Supposed

in the wrack and ruin  
of a frost crusted shack  
my fear was dream on repeat  
is there some reality nearby  
a hawk cries

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

## Why

a painting on the wall  
made during a lull in a storm  
the pine trees fluffed  
but holding steady  
as the rain streams pull  
dirt down the hill  
to a waiting river  
what a painting

Wednesday, February 15, 2023

## **Snow Rapt**

we come to look at the snow  
some of us fall down  
some were already there  
the snow fell two nights ago  
we heard a crow in the trees  
it came to look at us

Thursday, February 16, 2023

## Fulling

she surprised me one day  
putting her new skirt  
on a smooth large stone  
then beating it with a soft  
wood mallet to make it soft  
to make it shine



Friday, February 17, 2023

## The Nights

the dog his head on  
a grassy pillow in  
light rain getting wet  
me in my heavy blanket bed  
withering as fast as the wind  
can make me

Saturday, February 18, 2023

## Chill Wind

the spiked hill  
split one cloud  
from the other  
and drifted them  
apart / that wind  
unravelling her hair  
wrapping it around  
her slender untouched  
neck

Sunday, February 19, 2023

## Cliffside

sometimes when she's not here  
I sleep in the middle of the bed  
the salt spray rushing by is not mild  
and she has reasons to be away  
when a special chill drops by  
I scrunch under the too-small blankets  
and quilts which sometimes it seems  
smells of her absence

Monday, February 20, 2023

## **Fade**

plates and bowls on our table  
as ordinary as she is or I am  
and the sun is about to be nowhere  
with the fog and wave spray foaming up  
in the unavailable light in our croft  
the plate and bowl fall pale  
in our eyes and in our limits

Tuesday, February 21, 2023

## Breeze

breeze down the river  
small insects wafting away  
on the banks I remember  
where I once sat and how clear  
my voice once sounded  
how soft the breeze once was  
how the face alone is like the bend  
downriver / trust it

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

## What If Everything Was Like THis?

I tried to count the scenes  
I kept forgetting the number of  
clouds misting by  
mist clouding over  
mottles of sun on leaves  
turning in a disturbed light  
too many scenes to count

Thursday, February 23, 2023

## Changing View

when she dashed off the ferry  
I nearly surveyed her uppity gait  
later on High Street I gazed into  
her eyes while walking past  
the past / is it still there  
finally after we married  
I could see her and some past

Friday, February 24, 2023

## After Dancing

we danced while it grew chill  
and snowed / after when she had left  
me to walk alone to my place  
I was grateful to finally smell  
the snow-scented night air



Saturday, February 25, 2023

## Waif

alone in the autumn wind  
with birches bending  
my eyes I find the path  
that takes me to memories  
I unbury them from the years  
I am a waif in the autumn wind

Sunday, February 26, 2023

## Flurries

rain on the roof  
sound of lives slow  
and in the way  
heavy taps like stones  
or hail and then  
I find the blankets  
she left when she left  
now my hands finally warm

Monday, February 27, 2023

## **Running Out Time**

the journey's nights  
came on slowly then  
picked up the pace  
as my hope and time  
started to run out

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

## Colors

a warm bed covered  
we've turned our backs  
wept for the sake of sincerity  
with darkness comes opportunity  
we hired someone to photograph  
this then let the photos yellow

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

## To Live

what can be noticed  
fascination works but hard  
soothing / try soothing  
I tried it once and  
it fell on me

Thursday, March 2, 2023

## Three By My Cup

three friends gone now  
I'm waiting in the pub  
for drinks to arrive  
one for me and one  
for each of them  
they drink slowly now  
don't say much / my job  
is to carry the conversation  
or are they pretending to listen

Friday, March 3, 2023

## Missing Moon

something seems to be missing  
not the moon / not a birch  
whose bark looks moonlike  
might be someone I know  
who was to be here but  
isn't / maybe it's the primrose  
feeling when you stumble  
into harmony

Saturday, March 4, 2023

## Brush

she was scrubbing potatoes  
sitting on a low stool  
her skirt between her legs  
her old brush digging out  
dirt from dimples in the skin  
years ago she'd brush her fine  
hair with that brush / no  
skirt on at all / change



Sunday, March 5, 2023

## Leaves Letters

her letters once a week  
coming in colored sheets  
like leaves in autumn  
she'd scratch her news  
I'd rake leaves all day  
at the end of each she'd write  
please burn this dear  
once you've read it enough

Monday, March 6, 2023

## **Irritation**

waiting in the pine woods  
at the edge where birches  
start the frozen drizzle  
irritated the leaves still left  
and even on the hardskinned snow  
nearby the tinkling scratched  
a surface

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

## Another Bridge

on her side she kept  
her dislike away  
on my side I kept  
a hope not wanted alive  
the only thing unhidden  
that green bridge

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

## **Lithe**

as slender as a sliver  
she dropped her skirt  
onto the lightest dew  
any grass has ever covered  
under

Thursday, March 9, 2023

## Stornoway

the island visited didn't  
respond / we dithered  
and averaged / along  
came an idea to check  
with the dead so we headed  
seaward which was everywhere  
there we saw why / instead  
of smooth were rough stones  
direct from seacoast almost  
shards filling a stoned in  
garden / waves and spray  
on us and on the dead  
laughing their hearts split

Friday, March 10, 2023

## Thin Ice Indeed

the snow didn't care  
coming down it blended  
with sleet / over our heads  
it piled on roofs  
the branches could not stand it  
because nothing cared  
I was able to skate  
down the road / ice and snow  
the heart of a lady

Saturday, March 11, 2023

## Shorts

the way to you was on the bus  
in the rain I'd miss it some times  
when snow came you would call  
say stay home / the seats were hard  
the road not smooth / when I got  
to you your hair was down  
I know you can cry

Sunday, March 12, 2023

## **Parked Wish**

who is it this evening  
the place of food and books  
I know everything works  
but no one wants everything  
I was in contempt of your wording  
so I pressed the gas pedal  
parked by a place of worship  
who will it be this evening



Monday, March 13, 2023

## Sublime

rain that won't stop  
terror that makes us love  
I spent a year where it never  
stopped raining / at the same time  
my terror of love forced me to love  
the first thing that came along

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

## Beeping

the beeping all night  
like the telltale heart  
of equipment dying from no power  
come to think of it  
people tell me I beep all night  
all day too

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

## Turned

we make what we can  
though the source is creepy  
or melancholy / give up  
on hard ladies no matter  
how they ask / don't let them  
suck it all out of you

---

Thursday, March 16, 2023

## What's Wrong

I made my way through thickets  
of diminishment and found a way  
to not be ridiculous / now they  
pile up / in my mind global variables  
swim my devotions and the thought of locals  
means passing along what can never  
be said aloud

Friday, March 17, 2023

## QWAN

time when I could sit by the river  
doze and listen to the river pass  
or birds / warm air through rolled  
down windows / then a drive and a meal  
at good places to eat / linking new  
memories to old / smell of cut grass  
a place like a home / now gone  
from the world and from me  
is it a perfect design

Saturday, March 18, 2023

## **Wicker of Knowledge**

I am under her narrow wicker  
of shade waiting for a burst  
to bust in / she likes to displace  
any who question and supplies  
plenty of her own like priming  
a pump in a deep well to extract  
everything and put it under  
her hat

Sunday, March 19, 2023

## Night Arrival

flying low coming into the city  
nighttime / blue light windows  
orange streetlights / runway  
across town / who will I meet  
when tomorrow night arrives  
after meals and meetings  
in a place walkable distance  
from my hotel room and a book  
before me / will it be she

Monday, March 20, 2023

## Falling

the day fell quickly to night  
outside to the north an aurora  
tomorrow I will drive to other  
places / spend time with words  
one day I'll regret the black  
woods and pine hollows / for  
now they are memories falling  
quickly to night



Tuesday, March 21, 2023

## Here

the night of fog  
the fog of night  
I confound them  
while hoping you're  
walking from your  
door to mine but  
instead the fog  
turns to clear day  
and the night turns  
back

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

## God Light

the lamplighter with his wick pole  
lights lamps down Merrimack  
just as twilight peaks / with his pen  
he notes the remarkable and in the paper  
tomorrow he'll report / goings on  
people out and about / new meals to be  
had / the lamplighter thinks he's god

Thursday, March 23, 2023

## Snow

snow outside and we fuck  
multicolor facts of existence  
think extremes / I can't tell  
and neither can she / husband  
and wife but not to each other  
common as birds / common as lice  
she lies on her side watching  
me worry / soon it starts again  
and then later again some more  
snow

Friday, March 24, 2023

## Taken Roads

the road there is the road here  
reasonable enough / I don't like  
being a mechanism for another's trips  
nothing I remember about the road there  
includes that user / on the road here  
that user revealed her plan which was  
her not me

Saturday, March 25, 2023

## **Sadness**

when I delve into my past  
I'm not impressed  
I wonder what was wrong with me  
makes her remarks make sense

Sunday, March 26, 2023

## Coops

my grandfather had chicken coops  
three or four of them big enough  
each for a hundred chickens  
eggs / that was the crop  
in late summer he'd scythe the timothy  
for winter cow feed all the while  
my mother would gather the eggs  
sandpaper off the shit  
sell them to Sam or to stores  
in Haverhill / I know this only  
by seeing the coops and guessing  
good stories / goodbye Ma

Monday, March 27, 2023

## Side Man

my sideman gone I can't  
play! it! / his counter  
made every better / by  
the time I run out every  
one will have been faded  
I thought a train could take  
us back but only women paused  
to watch me go and never wonder  
about the where of it

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

## Parking

I parked across the street  
from her house and waited  
for her mother to come home  
I waited hours but signs of life  
were sparse / when it got dark  
I started the car and drove  
one mile no headlights / you  
might wonder what this was about  
yes you might



Wednesday, March 29, 2023

## **A Line**

attacked she decided to retreat  
blame doesn't figure  
starting hospice we figure  
time will run out  
to think the most engagement  
comes when engagement is ending  
I am reminded of the fluid  
nature of effect and cause

Thursday, March 30, 2023

## Hospiced Out

she wants to say goodbye  
her friends nearby have decided  
to protect her / goodbye  
takes time / too little time  
is repaid by regret  
for me regret is placed in a sieve  
open to all but the largest stones  
regret can't last long  
for some close to me it's  
a hermetic canister  
everyone knows

Friday, March 31, 2023

## Rhythm

they cook heavy and smoke  
can fill the room / once a bank  
with smoke heavy steam condensing  
meanwhile I read a book while I wait  
for something to eat that rests  
as heavy as the smoke and I turn  
the pages against a tide of talk  
and something sweet for later

Saturday, April 1, 2023

## Subtle Parade

the lingering hopes  
of departing autumn  
aiming directly for hoarfrost  
and delight are the hopes  
of the old fleeing the fleet  
youth of warm winds / the best  
writing is writing of twilight  
far from fog and mist our small  
home reeks of age but still  
beside the firebox our hopes  
continue / to linger

Sunday, April 2, 2023

## Hunters Gather

sweltering in June after a heavy rain  
a neighbor woman and I traipse under pines  
looking for wine caps and lobsters  
the occasional chanterelle and hen of the woods  
perhaps having erupted from rain and hanging out  
with princess pines / the neighbor woman  
old but viable wears her baggy hat  
and a hefty bag / no relation to the product  
and when she bends her hair's a-falling  
about her cheeks and the foraging  
stops for just that minute

Monday, April 3, 2023

## Drainage

the farm's scents blew in  
no matter where I sat  
you cannot forget them  
from beasts who depend on us  
and made ripe by how we directed  
waste / we never thought of it as waste  
just as we never thought they felt  
one second of self-pity as long  
as they lived up to the instant  
of death

Tuesday, April 4, 2023

## Short Shiva

above the room of very early mourners  
the clarity of the moon cuts shapes  
from shadows / the mourned sits quiet  
listens to stories and torn up farewells  
better to remember me as I am now  
not how I will be she has told us  
her diligent planner laid it out  
two hours from 1 to 3

Wednesday, April 5, 2023

## Insights Stun

when a woman steps out of the surf  
naked and up the beach toward dunes  
are we gazing on beauty / admiring  
and hoping or are we ruining the meaning  
of femininity and the feminine / are  
we attacking a gender / or / is it  
art or is it assault



Thursday, April 6, 2023

## South

our dinner over I suspected  
she was going to stand  
out the window I could see  
the clouds parting / geese  
forming for south / she stood  
without looking she opened  
the door / away she went

Friday, April 7, 2023

## Bar & Girl

after a difficult meal  
Rack's in Ely / two big pork chops  
for me / salad medley for her  
on the walls many racks of fallen beasts  
an orange building in a saddened row  
it was the last time we spoke / on the way  
out I held her hand while she stepped  
on ice before my car and what she said  
was sweet

Saturday, April 8, 2023

## Licking Around

outside the door a signpost  
maybe the moon or its shadow  
or a relic found in a ghost town  
moved here / a Brian Foote joke  
we stop though she and I stop to look  
inside a place to eat or sleep  
a fire or refrigerator / depends  
what can it mean the orange paint  
or a God impostor leaning against adobe  
his foot flat on the wall / she walks  
from here to Trader Joe's / comes back  
with flavored seltzer / then in we go  
do we come out

Sunday, April 9, 2023

## Lush And Not Lush

what we couldn't remember  
she imagined / what the place  
before us did was issue a request  
the sage and undergrowth were generous  
but never told us what generous means  
the adobe walls half crumbled received us  
a sensibility / a spirituality beyond church  
a nexus we swarmed within / fascination  
as mine for her / coherence as my grid  
of inferences / a hominess such as a bit  
of wood holding up stone or a bit of word  
holding up a beautiful action

Monday, April 10, 2023

## Hopi

what we saw was flat  
a rhyme that slid by  
in Hopi we sat for hours  
a place above a canyon  
drinking coffee / chowing  
on pastries / several men came  
to chat / the only woman but her  
left / a sunny day / a warm day

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

## Second Hands

the stores where she shopped  
second hand Santa Fe / drop offs  
from standardized women / she  
fanned through them pulling out  
the possibles / my job to judge  
color & style / she'd try some on  
she bought some / everything too  
a variety of adjectives she  
rejected / soon me too

Wednesday, April 12, 2023

## Help From A Song

even though we were together  
days on end and near each other  
all night warmth stayed strangely  
away until cruel bursts the last days  
what did I do / I played a sad song  
over and over and over her voice  
because she couldn't know what was doing  
or what

Thursday, April 13, 2023

## Shimmer

early fall but the grass gone brown  
catches the sun / just above the blades  
a shim or a shimmering distorting the distance  
when my head's down there / nearby a brown  
river makes its way past and maybe to a sea



Friday, April 14, 2023

## Autumn Hymn

sheepskin coverlet on our bed  
a gentle way to lay about  
the sun decides which motes  
to highlight / behind us the kettle  
calls / even cats made of papier-mâché  
know when autumn arrives / they notice  
the coverlet / the forgotten sheep

Saturday, April 15, 2023

## Stillness & Violence

the speed of fast reading  
is slower than digital movies  
while we sit still on our side  
of the screen the world beyond  
speeds with velocity on the other

Sunday, April 16, 2023

## **Bard: Loud Blues Guitar Music**

The guitar screams,  
The amp wails,  
The music pounds,  
My soul sails.

The blues are real,  
The blues are raw,  
The blues are pain,  
The blues are love.

The blues are life,  
The blues are death,  
The blues are everything,  
The blues are nothing.

The blues are me,  
The blues are you,  
The blues are all of us,  
The blues are all of you.

The blues are loud,  
The blues are proud,  
The blues are here to stay,  
The blues will never die.

Monday, April 17, 2023

## Bedclothes

on top of us the bedclothes  
heavy because the snow has come  
when it grows light I'll pack  
the stove and warmth will flow  
we will have climbed out from under  
those coverings one at a time

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

## JQ

she made everything I've done  
silly and crude / now my job  
is disappear

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

## Mudsnails

in a mushy creek just barely moving  
a young man bends to harvest mudsnails  
the wind above makes no difference to this work  
the vivid odors of new buds don't penetrate  
the scene / all is quiet except a mystery  
one for me only / is it a woman instead

Thursday, April 20, 2023

## **Snow / Boston**

snow coming down on a Boston street  
7:30pm / some of it turning to rain  
near the steam warmed street  
men and women walking with umbrellas  
away from me standing by a corner  
steam rising / snow falling  
everything around me has sadness  
in it / I am alone / I will remain  
so for years to come

Friday, April 21, 2023

## Slate

think about this  
my father acquired four slabs  
of 6'x8' slate polished on both sides  
more than an inch thick  
he took them to the edge of the woods  
leaned them against a thick tree  
here is what I never asked him  
where did he get them  
why did he get them  
what will he do with them  
he never said anything about them  
he never did anything with them  
I never saw him look at them  
slate / very heavy



Saturday, April 22, 2023

## Secret Night

secret things happen in the night  
loneliness is one of them  
one person walks away from another  
under streetlights in light rain  
decisions made in darkness lead to darkness  
no matter the lights being on  
winter makes it worse

Sunday, April 23, 2023

## **Bard Revised**

blues control the volume of a cold world  
this guitar pounds every singer's voice  
like thunder and a knife / the music is close  
my eyes close / force trouble over power  
far away and down the blues outside is calling  
you never thought it possible

Monday, April 24, 2023

## Surprising Help

the umbrella hooked on her elbow  
walking toward the harbor with speed  
the winter rain she expected still  
on the other side of the island  
over the tops of hill it will be snow  
then rain here again / it's the thought  
process of a swarm / hers the thought  
process of flight / the rain is her prison

Tuesday, April 25, 2023

## The Equation

I wonder who found her  
after shimmering her way  
through a double strange  
sun light dabs bouncing  
off harbor waves early  
not long after the rise  
it wasn't me because I  
was the one her tail end  
pointed to and the speed  
of her walk was proportional  
to the inverse square  
of our distance apart

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

## Deep April

she took 26 short words  
piled them on the table  
to prove my love I sorted  
them into the best poem  
I could / in the end  
she scoffed and opened  
the door / a wind blew  
everything on the table away

Thursday, April 27, 2023

## Heroes

a hundred women watching  
two men bury me alone in a field  
flew into a cadence reflecting  
disquiet when the pastor refused  
to speak the eulogy he wrote  
on the rainy night he heard  
of my death / or was it escape

Friday, April 28, 2023

## Ice Shit

sewage and debris mixed  
with ice in a river hot  
to move to sea and instead  
of pure flow the river's rocks  
permitted only boils of brown  
and the sickening sound of ice  
breaking on the piers of a desperate  
bridge waiting for summer  
and its relenting putrid smells

Saturday, April 29, 2023

## Boston Night

early evening in the city  
lights in offices being turned off  
stoves and ovens heating in time  
for meals to lay upon / to enter  
ahead of every man and every woman  
a stretch of waking dark then sleeping  
darkness / from, above if one could see  
there would be blue lights / yellow light  
if luck had its way the streets would be wet  
ready to reflect / let's reflect  
before we grow too fearful of our own selves



Sunday, April 30, 2023

## Glarg

cleverness is good medicine  
something I don't much like to take  
but wading through the thickets of  
however these are merely examples of arithmetic  
operations that may correspond with manipulations of and/or  
operations applied to the problem domain and claimed subject  
matter may include other such arithmetic operations  
makes me feel sleepish

Monday, May 1, 2023

## Rock Bed

the river bed is a field of rocks  
the water is not deep  
when it's warm afternoons I sit  
by it / doze to the sound of water  
and birds / the air has a little salt  
and cut grass / I sometimes read  
hard to read poetry / I find it  
hard to leave sometimes once dark  
everything keeps hold of me

Tuesday, May 2, 2023

## Tears

yesterday alive / today dead  
she wasn't special in any way  
that meant something to me  
but she was alive and that's enough

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

## **Rest & Life**

every day for her very life  
she always had a rest of her life  
ahead like the way forward  
a rest to have / look for  
what she lost yesterday  
was the rest of her life  
another overload

Thursday, May 4, 2023

## At Night

the world happens at night  
the scrawny fox eats the dog food  
left out and forgotten by dog  
and man alike in their separate manners  
mice and owls using ways to understand  
the night arena clash / over the tops  
of the roofs of a city those who can see  
see the lights on in buildings and homes  
apartments and flats / nearby might  
be water skimming aside those lights  
the world might happen again tonight  
to you

Friday, May 5, 2023

## Snow Flat

focus on the snow flattened  
under tires / focus on the snow  
tinted yellow in a foreign night  
bedrooms surround this strip  
of snow and more will come tonight  
when you look back on this think love  
because the melancholy of flattened snow  
is the music of love

Saturday, May 6, 2023

## Cross Wise

Jeff's idea / nuts / drive across country  
to drop in on a girl who dumped him  
but his two friends / and I'm one of them  
went with him / from Boston to Columbus  
one leg to fix up his car / then one day  
to Goodland Kansas / one day to St George Utah  
one day to LA / she turned him away  
nonstop drive to SF then Salt Lake then  
Green River Wyoming when his car broke  
a bus to Salt Lake / panhandling at the airport  
a flight to Denver to Chicago to Columbus  
John's parents wired us money to get to Boston  
my parents picked me up / drove me home  
to Merrimac / LA to Merrimac without sleeping  
nuts / nuts / nuts / were we heroes

Sunday, May 7, 2023

## **They All**

big waves / beautiful bodies  
on surfboards / the first time  
I saw California girls / the Beach  
Boys taught / I believed in more  
back home the skies were wanderers  
how they looked seemed important



Monday, May 8, 2023

## Yesterdays

yesterday happened and shall  
we mark the event / I forgot  
to do something sweet or really  
anything at all and so except for  
these dull poems there be no reason  
to remember the except for a big X  
on a calendar somewhere

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

## Legs

the poet lies in his bed  
stricken during a long journey  
a journey of dreams and wandering  
dreams / along the way he dwelt  
for time by stubble fields  
and withered stalks and still  
he spoke in music / his last will  
was to speak a poem  
perhaps this

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

## Cold Mountain

the old man sits at the edge  
of a green cliff wondering  
about the instant that was his life  
above him kites and seabirds  
scan the sea edge for signs  
of boats on their way in to grab  
him up / perhaps he will survive  
then his task will be witness  
and the books of poems he'll write  
will be written in the language of birds  
written on the wings of kites

Thursday, May 11, 2023

## Steps

in the woods alone  
I walk stepping from stone to stone  
grabbing grape vines I sometimes eat  
the leaves sometimes the grapes  
when they are blue I am green  
you might have thought with envy  
but I mean youth

Friday, May 12, 2023

## Wave Watch

beside the sea where I watch  
the water's whims display in foam  
and frustration / waves from afar  
I mean force from afar pushes  
water up the sides of cliffs  
sometimes rocks thrown up  
I watch the water but soon I'll watch  
her cook and serve and what might be thought  
of as love is a wave from afar  
I mean a force

Saturday, May 13, 2023

## The Master

the way a master paints  
strokes never seen  
paints made from all things  
colors unimagined but yet  
not all colors can be made  
the stuff of light is not  
the light of stuff / painters'  
strokes can only imply  
the mind helps

Sunday, May 14, 2023

## Shetland Sonnet

a man walked with a woman  
along shores made of cliffs  
and hills without trees  
high up north / they ate  
together every meal  
the man believed in love  
but the woman only about thought  
one night she laid her head  
on his shoulder / nothing  
about the surrounding moment changed  
outside the wind kept up its rain  
below the waves kept up its foaming  
inside his head he grappled hope  
outside her heart remained her heart

Monday, May 15, 2023

## Merrimac Sonnet

the woman he writes of  
is no one / nowhere  
she is helium / he Strindberg  
many would guess the nothing  
that's part of no one and nowhere  
is what could happen / did happen  
for two days / they toured a hometown  
places of rest / she hated them  
they sat one afternoon by the cold  
riverside he loved / she let him  
warm his hands on her / she let them  
eat in the warm wet of a café  
but after that nothing triumphed  
now that void is the whole of him



Tuesday, May 16, 2023

**Left**

he boxed her in one time  
his hope to throw her into him  
her heavy coat kept things cool  
down the stone alley they went  
to the Market Cross then the Pier  
they sat on a slat bench and waited  
for the ferry to return / on foot  
they boarded and he boxed her in again  
this time by the rear rail where the town  
disappeared from / maybe it was fog  
once there nothing could happen  
because the island's too vast  
for feet / she made it clear  
the ferry back was the only thing

Wednesday, May 17, 2023

## Mine

once a year I make my way  
to the potter's end of the cemetery  
to tell the ones in plywood boxes  
goodbye / because everyone who  
comes here with one to welcome  
them needs to have someone to be  
there with them to see them off  
this way God knows He didn't  
make a mistake when He cut the reins  
between His hands and heart to the strings  
of everything so His interventions  
were over / yet the machine He made  
still works / still holds each life  
in a pair of opposing hands

Thursday, May 18, 2023

## Her

the two of them sat looking  
at the place of his childhood  
a place of belonging and imagining  
where barn swallows and robins  
cast their nests / where rabbits  
and skunks made their stands  
a place with buildings hundreds  
of years old / where his mother  
lost her faith and his parents  
lost their wills / everything  
about it he loved / he told her  
this over and over and over  
for that she looked hard / looked  
hard and even so said it was all nothing

Friday, May 19, 2023

## In Woods

in the woods of sweet maples  
sweeping pines / diminishing swamps  
small roads once only paths lead  
it seems to blocking stone walls  
or places where fragile bedsteads  
and hollowed auto chassis lay atop  
bottles and bottlecaps / and though  
the swamps ooze mosquitos and midges  
grapple armhair every boy nearby pretends  
to hunt or discover and sometimes dream  
sex / once I found a stone in the stonewall  
that banged metallic and boasted pockmarks  
and the distance of its travel mimicked  
the depth of blunted hope the life ahead beseemed

Saturday, May 20, 2023

## Likes The Cold

in a small city / think of Boston  
after the workday when cars are retreating  
home or beginning their evening stalks  
when some lights in office buildings are still on  
people in winter coats necks wrapped in scarves  
are advancing on sidewalks a man might be approaching  
the beautiful door of a newfound woman and each leans  
forward hoping for night's play / when this happens  
anyone watching focuses on the steps leading up to that door  
on the man walking up the middle of them / the weight  
of the knock and how long until a light comes on  
then what she is wearing and how she helps him out  
of his coat and scarf maybe a wool cap or désinvolte béret  
a small peck an enfolding hug / or a sudden depth

Sunday, May 21, 2023

## Older

waterfront of many places  
the city / Newburyport  
sea water or river water  
views from boats on homes  
office buildings / cars  
hoping they make it home  
my walk along the waterfront  
accomplishes nothing though  
the wet cold wind or rain blasts  
bend ears toward me / when I  
was young the idea of the older  
woman rang like ropes banging  
on hulls / their skin might still  
smooth under a stretch and who knows

Monday, May 22, 2023

## Street

I have never made the first move  
really not for anything  
feelings foremost on the list  
of nevers / when I can't sneak  
the idea in the idea never happens  
saying no is impossible too  
even when yes breaks it all  
to be sneaky like this and  
hateful like this is what poets  
call fate or is it feat  
just add one r and it covers after  
streets are filled with the yearning  
I feel their eyes on me when it's sunny  
feel them look then look away

Tuesday, May 23, 2023

## Cellar Dump

the cellar open to the sky  
is dumpfilled to its brim  
with rustcans and bedsteads  
oilcans and funnels  
scraps of cars and a sidedelivery  
a hayrake and a wagon tongue  
someone lived above in a house  
gone for good / a cellar  
banked up all around



Wednesday, May 24, 2023

## **Boston Nana's Place**

sitting down to Thanksgiving  
an ample table in an inadequate room  
heat from an oil burner / oddities  
include Brazil nuts / a sauerkraut-based  
cabbage dish / big overcooked a little  
turkey / being a child my job was to be  
forgotten and overlooked / I recall exactly  
zero words of conversation / kielbasi  
as they called it along with mashed  
potatoes / I never brought books  
the TV got only a few stations  
I sometimes napped on a tall narrow  
bed / I was good at being forgotten  
overlooked

Thursday, May 25, 2023

## Lush & Hard

I spend my summers  
in a lush valley centered  
on a demon river not far  
from the ocean / in those summers  
the grass and ocean smells  
the moist winds drilling the valley  
help me swim in memory  
I spend my winters  
in the hard north never lower  
than 60° in a stone croft  
when sunlight is rare / the sources  
of water are limited but not  
the water

Friday, May 26, 2023

## Mother

Haverhill National Bank in the sixties  
my first passbook with maybe \$1000 in it  
entries written in ink / my mother trying  
to teach me how to be an adult one day  
she never believed in it  
she was right but for her reasons  
mine were that I never wanted to be an adult  
fear of it crisscrossed my mind  
I preferred being dazed and playful  
even while never a smile

Saturday, May 27, 2023

## Objecting

women come to wash  
comb their hair and lay  
around shallow waters  
they never see each other  
as men do so they look to arms  
and eyes nothing else  
what's worse / being an object  
not being an object  
that was in a movie

Sunday, May 28, 2023

## Chiles Con Cheese

at Chopé's / families farmers and bikers  
chat about the jukebox playing 80s rock  
thumping reggaeton / chile con queso is deceptive  
-ly monochromatic / white bowl melted white cheddar  
warm foil-wrapped flour tortillas / tear off  
bits of tortilla / plunge them through the thick cheese  
layer to unleash roasted chiles simmered in tangy  
spicy liquor / Joe E. Parker green chiles  
grown and roasted in Las Cruces and Hatch  
two buildings in a gravel lot on Highway 28  
I love my job

Monday, May 29, 2023

## Pyle

a man squatted  
reached down  
took the dead hand  
sat five minutes  
looking into the dead face  
put the hand down  
straightened the points  
of the man's shirt collar  
rearranged the tattered edges  
around the wound  
got up  
walked away down the road  
in the moonlight  
all alone

the rest of us went back into the cowshed  
leaving the five dead lying in a line  
end to end  
in the shadow of the low stone wall  
we lay down on the straw in the cowshed  
pretty soon we were all asleep

Tuesday, May 30, 2023

## Madder

many ways to see place  
some like her talk always  
about such / she asks  
and asks / same questions  
in different pants  
the same pants  
I asked her to drive once  
slow / wavy / adjusting  
often / too her way  
of making me drive  
all the time

Wednesday, May 31, 2023

## Christ In Desert

mudsoaked water coming down  
a wide river in a wide valley  
yellow cottonwoods across there  
hit by a late sun / she walked  
fast ahead of me seeking a place  
that could speak to her / I mean  
actual speech / what I might say  
like the mud heading down  
to a deep unknown not near  
those yellow cottonwoods



Thursday, June 1, 2023

## Into It, Love

snow fell hushed on the ground  
on the great metal / copper? / roofs  
fell through the leaves / strummed  
lightly / each one / each leaf brushed  
the snow / he could / well  
he imagined he could / hear each flake  
hit the ground / his ears rang

no cars in Paris tonight  
not very cold  
just around freezing  
he came to the low wall with the rounded top  
the wall high on the other side  
it dropped to the rabid Seine  
the river struck him as bad / familiar  
he pictured it with little maelstroms  
to pull you when you fall

Friday, June 2, 2023

## **Zoom**

it could be something else  
it could be the place  
you always are  
nothing unpredictable  
nothing marvelous  
just cats

Saturday, June 3, 2023

## Walk

she walks away  
that's all it ever is  
when I was young I fell  
for all the ads about  
what love meant to a woman  
I made plans assuming those lies  
my life then was less full  
of meaning and all I could  
ever achieve was disappointment  
but I was good at it

Sunday, June 4, 2023

**1007**

kitchen closet size  
living room just a couch and TV  
back room a table to eat at  
a closet  
a bedroom just bigger than a bed  
when it rained the bedroom flooded  
a porch that meant nothing  
a bush in front the only grace  
big yard  
big garden  
a crap-o storage box I built out back  
but what a lousy job  
set back from the street  
South Cottage Grove  
sounds pretty / right?

Monday, June 5, 2023

## May

May is a lot to eat with someone  
and I'm pretty selective  
just about double the amount  
but it didn't sound like too much  
in April I followed the limit  
of 20 trillion  
this month we chose a picture of a meal  
that reminds us of that day's episode  
instead of a delicious meal

Tuesday, June 6, 2023

## **Fountain Source**

while writing before dawn  
I fill my empty pen  
from an inkwell full  
of the dark blue ink  
squeezed from luxurious words

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

## Walls

the stonewalls of my youth  
robust and packed / outer  
walls with inner filling  
granite and some meteorites  
ringing true / now those walls  
mined for stones / depleted to near  
rubble / would their makers rejoice  
or tear up for the tear down

Thursday, June 8, 2023

## Shetland Love

the finely blowing wind  
coming off the voe and shaking  
the strips of silage wrap  
torn onto wire fences reminds  
the music to turn low and sad  
after walking to water's edge  
the rarely shining sun  
pinging off spent old waves  
reminds the writers standing  
by to open up their grayest dictionaries



Friday, June 9, 2023

## Light Lack

in the darkening light  
soon after sunset by a calming  
ocean there are no colors  
only tones which signal change  
or the hope that comes after change  
we can only imagine the songs  
that go with this because  
anything more substantial  
would require certainty

Saturday, June 10, 2023

## Leave

at a ridiculous hour  
the sun is high  
the ferry has looped  
dock to dock a dozen  
times since it rose  
she got up earlier  
than anyone and sits  
on a bench by one of  
those docks holding  
a cardboard cup  
of tea and chewing  
down a scone / later  
she'll leave

Sunday, June 11, 2023

## How To Understand

each night we walked roads  
leading from ourcroft  
toward the sea / toward  
a ness / along tracks  
worn by sheep at constant  
levels and sometimes up  
to try hard as could be  
to understand first  
the poems she wrote  
then the ones I wrote

Monday, June 12, 2023

## Conspiracy

clouds mist and wind  
rush in to create  
scene after scene  
the place just sits  
letting it happen  
to its surface  
even though the place  
shifts only a little  
our lives differ  
one minute to another  
sunset then changes  
all the aforementioned changes

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

## Afar

the woman brilliant  
and almost beautiful  
wanted to meet  
spend time / at least  
she said she thought  
it would be fun  
I feared her and felt  
small for that  
her colleagues feared her too  
I recall walking behind her  
as she worked toward the conference  
room and thinking is there  
a way to arrange to kiss her

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

## Mud Strip

the mud in the field  
across the street is looking  
to suck down my shoes  
sometimes cranberries grow  
in the narrow path of a swamp  
-supplying stream / it is  
our biggest field

Thursday, June 15, 2023

## Again Universe

again  
I find myself walking  
just behind a woman who  
once muttered love  
and as I write these words  
each is a particle in the word  
universe of everything that will  
have been written everywhere in the  
universe

Friday, June 16, 2023

## **Snow**

snow is a weakness  
covering the fallen  
with the purity of sinlessness  
people track bootprints  
across it and children  
build monuments  
with luck we slide on past  
this is our strength



Saturday, June 17, 2023

## Moon Rules

moon above the harbor  
there and shining  
but something is missing  
perhaps the window  
of in v out  
or the door that spells goodbye  
the road with whooshing tires  
and falling footsteps  
whatever it is the scarf  
still hangs on its hook  
and my bookmark moves just  
some each day

Sunday, June 18, 2023

## Bad Day

bad day for the computer  
I might have messed up  
a drive / keyboard flaked  
out / at least I hope that's  
what happened / need a new  
computer / money

Monday, June 19, 2023

## Illinois Times

I parked by a field a baler  
was working in kicking  
up dust and making sharp  
loops / I had two burgers  
and a Dr Pepper and a book  
by Cormac McCarthy to read  
I was on a side road off  
a side road that led to a road  
that onramped to 74 more or less  
I think it was going to rain soon

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

## Spring Falls

the harbor's a smear  
behind fog the last day  
of spring above 60°  
I feel cold and wet  
my brain attuned to figuring  
things worse than they are  
the view is how I view  
my life unfolding or refolding  
my mother was right to think  
I'd be nothing

Wednesday, June 21, 2023

## **Pine For Bed**

sleeping under pines  
before mosquito time  
needle bed / jacket pillow  
why expect this one  
to woo women and make history  
lack of faith expressed  
by mother sometimes father  
were ways to temper ambition  
now I sleep randomly when idle  
wooing and history lay  
behind me

Thursday, June 22, 2023

## Shopping

she chose things to try  
on / I thumbed them  
up or down / then  
she'd go in back / try  
each on / then I'd thumb  
them up or down / she'd  
buy some / take them  
to her house to wash  
I never saw them  
or her  
again

Friday, June 23, 2023

## Newspapers, Wadded

make a house and your dumb kid  
is inspired / believes that father  
does all / later when it's torn  
down that dumb kid sees the insulation  
is fiberglass cloth and wadded up  
newspapers / he might then believe  
he didn't understand building  
or he might believe faith though  
not many letters off has not much  
to do with father

Saturday, June 24, 2023

## Speaking

when we sit by headstones  
for hours we deposit ourselves  
a little in those graves  
do they know we're here  
cut grass reminds us of the knife  
between above and below  
beyond one chain link fence  
the wind whispered / the wheat  
bent in the light heads fading  
toward the Pacific / another place  
the crosses were wood / the names  
lonely and far from their homes  
were they here for the silence  
and desert rocks and river



Sunday, June 25, 2023

## Lost In It

beauty fading fairy tale  
what pleasure abound we want  
I crave the life I could have had  
but feared asking for  
making things clear more  
important than making things  
happen

Monday, June 26, 2023

## Rooster Side

she was friends with him  
we all did many things  
when she lost touch with me  
in her head  
she turned toward him in our bed  
he kissed her tenderly  
as he entered  
I was there and saw it all  
like beauty / like a sewer

Tuesday, June 27, 2023

## For Good

there is nothing to remember  
the trip of hopes and long  
drives but she was cocooned  
in her projects and wants  
and I was only her driver  
luggage lugger / non rabbit  
when it was about to end  
she ended it

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

## **Cheated**

small bumps throw me off  
so much I have trouble  
believing I can survive  
growing older

Thursday, June 29, 2023

## Stress

I made progress on the bank problem  
if it turns out for the worst  
I will declare intellectual bankruptcy  
and focus on saving money by not spending  
so no new computer / forever  
and a lawsuit

Friday, June 30, 2023

## **Before It's Too Late**

a valiant country  
strangling itself  
to make it easy for  
people to hate and act  
on that hate / what a way  
to make it easy to want  
to die

Saturday, July 1, 2023

## JGQ?

her selfness consumes her  
she rankles to beat the band  
if she had a goozle I'd snag it  
what she reads / her road trips  
not for me / her name on it  
or not / tell me that

Sunday, July 2, 2023

## Wonder

the tear that falls  
falls to the floor  
my mind filters  
the heart / at least some  
so say / the floor either  
granite or sandstone  
this determines the sign  
of result / repelled  
or captured / she stays  
she's gone



Monday, July 3, 2023

## Slow

falling behind  
clouds behind black branches  
parents squabbling while  
the fan pushes out the hot  
draws in the cool  
sun setting while songs  
play on the radio  
sand over tar the way  
of roads around here  
stone walls still sharp  
later robbed of selves  
fell behind / kept it up

---

Tuesday, July 4, 2023

## **Fashioned**

I made my way to far ends  
but it took years to know  
that the sudden fame I caught  
was a fluke or a mistake  
that nothing about me will  
survive once I don't any more

Wednesday, July 5, 2023

## Living Uneasy

summers passed slowly then  
a day of mowing / a bike  
ride across the river  
heat and ocean damp  
the garden tended  
no other work to do  
I tried to wedge in  
but not enough reps  
to keep from overthinking  
not enough live action  
just guesses and dreams

Thursday, July 6, 2023

## Outskirts

in the small town  
there are outskirts  
extraforgotten people  
one road passes through there  
the other towns are in another  
state / few neighbors  
the dreams there are nonvisual  
what grows there feeds the town  
but mud slows the way  
what keeps them going is very  
sad and oddly compelling

Friday, July 7, 2023

## Queen House

wood beams on the open porch  
under a sheltering roof  
board and batten dormers  
tin roof as they say  
downplayed color palette  
trappings of modernism  
on top of farmhouse nostalgia  
a form of drag / the form  
of a house these days

Saturday, July 8, 2023

## English to English

hours spent translating  
or is it revising  
the flopped over english  
a well meaning writer  
her written / strengthen  
enliven / wring more  
out of less / take the murky  
mush and guess the thought  
behind it / translate  
assimilate

Sunday, July 9, 2023

## Moon

nurse or purse  
she explained are  
the only reasons old men  
chase old women and  
we wonder whether  
fact or hate is behind  
it / we are old men  
she is an old woman  
what is she saying

Monday, July 10, 2023

## Aquarium

it boils down to fatigue  
unexpected movements  
attack unprepared parts  
dehydration factors  
twinge in a nerve  
but it was fun / the sea



Tuesday, July 11, 2023

## Some Thought

details are random glimpses  
so we might as well fabricate them  
using blocks of light and dynamite  
then a smear to unite the items  
to make them seem apart of something  
a thing of sentience

Wednesday, July 12, 2023

## Walking

a stunning woman sometimes  
passes / when it happens  
one thing might happen  
as a response / fear

Thursday, July 13, 2023

## Red

he dies in a field  
perhaps his own choosing  
a built-in repetition  
a gladiator's ending  
hat back on his head  
all the mysteries  
left in place

Friday, July 14, 2023

## Wrong

blown off  
computer payment woes  
again / requests to speak  
I don't want to honor  
a humid walk dripping  
in sweat / I want  
something to go right

Saturday, July 15, 2023

## Ending

alone at the kitchen table  
a woman not young holds  
a chipped cup of cooling tea  
as if it were the book  
of ways to embrace the inevitable

Sunday, July 16, 2023

## Unending

A woman not young, alone at the kitchen table,  
Holds a chipped cup of cooling tea,  
As if it were the book  
Of ways to embrace the inevitable.  
The cup is cracked, the tea is cold,  
But she holds them both with care,  
As if they were the last things left  
Of a life that has passed her by.  
She sips the tea, and her eyes grow dim,  
As she remembers all the things she's lost:  
The love of her life, the laughter of her children,  
The dreams she once held dear.  
But even as she grieves, she knows  
That she must find a way to go on.  
So she takes a deep breath, and sets the cup down,  
And opens the book of ways to embrace the inevitable.

Monday, July 17, 2023

## Oiled Sand

writing poetry about a home place  
can be done but rarely  
a poem is the other / other place  
what presents as shy flowers  
bending to whispering western winds back east  
are weeds in the oiled sand shoulders  
in the next town over

Tuesday, July 18, 2023

## Tomb

the tomb across the way  
looks to be 150 years old  
holding a family big enough  
to fill the section my parents  
are in / surrounded by rhododendrons  
it's a good place to pee when the day  
is too long / important people they were  
now they are nothing or well on their way



Wednesday, July 19, 2023

## **A Box**

one thing for certain  
left alone all things  
grow back / wear down  
the process is called  
never stops / it will  
claim us one day / it  
will reclaim us again

Thursday, July 20, 2023

## Right Hand Problem

Chekov mentioned how hard it was  
to trim the nails on his right hand  
I noticed that and with a super  
sharp nail clipper it's dangerous  
too / maybe a good file can work  
later on when I'm older and the hands  
refuse to work well if at all

Friday, July 21, 2023

## Dreaming

i built my little hut  
under a grove of tall pines  
covering it with cut to the fresh  
boughs still needle laden  
it won't last a storm  
the next one / and after  
inside I'll soak but instead  
of regret I am cleansed

Saturday, July 22, 2023

## **In Order**

achievement and accomplishment  
getting somewhere / finishing  
done / ending / I've done  
lots of one and not so many  
of the other / perhaps something  
about self-respect is in order

Sunday, July 23, 2023

## How To Write

the reason to write is impulse  
the perserverence comes rarely  
surrounded by waiting / what I  
imagined as a boy was the flowing  
fame would light my steps / instead  
flow lagged and never lingered  
the gales became small puffs  
the long sentences just stutters

Monday, July 24, 2023

## Boulder

looking for the huge rock  
mosquitos all on me  
a good memory of where  
but the finding's not working  
ten or fifteen feet tall  
a big split down one side  
I'd climb it all different ways  
on our land in the woods  
next to Sam's / who else  
has been there

Tuesday, July 25, 2023

## Old Woman

her hold fades  
I find it hard  
to locate other topics  
what does that say  
her disdain was a great  
source of beauty

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

## Lead Player

we walked back to the car  
after two sets with Harry Perino  
who could clone a lead with just  
one listen / the height of a cover  
band / Sandy Lou wouldn't stand  
for my picks and chose to walk  
on the other side of Brother Jim  
Big Jim / I packed them up by firefly  
lights and we skipped the frappes  
we sang gospel songs on the sultry  
ride to Hampton Beach where they lived  
and I didn't / I stopped at Christy's  
for two slices of beach pizza but  
never saw the rhymes God gave me



Thursday, July 27, 2023

## Tall Ships

a full day to get InkWell  
to compile clean / tomorrow  
I'll try running the complex  
code / turning off auto-everything  
taking forever / no wonder  
no one can think these days  
but it seems I might be able to make  
this new computer work

Friday, July 28, 2023

## Invitation

the inviting place is rarely near  
we drive for days / fly for hours  
if we sail months are not strange  
a woman I know has speculated  
that an inviting place needs no  
people but a shrink-type friend  
rejects that / we could drink  
and talk it out / but no inviting  
place has invited the three of us

Saturday, July 29, 2023

## Teeth

friends my age are sinking fast  
hard to watch / hear them talk  
about grandkids / nice people  
simple deeds / tending gardens  
little spark / no spark  
did they have any earlier  
maybe they never learned to bite

Sunday, July 30, 2023

## Never A Kiss

crickets and small frogs  
racketing all night  
fireflies on the rise  
after heat and the humid  
a cool wind / just a slight one  
pushes the heat and wet away  
from my face and arms  
in bed listening to California  
Dreaming as a precursor to sleeping  
summers are short for me with not  
many chores and not many friends  
the depths of twilight are my time  
the radio's tube hot and sweet  
pave the way toward autumn and slumber

Monday, July 31, 2023

## **Pinboards**

difficult hacking  
because the documentation  
is so bad / why

Tuesday, August 1, 2023

## River And A Day

the river cared little  
for me or my rides  
bikes or cars didn't matter  
the bride was more loving  
I married by it on the best of days  
robins and cormorants / some friends  
some family / by the stone wall  
hold back the wall / water  
still not caring slicing by  
and then the ocean

Wednesday, August 2, 2023

## Fourth of July

long ago and once a week  
we'd get together to rehearse  
jam really / and though we never  
got much better we learned to listen  
a little more to each other so  
the music was more like music  
and less like pure fun  
in the garage or a spare  
living room / recorded  
and replayed

Thursday, August 3, 2023

## **Transformation**

sometimes the simplifications  
complexify and my strength  
is not in thinking through  
the details



Friday, August 4, 2023

## Yalta

instead the winds were slight  
the light was dim  
the flowers threw off spotty scents  
below the sea was flat and above  
the clouds hardly cared  
when we sat down she was to me  
lovely but after the start of twilight  
I doubted everything

Saturday, August 5, 2023

## Nil

a couple of steps forward  
but a big one back  
more trouble with the teeth  
worried

Sunday, August 6, 2023

## Yalta

such a thing as a bad beach  
Chekov knew it / a woman walking  
across the tide can stun when dunes  
cannot / just up the beach we think  
things will improve but who can say that  
better to find the woman / failing that  
imagine her

Monday, August 7, 2023

## End Drift

what we grasp near the end  
the sage green we saw in a New  
Mexico canyon / a tall Benedictine  
brewing beer / a cross in front  
of a stone cliff wall  
we hear tell of a muddy river  
nearby but admit it's forgotten  
we recall the cold nights  
and lonely / she sleeps two  
doors down

Tuesday, August 8, 2023

## By The Wall

we eat in silence  
making food the centerpiece  
against the grain of families  
this is the grain of religious  
enforced silence / but lunch  
is different / the only sound  
a monk reading aloud from a text  
they have chosen and if we choose  
to listen the chosen words come  
from afar

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

## Pretty Boy

reports of love untrusted  
and inevitable / even my wife  
admits I was once pretty  
the list is longer than makes sense  
all wrapped up in sadness

Thursday, August 10, 2023

## Lineman

she could never get that some places  
for me fill me with a melancholy  
and sadness that fill my memories  
with old things and visions of new  
that repetitions of the same  
patterns like ninths in an old song  
were a height of happiness as if  
the dance of opposites were a whine  
everyone could hear / that wheat under  
a dust obscured sun was the prairie I  
needed to cover the tracks of my escape  
she never could get this / my loss

Friday, August 11, 2023

## On The Line

what draws me to the prairie  
of western Kansas / a story  
a writer writing of a strange  
to him place / was it the slow  
rhythms of both place and place  
description / the sadness of the last  
scene / the time of past in line  
with my youth / was it a song  
I heard that I can't stop listening to  
lyrics that make we want to stop  
by the side of the road / wheat  
in dust beside me / no women in sight



Saturday, August 12, 2023

## Drape

the riverbank over there  
cut deep after a flood  
mud coming down from mountains  
up north / I wish for a louder  
water flowing sound / I picture  
someone upstream hoping I'll  
think of her / willows drape  
the bank

Sunday, August 13, 2023

## Young Food

thaw a steak after my parents leave  
using warm water / I got it from the freezer  
and I'll broil it with butter  
it tastes lousy because all frozen meat  
back then did / I still do that  
not the thawing and frozen steak  
but steak when she leaves for her  
mother's / it's exotic so I bake it  
it tastes good because now I am  
old

Monday, August 14, 2023

## Thing

cemetery once upon a time  
on a low ridge but a road  
carved away its front  
then a plaza cut away its south side  
next years later a driveway cut  
away its north side / now  
it's some sugar pines and badly worn  
slate and granite headstones  
some tipped by tree growth  
and eager roots / but the spread ground  
is soft browned sugar pine needles  
not what the family of Jesse Thing  
anticipated / not what they hoped for  
instead it was something that lasted  
for  
ever

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

## Needle

a forest floor in deep pine needles  
soft as a sweet dessert  
common mushrooms pushing through them  
princess pines in big circles  
a small but rushing stream pushing  
toward a beaver pond a mile away  
a swamp nearby means mosquitos  
I would stop by the granite stone  
plunked here but I am too young  
to know what this would mean  
in fifty years when it would matter

Wednesday, August 16, 2023

## A Pie

a long long time ago  
a songwriter wrote a song  
the way ordinary poets do  
and made lyrics surprising  
and clicking but made in so  
ordinary a fashion that where  
he got them was obvious  
to the rest of us / for years  
he avoided telling the story  
of making the song and then  
he decided to make himself  
the romantic genius and ordinary  
people believed him / but  
he lied

Thursday, August 17, 2023

## Hole

by stones thrown up by winter waves  
a hundred feet / stones weighing  
500lbs / we walk  
there is a hole a hundred feet deep  
nearby dug by waves / we cannot  
imagine it / winter so committed  
force something unlikely to make sense  
wind strong enough to lift the spirits  
of one whose spirits have been blown  
to a kingdom yet to come

Friday, August 18, 2023

## Beach Pizza On A Hot Day

I stopped for beach pizza  
in downtown Haverhill  
on my way to West Newbury  
where I'd eat at the picnic table  
in Ferry Park / loaded with sweet  
tomato sauce and light cheese  
cut into rectangles from a large sheet  
it's a taste foreign to folks  
with good taste / I eat four  
slices while watching the river  
jet skis going by / speed boats  
and women on standing paddle boards  
the rocks in Rocks Village are mythical

Saturday, August 19, 2023

## Exorcist

one thing the past can't forgive  
is choosing to play it safe  
easy to do because seeing the future  
doesn't work / well now all we can do  
is fantasize or read accounts or  
watch film / the past tells us  
we've taken the bait



Sunday, August 20, 2023

## State Street South

the street down to the river  
is empty this time of night  
perhaps a moth or owl  
flashes its silence across  
dry pavement / cars parked  
might mean tight hugs up  
on the second floor but more  
likely an early morning riser  
gearing for Boston  
across the street and down  
the street sidewalk seating  
is folded up and covered  
if you squint hard behind you  
perhaps a bathroom light  
will flick on

then flick off

Monday, August 21, 2023

## Storm

my father nailed plywood sheets  
against our windows / put up the winter  
swimming pool cover he made  
supported by angle iron welded to geometric  
safeness and painted deep red  
still the trees blew down across  
the road and leaves and grass plastered  
the farm / the animals in the barn  
shook in fear / Donna was her name  
she came up from Puerto Rico  
right over us / I remember the eye  
peacefully clear to the stars  
I was ten

Tuesday, August 22, 2023

## Big Old Farm

having a farm with fields and woods  
enough land to support subtle roads  
pine groves and swamped maples  
blueberry bushes both low and tall  
ferns / mushrooms / princess pines  
skunk cabbage and lady slippers  
stone walls with meteorites here  
and there / fields with boulders  
too huge to lose / when you have  
had that nothing will make you sing

Wednesday, August 23, 2023

## Rancho

at the corner of Jones and Main sits  
a stuccoed building painted white  
with blunt parapets and down Main  
railroad tracks cross / one pair east  
another west and a siding / that building  
once was Hartman's Café / a meeting place  
now an arroz y frijoles joint  
not up on the highway anymore  
sixty years will do that

Thursday, August 24, 2023

## Lerwick

will a capture store a dream  
of morning rising against a boat-  
stained harbor packed with tall ships  
darkness stunned with bashes of orange  
sun from a deceptive east / streelights  
are about to give up

Friday, August 25, 2023

## **Bang**

hard to imagine a day  
started in fog turning  
into a wedding day aloof  
on the riverbank / the sun  
did its thing and wind  
broke through / a start  
for everything registered  
the day everything began

Saturday, August 26, 2023

## The Eat And Get Out

in a diner by the river  
on a winter morning when  
ice flows downstream and over  
the dam writers gather  
for hot griddle grease  
and hints of imagery  
the waitresses don't care  
and push their fattened hips  
against pens scribbling on moleskines  
I get pancakes with an over-hard fried  
egg planted between the top two  
butter and real maple syrup I brought  
myself from my last Montréal trip  
my stuff doesn't rhyme / does yours?

Sunday, August 27, 2023

## Church Rock

flat and red brown and sage  
Navajo live in places synchronized  
rocks here are crazy and hogans  
balance of life and color  
wind and fleeting rain  
snow



Monday, August 28, 2023

## **Alone In A City**

while I write my friend  
lies in bed in a hospital  
with three things wrong  
each could kill / one will  
as I write this and weep  
for him I read my letter  
that she said my idea  
of romance is sex / that  
she loathes my ideas

Tuesday, August 29, 2023

## **Baz**

always bugs or problems  
hard to find them  
on the lookout for solutions

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

## We Sound Lousy

set up at the end of the room  
amps tilted so we know how  
we sound / Ron becomes a host  
introducing songs / remarking  
on dancing / making us seem  
more like people than we regularly  
are / his playing uninfluenced  
by anything the rest of us do  
his notes / words / stories  
swirl close by him while the rest  
of us orbit far away

Thursday, August 31, 2023

## Here To There

the road that divides our farm  
on the west side abuts a field of timothy  
sometimes rye / a stone wall to  
a back field then a pine woods  
drizzled in maples / a final stone  
wall / I want to describe these to you  
but I can tell you only of two or three  
people making their way from road  
to wall / two or three pure stories  
with their minds lumped in and elbowing  
toward you while drifting into and out  
a fact from two or three fictions

Friday, September 1, 2023

## Leaper

the cliffs behind the small homes  
where the ill spend their forever  
leftovers taken care of for sympathy  
they lived without blame but sometimes  
they'd fade fast and the little but  
warm cemetery was happy for their repair  
I stepped off the bus from tiny plane  
that dropped the two of us down here  
from behind doors and windows we  
became the show / we walked slow

Saturday, September 2, 2023

## Steel

in the rain a steep street  
hills down to the river  
cross streets carry speeding  
trucks and in the blue light  
of night and lamps it's clear  
the women waiting in kitchens  
are the last to know

Sunday, September 3, 2023

## Who Needs Forever

when a big machine which is a tall ship  
sidles up to a dock nowadays it's a side  
thruster that pushes it the last bit  
out in the ocean men climb rope ladders  
and all that's needed is a blow that starts  
with the sun warming us for its promised time

Monday, September 4, 2023

## Without You

when I got into the cafeteria  
turned in the afternoon into a dance hall  
and I saw Miriam blondely looking my way  
my pal and I started to dance with her  
in 1963 and I thought then and still feel it  
that I was entering the world where men  
and women created the world around everyone

when my father reached the end of the school  
driveway / the sun just barely still up  
and turned left toward home what he left  
behind was a simple and silly young boy  
whom he was sure would go nowhere because  
he and his wife were cursed of ancestry

was either of us right



Tuesday, September 5, 2023

## Swamp

when we deal in noise  
beliefs are hardly worth  
the effort / things could  
be just a hint entangled  
from afar / like when you lose  
your way in a swamp of tall  
bushes and rootful trees  
and come across a tall  
blueberry bush whose berries  
cannot be reached / see?

Wednesday, September 6, 2023

## Fog

fog / can't see the far treeline  
across the big field / apple trees  
and rough trees hidden from me  
from them it's the same idea  
across the big field / house  
and Richard hidden from us

Thursday, September 7, 2023

## Sound Stage

driving along the river  
I've arranged to have my  
car flooded by music designed  
to make the green of trees greener  
the flow of the river more fluid  
the sound of the wind driving  
down the river more like a blow  
no one can recover from

Friday, September 8, 2023

## On A Lake

they made a movie by a lake  
near where we had our dacha  
though I never spent time  
at that lake I did at another  
one closer by and my father spoke  
of the loons flying over every morning  
heading to that lake / my parents  
were old like the characters  
in the movie or like the loons  
in the movie / like the lakes  
where our feet touched down  
was water smoothed rocks / making  
for a foundation for living  
and talking about living

Saturday, September 9, 2023

## Lost

what does he say to her  
the older man in midlife  
the younger woman just graduated  
and married after he ran  
to find her while on his way  
to the airport / a promise  
a description / a token  
the Japanese woman getting  
married in Kyoto touched  
her husband as little as possible  
when stepping over the temple gateway  
the only serious song was playing  
and the place was a reversal  
of the sleepless place where the non  
affair happened / he got back  
in the limo and the strange roads  
away untangled

Sunday, September 10, 2023

## Imperceptible

the change minute to minute  
is imperceptible / the maples  
might sway / insect chittering  
might diminish / the road rarely  
carries any traffic / we live  
far from every center / the barn  
built hundreds of years ago grays  
with every day of sun / add  
them up and it becomes decay

Monday, September 11, 2023

## What A Day

first the rain is just a hint  
while the sun goes away  
on the other side of the clouds  
then when the dark rises the rain  
turns into fierce drops that sound  
guns over the horizon when  
they hit the canvas hovering  
over the tables where pairs  
of lovers wait for the food be gone  
and the meal to end and the walk  
to her place to start and end  
with all the stereotypes in tact

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

## Fall Asleep

town in a narrow canyon  
sun rarely beats on the single  
street that starts by the copper  
mine and ends between two  
boulders / on its way a coffee shop  
antiques / a bookstore selling  
Coyote v. Acme / a few books  
much dust / sitting by the window  
across the street a woman I see  
with a low ass walks up toward  
the boulders / on a phone line  
stretched across / a pair of sneakers  
laced together wait for the upwind



Wednesday, September 13, 2023

## Waiting

standing in the bookstore  
on the narrow canyon street  
the next aisle over the woman  
with me is reading a book  
she might love that I would hate  
still I have been waiting for her  
the whole trip and for years before  
when we get to the boulders it all  
will end with reverb cascading silence

Thursday, September 14, 2023

## Leave

it's already winter somewhere  
here the small animals embrace  
the back fence / cling to nearby it  
animals that burrow burrow  
when mist comes we'll debate  
whether it's a mystery or plain  
things that happened a year ago  
blow away with the dried up  
summer leaves

Friday, September 15, 2023

## And The River

preparing for the hurricane  
plywood over windows  
putting the sheet metal roof  
over the pool / tying weak  
trees safely down / getting  
the kerosene lamps ready  
and wood for the cast iron  
stove in the cellar / even  
with all that big branches  
will fall / windows and some doors  
will break / leaves and even  
grass will become litter  
if we see the eye we'll know  
it's half over / it'll have  
a woman's name and like her  
we'll weep before and after  
a hurricane is fear

Saturday, September 16, 2023

## Don't Forget It

sitting beneath the tall pine  
I thought I'd be able to climb  
it / to get to the first rung  
of branches though required  
a ladder perhaps nailed onto  
the trunk / I never did any  
of those things / when I think  
of my plans / I never did many  
of those either

Sunday, September 17, 2023

## Hereafter

there was never a tender occasion  
she made it all ideas and talk  
what I wanted was the chance  
to just touch her so that she would know  
it as not all ideas and talk

Monday, September 18, 2023

## Bring Me Down

no one on LinkedIn ever endorsed  
a skill they thought I had  
does that speak to my skills  
or to me / raising feelings  
was not a skill I ever had  
maybe endorse me for having  
the skill of not raising feelings  
right / come on

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

## **Rocks To Flats**

the great man asked her  
to marry him / she  
believed him great  
he enjoyed my body she  
once told me / but I  
to her was on a tier  
not worth considering  
so she threw me away  
and I threw her away  
knowing where you are  
makes for a lonely  
drift down what remains  
of the downstream river

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

## Tonight's Air

the last thing of belief  
that a song pure of electronics  
and computers played in front  
of an urbanscape artificially  
made has the sage effect of breeze  
over bare rain in a woods  
of birch and thin maples / relax  
chill



Thursday, September 21, 2023

## Lay's Sand Pit

the road down to the sand pit  
was two tracks and rock filled  
down a hundred feet or more  
the sand pit cliff a hundred  
feet or more / its top  
vertical for 20 feet / I  
climbed up / ran to the edge  
and jumped / weightless for  
seconds until a gentle slide  
downslope / my father shoveling  
sand into our Chevy truck

Friday, September 22, 2023

## Jade

like all the best ones  
the singer in dark and blonde  
hair is nasty and ugly in the right  
lighting and superb and seductive  
in the wrong / though she sings  
backup her voice is a blade  
and her vibrato guts / she's  
so far / but she sings to all

Saturday, September 23, 2023

## News Travel

they leave us behind  
childhood friends unluckier  
than us / who fall into a bed  
sleep or seem to and when a friend  
speaks an eye might open but  
a last effort / unintended gesture  
the rest of us read about it  
online

Sunday, September 24, 2023

## Places

walking through decay  
barn / dying orchard  
aged apple tree still  
urgent / stone walls  
caved in by design  
under the barn wagons  
with displaced wheels  
all held together by iron  
plates and rods while wood  
parts drift through time  
faster than all of us  
it was to me a place  
now it was a place

Monday, September 25, 2023

## Deborah Wallace

she was preceded in death  
by her husbands  
as well as her brother  
and her parents

fill in the blanks  
but note the plural  
husbands / I knew  
she was plain  
how plain though  
could she be

she will be greatly missed  
by all who knew her

I knew her

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

## Birth Day

generations march on  
one's coming up on me  
my daughter's in labor  
now and that child  
will one day wonder  
about me the way I wondered  
about my grandfather  
who will that person be  
first thing to know  
is boy or girl

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

## Nice A Day!

do you want to easily  
engraving on wooden products  
make a new marking  
style surprise customer  
with the pattern never disappears  
hispeed CO<sub>2</sub> laser

Thursday, September 28, 2023

## Boy

someone new around town  
we'll need to load him up  
with what all he'll need  
then one day he'll be new  
to a different town  
one we all visit but  
never know



Friday, September 29, 2023

## All My Life

sitting on the hearth  
that never held a fire  
surrounded by small bookshelves  
with inconsequential reading  
looking out a small picture window  
toward an orange sky behind  
crocheted branchwork in the direction  
I would move and where I now sit  
writing this wishing I could  
start over

Saturday, September 30, 2023

## Alone

walking through the gate  
from big field to back field  
that walking a wandering  
the stone wall between a place  
for bush and tree / once  
on the far side my house  
was as distant as it could ever be  
I spent hours in that field  
silent as wind in pines  
and grasshoppers creaking

Sunday, October 1, 2023

## **Dancing Looks Good**

the music's a mess  
no discipline / careless  
and sloppy / it sure  
sounded like I was  
having fun

Monday, October 2, 2023

## Going Down

crossing the bridge  
on a cold night  
the yellow arc lights  
on the river bluing  
in the current when I  
drive away riverside toward  
a house not meant for me

Tuesday, October 3, 2023

## **Turtles In The Border**

seljuk prayer rug / byzantine-timurid prototype  
archaic lobed medallions carpet with turtles in the border  
ghirlandaio carpet / medallion carpet with endless rumi design  
archaic arrowhead blossom carpet / waving border carpet  
endless repeating design with blue leaves on a yellow border  
carpet with endless repeat of leopard spots and cartouches  
saph mihrab with plum blossoms  
memling gul carpet with nine compartments and kufic border  
scarlet niched transylvanian prayer rug  
small pattern holbein variant  
flaming animal spirit carpet with vultures

Wednesday, October 4, 2023

## **Stranger To You And Me**

winter dark on the horizon  
time of year for loss and melancholy  
time of year in which I thrive  
leaves coloring themselves  
the color of departure

Thursday, October 5, 2023

## Lost

how we see it  
different as different  
translations of a common  
text / what if misery  
is a tone played on a high  
string / outside crickets  
rejoice but the translator  
sees it as dying  
one could say that the squint  
required is too squity  
but OK

Friday, October 6, 2023

## Her Two Eyes

she once was perfect  
what she felt was right  
what she thought was truth  
what she wanted could not  
be me / I only walked by  
near her / when she moved  
it was to the rhythm  
of the plenum / the adjustments  
she made were slight and pivotal  
now that's less / so much less  
age  
I am someone she could want  
in theory / in fact / however



Saturday, October 7, 2023

## O Lord

in the background  
on stage but behind  
the main men  
the Asian keyboarder  
in black hair / long coat  
but what she plays seems  
digital and knob based  
I suspect most of the song  
comes up through her springing  
legs through her head where it  
animates her hair and then her hands  
outside this loft studio  
the sky sweats sadness and late  
in the day / urban remnants  
in the background

Sunday, October 8, 2023

## Once

implausible beauty alongside me  
what I need to think  
is that this cannot happen  
and the things that seem wrong  
really are

Monday, October 9, 2023

## Lounge Lizard

we were eating a porkish meal  
and after we had moved out  
of a direct line of sound  
from the invasive sound  
system the woman who defines  
love-lostness walked into  
the barerestaurant in her formal  
square dance outfit in Cortez  
after a day at Mesa Verde  
she had some drinks and chatted up

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

## Stews, Clouds, and Snow

still asking for help  
I near my limit  
imagine the sweat  
on restaurant windows  
was the chef making stews  
and clouds making snow  
even if she asked them I'd  
refuse

Wednesday, October 11, 2023

## Alone

everything passed from father to son  
filters through work into an slant  
on decay and how stillness is made silly  
when I step back and include the angel  
statue in my viewing I can see that his anguish  
like mine stems from my mother who acquired  
her family's dreadfulness and deceit  
but is there still love

Thursday, October 12, 2023

## His Face

he never visited his father's grave  
not his mother's / not his wife's  
parents' / not the place she chose  
for them and into which I placed  
them both / he seemed aloof from death  
he never reflected on them in front  
of me / that's all I care about

Friday, October 13, 2023

## Lend A Hand

steal her / I wanted  
to marry her / thing is  
her husband still wanted  
to pound her as in  
with his fists / and their kids  
sleeping or pretending to  
in their room down the hall  
later I lay next to her  
on the floor at hall end  
we kissed / I touched her  
instead of love her shrink  
said this was therapy / and I  
got advice / she's gone now

Saturday, October 14, 2023

## I Have

the edge of the field  
wheat starting to the west  
a dusty edge / nearby a woman  
who's chosen me waits  
she's made a meal for us  
and now is scraping pans  
our place is up what's called  
a hill these parts / down  
there and all around the wheat  
waits for edges to settle  
after staying as long as I can  
I head up that hill because what  
waits is expecting little



Sunday, October 15, 2023

## Disappointment

for years I made myself  
that river / its fate  
was mine / when it froze  
I did / when it flowed  
backward so did I  
sitting by it for hours  
I was beside myself / now  
I must drift away or flow  
at last to the sea

Monday, October 16, 2023

## Rima

Merrimac Square / I never  
went there before I moved  
away / I didn't play with kids  
in Merrimac proper only the swamps  
out near us / the only place was sometimes  
the library where I'd do crazy  
projects like map out where Rima  
lived by gathering clues from the book  
even though / I know now / books  
don't embrace the factual world  
maps / passages / guesses  
and my father helped me  
my father

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

## Matters

when she sings it sounds like words  
a lyric statement more important  
than any death you can imagine  
even when she's all light  
the rest of us listening crouch  
the music behind her is played  
by musicians who never wanted money  
like her they shrink under perfection  
but there are no words / only sounds  
only noise

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

## Rabbits

her job was muse  
she did it by unstoppable questions  
she lived with him and maybe  
some other things / now  
she asks me to explain his thoughts  
but none of the tenderness  
is part of the deal / just  
answer / answer me

Thursday, October 19, 2023

## Coming

though I didn't make any grade  
she agreed to write papers  
with me / she didn't with him  
or he didn't with her / egos  
perhaps / I am clearly the lesser  
and after enough time had passed  
she made it clear / no doubts  
no rabbits here and she said so

Friday, October 20, 2023

## Flyer

the travel / the old fear back  
not of flying but of the discomfort  
the disquiet / bathroom problems  
a mask for 5 hours / the usual  
uncertainties / I look forward  
to being there / not the getting  
there

Saturday, October 21, 2023

## Pack Of Lies

behind the band in an industrial  
loft / windows floor up / small panes  
the sky layered in smoked wisps  
not dark but darkening I imagine  
a brown river below lacing  
through the smokestacked manufacturing  
park even though trees blank of leaves  
just stand there / the Korean keyboardist  
swaying and bobbing is the real treat

Sunday, October 22, 2023

## Tonight

the small road recently oiled  
and sanded relies on us to pack  
it down / this explains the faint  
ruts that collect the cold rain  
in the throes of fall / when  
the leaves are regretting the heat  
of summer and the longing stares  
of the month of hopeful regret



Monday, October 23, 2023

## Shetland Fog

outside the gale baths the bare hill  
her female form builds in lumps  
while she lays on her side staring  
unhopefully at the fog blown sky  
she raises up and prances to her bedshell  
my only answer is to whisper farewell  
as if she would hear

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

## Under

age's fog is not selective  
it's in my head and not friendly  
I fear the way time will dement me

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

## Bayside

grey wad of cloud over a blue  
ocean / the autumn day just starting  
the old woman depleted of love  
sits on a bench waiting for a boat  
the time to start

Thursday, October 26, 2023

## Allerton

the bad woman made me  
go commander and insist  
on speed and compliance  
now my view on return  
is dimmed / I don't like  
how treatment treated us

Friday, October 27, 2023

## Stop Being Calm

sunlight cherishing the tops  
of trees gone brown with time  
facing loss and resumption  
I've made a habit of fear  
I'm afraid and who can blame  
me aside from these who already  
have / I've lived this way  
long enough I'm now officially  
within common law

Saturday, October 28, 2023

## Alone

not taking them seriously  
I manage to arrange their laughing  
so they sound ever more like  
young girls instead of active  
thinkers / and all to amuse  
me / no one else

Sunday, October 29, 2023

## Meredith

she sits I imagine at home  
in a dreary town with only  
a veil of belief between her  
and her dreams or maybe just  
the road that could have led  
to us / but at the pivotal moment  
she decided she didn't like  
my pants / love

Monday, October 30, 2023

## Telling Story

where was she when her  
mother killed her father  
July 1937 / the Cape  
Plum Island / with someone  
from Haverhill / working  
extra hours / White Mountains  
Hampton Beach / when she returned  
was he in the hospital or did she  
take him / what did she say to her  
mother / to Sam across the street  
was there a fancy car / an ambulance  
was it the lie told to her  
told to me



Tuesday, October 31, 2023

## Mother

running to her father from her  
top-downed car a day after  
he fell by the well she knew  
he was soon to be passed away  
and she left with her own proud  
villain and they would work  
the farm arm against arm  
for eight years of screaming  
before my father would come along  
and without any explanation or reason  
save her

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

## Seks

in the window above Market Cross  
in November at 7 two people just  
shadows pass by the window  
and each other / tied up at Victoria  
pier a tug big enough to tow  
oil rigs rests while taxis loop  
around to get in line

in spite of this or because of this  
across the island to the west  
a woman naked walks into a room holding  
heavy men drinking heavy and wondering  
as did she who would be first

Thursday, November 2, 2023

## Empty Or Null

at the end of the street the river  
hesitates between down and up stream  
a fact obscure to many  
up that street the two lovers are tangled  
in doubt over part or make up  
food was involved / a meal in a church  
turned away / sauced grilled meat and nearly  
over-steamed asparagus / this story  
is every story or more likely no story

Friday, November 3, 2023

## Perspective

walking by the diner / looking in  
that time of night or morning  
just two and perhaps lovers  
eating omelettes and looking down  
at them / weak coffee I suppose  
I wondered whether they would kiss

sitting at the table / looking out  
that time of night or morning  
just two and perhaps lovers  
stopped in front of the window and looking in  
at them / holding hands I suppose  
I wondered whether they would kiss

Saturday, November 4, 2023

## **Time**

time passes / things break down

time to stop watching TV

time to start reading books

Sunday, November 5, 2023

## Scarves

I saw her in the café window  
I was approaching from afar  
in a light drizzle on a night  
when many things were possible  
but she knew fifty ways to tie  
a scarf / someone said / and at her age  
I suspected I'd be a distraction  
or a bump on her wayward way  
so even though she was waiting  
for me / I stepped past the café  
toward a drier place

Monday, November 6, 2023

## Fallout

she watched her mother kick  
the hell out of her father  
after a hot fourth of July  
full of drinking and revelations  
about the neighbor across the road  
she was my mother and nothing  
about her was the same until the minute  
she died alone and filled I suppose  
with fear and hate / she lived on that farm  
for 33 more years after that day  
the week Amelia went missing  
a third of a long time for a woman  
she left herself and my father  
for me to bury

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

## **On Shetland / In Santa Fe**

I wrote for her on the peat hills  
and by the pier hooked into the harbor  
I answered all her questions even  
when they never stopped / I drove  
her everywhere she wanted and gave  
later a year later she told me of her  
deep disrespect and planned avoidance  
I kept writing



Wednesday, November 8, 2023

## Bar Band

the big chords played too  
simply because skill and talent  
a little low / out in the audience  
by the bar couples elbow the polished  
surface and reminisce of lovers  
in the rearview / meanwhile we play  
love songs too long because we love  
to show off our licks / a theme  
borrowed from those couples

Thursday, November 9, 2023

## Falling

the house that fell down  
started as a real place  
I was a kid with people  
living there / only when I  
got older did they move away  
leaving the house empty  
one winter the roof started  
leaking / then the mold and rot  
began / one time when my daughter  
drove me past it had fallen down  
and I wondered

Friday, November 10, 2023

## Arizona Bites

in Kingamn at the Dambar & Steakhouse  
I ordered DamNachos  
Okra and a DamRed Ribeye  
grilled might recover  
for dessert DamBerry Pie  
and Cowgirl Heaven  
the big pit up north  
notwithstanding

Saturday, November 11, 2023

## Rush

when the phone goes unanswered  
we are in the car to see  
even if we suspect the phone's  
at fault / as we go I plan  
who to call / what to do

Sunday, November 12, 2023

## Running From

walking or running from one end  
of the farm to the other along  
the road down its middle when  
I was in college / the start  
of a fear that never let up

Monday, November 13, 2023

## Strand

advice to lesser writers  
easy to do but little effect  
I sometimes wonder what writers  
who helped me thought they  
were doing

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

## Donald Robertson

he was a peaceable quiet man  
and to all appearance  
a sincere Christian

his death was much regretted  
which was caused by the stupidity  
of Laurence Tulloch of Clothister (Sullom)  
who sold him nitre instead of Epsom salts  
by which he was killed in the space  
of 5 hours after taking a dose of it

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

## Monks

in her monk's cell two  
doors down from mine  
she sleeps under a small  
blanket never imagining  
nearby someone hoped  
she'd speak up with something  
other than endless questions



Thursday, November 16, 2023

## Me Me

she doesn't care about things  
especially things not hers  
she will get into a clean car  
covered in dust / she will insist  
on driving on damaging roads  
just to see where they lead  
she will microwave nostalgic cups  
into deformity to drink her tea  
she will even go to the edge of marriage  
to find out about the goal of tears

Friday, November 17, 2023

## Haverhill

Haverhill / not a place really  
once a queen city now a strip  
one section remains / I think  
my mother worked in a building  
there / next to the river  
once a strip where writers  
could walk / why did big  
money decide to bulldoze  
all the place away from the place

Saturday, November 18, 2023

## **Circling**

now that I know what I want  
I can't get any of it  
too old / too tired

Sunday, November 19, 2023

## **Black Dog of Night**

in the night / in the dark  
I awake to wonder about the damage  
to the / oh / something we own  
I wonder how to fix it  
who to call / how to describe  
the damage / I wonder  
how to pay for it / I worry  
I could have done something  
earlier or better to prevent it  
with this I cannot fall back  
to sleep / after time has passed  
it gets light / I spend the morning  
tired and weak / I fall asleep  
in a chair for three hours  
I am old

Monday, November 20, 2023

## Awakened

who gets up at 4:37  
when must they go to bed  
fish people or farmers  
but here in the city  
center it's murkier  
outside no one on the cobbled  
street / I can however  
smell coffee somewhere  
up the hill

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

## Kids

a small drop  
from the parking lot  
to the field  
behind the elementary school  
sometimes in winter  
this slope would turn to ice  
and we'd slide down  
standing like surfers  
at the bottom sometimes a pile-up  
I'd try to stay off when that happened  
because lots of the kids  
would be happy to hear  
of me in the hospital  
that's how you grow up  
imagine a cloudy day

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

## Storms

outside a gale force wind  
pushes rain against our window  
we under covers and sometimes  
touching wait for it break  
but it won't because it's built  
to withstand even more  
our walls are thick stones  
because nothing else is here  
this place / the land / the house  
suits the two of us to perfection

Thursday, November 23, 2023

## **Like They Are**

on Merrimack Street on Thanksgiving  
1854 the beginning of a small parade  
small city man with a starting store  
Haverhill Cheap Store / now Macy's  
the girl is in a blooming skirt  
unaware of attractions / she is wary  
of the river streaming quickly past  
oysters or ice cream her most difficult  
choice / one day the parade would win  
the men pursuing her would not



Friday, November 24, 2023

## Valley View

the stretch of road from Garden  
City to Holcomb / the cries of women  
wailing for the fallen / walking  
graveyard lanes in search of familiars  
when I find them I spend the day  
then the next / bringing flowers

Saturday, November 25, 2023

## After Wittgenstein

she writes short things  
essays / very small stories  
but translates long things  
words like leaves drift  
around her / like other  
old women she attracts  
the minded

Sunday, November 26, 2023

## Land Filled

take out the garbage  
Ma said and I got out  
from under the sink  
a paper bag sometimes  
doubled / out one of the back  
facing doors / basement  
side front / Nana's door  
then across the backyard  
along the pool fence / across  
the pool drain ditch to a landfill  
every farm and small house had one  
at woods' edge under some pines  
oaks & maples / sun / rain  
air / wind / critters / bugs  
took care of it all / I'd  
heave it deep toward the back  
closer to the dark woods especially  
at twilight

Monday, November 27, 2023

## Call Your Own

a clear & simple guitar  
playing a sad song that seems  
part of a film but is it?  
written by a songwriter  
in love for a writer and the moon  
someday the night will rise  
slay the moon / slay all who love  
her / every her by the pines  
walking alone from stone to stone

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

## Colderness

the cold tries to reach  
up her skirt but its shape  
holds her heat in  
the river down the street  
flowing seaward carries  
the cold like a well-built  
weight lifter / she might be  
headed for my place / this time  
of night she sometimes does  
but I've chosen another  
way to keep warm

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

## Her House Her Hours

she throws another turf  
on the fire and soon  
the small room in its stoned walls  
grows warm then hot / later  
she will put on a kettle  
outside the moon will rise  
when it does all her love  
will be rinsed in her harsh  
lightness / the tea will warm  
her as will the relentless  
turf / my walk to the coast  
will be slow and long

Thursday, November 30, 2023

## Michele

one of our cohort  
is now bedridden  
cannot speak words  
coherently but she sings  
in our yearbook's inner cover  
she and another of us walk  
toward the bridge of our dreams  
in autumn colors / a symbol  
of starts / she was so pretty

Friday, December 1, 2023

## Passerby

I once made a difference  
once has passed away  
I'm just a man who takes  
hilly walks / trying to stay  
alive I tell them but it's a fear  
that pushes me up the steepnesses  
sometimes passersby wonder  
if I'll make it



Saturday, December 2, 2023

## Place They Chose

winter in Florida  
soft sand underlying  
everything / heat  
in the afternoons  
but at night cold  
as New England mid-autumn  
no number of available  
blanket layers can handle  
the chill / the place  
is ragged / down at the end  
of the sand road kennels  
of baying hounds all night  
winter / night

Sunday, December 3, 2023

## Stains

that won't come out  
with every sort of scrubbing  
and chemical / harder than blood  
or iron / I worked hard at it

Monday, December 4, 2023

## The Ground

what she wants to know  
is what is real / I don't  
mean some hippy thing  
but what exactly reality is  
is there a real world  
out there  
or is it all in our shared  
head with small clusters  
that are us / rational idealism  
she called it / as usual  
I thought she meant something  
simpler / less metaphysical  
but it's because I always erred  
like this that she couldn't  
love me

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

## Bridge Fix

the tilted mud slope  
from bank to riverbed  
and the river waiting  
to make full strength  
only once a decade  
is the old pier visible  
in the cleared water  
the season of bridge  
remaking has been  
remarkable

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

## Shetland

bleak / nearly treeless  
winds all year  
rain every few days  
and lots of it  
auroras all winter  
stone houses heated  
by turf / a place  
to be successfully  
a nobody

Thursday, December 7, 2023

## Would It Help?

the new wing of my elementary school  
housed two classes its first year  
I was in Mr Shaw's room  
I was not special but Carol  
Sande was in my class  
I remember nothing else  
about that year  
perhaps a hallucination  
would help

Friday, December 8, 2023

## **Farmers First**

stones culled from fields  
found form and order  
in stone walls surrounding  
every field and guiding  
roads / since then those stones  
have returned to disorder  
having been culled by eager  
tourists

Saturday, December 9, 2023

## The One

food trucks in a dingy lot  
once a smart strip  
extension cords all whichway  
plugged like wasps swarming  
into two uncovered sockets  
a propane stove outside one  
making pepián which I order  
I was meeting her here  
but she's across town  
at least I think so



Sunday, December 10, 2023

## Analytic Idealism

we read the theories  
of what's real and the one  
that perks up is that all is mental  
and we are just clusters  
of isolated mentalness  
like the alternate personalities  
in a dissociative / the reason  
those personalities don't know each other  
is the same reason we don't see  
the universe entire

Monday, December 11, 2023

## Texas or New Mexico

we went to the ribs place  
ordered a few full racks  
lathered on the sauce  
they stationed around the table  
ate some corn painted with butter  
cole slaw and fried potatoes  
red checkered table cloth even  
picnic style tables  
peanut shells on the floor  
others with rib eyes and new yorks  
the woman with me ate more than me  
and later she slept more than me

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

## Tamworth

the pines stand waiting  
even if the building  
is waiting to fall down  
and the well is filled  
with sand and a rusting  
pump / overgrown but  
it's mine / once was theirs  
its pines stand guard  
no matter the weather  
or the time of year

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

## **Chuck Ortolani**

another is gone  
he was a better musician  
and a better athlete than us  
better looking and all that continued  
until the day he died  
and we still lived

Thursday, December 14, 2023

## Angel

I chose to play in her band  
unnamed guitar player  
we drove in a bus from the southern  
plains to the northern plains  
some nights after we washed  
away our sweat we'd stay  
in the same bed / in the mornings  
I'd touch her cheek before retreating  
to my assigned room / we thought  
it was our secret / it was just  
the sweetness of the music  
next night

Friday, December 15, 2023

## Town of Desert

I built a town in the destined  
desert on a road since abandoned  
from a place in Arizona to a place  
in California / I made a cafe  
and a car repair shop specializing  
in tire repair and other ripoffs  
a friend built a cabin motel  
it went well until the interstate  
went elsewhere / on a hill  
overlooking the town I swept  
myself a grave and a plaque  
way up there but I died  
and was buried somewhere else  
perhaps you can try  
to find me / now

Saturday, December 16, 2023

## Written

many people find the real world  
disappointing / they writ  
their own world instead  
making up crazy stories  
like the Apache Death Cave  
story / and Crazy Thunder  
in 2 Guns / I will try  
it myself

Sunday, December 17, 2023

## Sentience

cliff dwelling in red rock  
sandstone / steep climbs  
moki steps and finger marks  
in dry adobe / the southwest  
reminding us that if the universe  
is a mental landscape these dwellings  
have sentience



Monday, December 18, 2023

**Turner**

in the diner out on the road  
to the desert I sat watching  
three men waiting for a bad  
meet-up or a lingered fight  
around on the eight or so  
tables plates rested irregularly  
greased covered fries salted  
too heavily on plates  
red smears probably ketchup  
on some / the cook behind  
a counter with hot things  
behind him / later I'd read  
of gunfire in that diner  
and half a dozen dead  
including a woman whose living  
photo showed her the double  
of Lana Turner / I might  
have loved her had I stayed

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

## Boulders

the world comes at me slowly now  
the depths are deep and my worry  
carries me from hour to hour  
once in a while like a boulder  
thrown up at Eshaness something  
wonderful enters my mind  
but just as rarely

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

## Heath

the road goes past  
a cemetery so small  
only a dozen buried there  
if that many / under  
some pines / small stones  
fencing it off / from the road  
it's hard to notice  
it's hard to know  
what it is / I stopped  
there many times but have  
forgotten all the names

Thursday, December 21, 2023

## North

fire in the stove  
set up in an old fireplace  
enough to keep us warm  
until we fall asleep  
and then the quilts and duvets  
will take on the task  
we will touch at times  
tomorrow we'll wake  
do it all again  
but only those two things  
matter / at least up  
here in the north  
in winter / the south  
is so boring

Friday, December 22, 2023

## On This Ridge

on this ridge more  
than a hundred years  
ago on a day like this  
a woman stopped to watch  
the sun go down downing  
an expanse of trees turning  
colors like a thousand  
retreats / she stopped  
here only for a minute  
maybe some but even  
after all this time  
her selfness lingers

Saturday, December 23, 2023

## 50

fifty years ago today  
I got married / because  
love seemed impossible  
I didn't experiment  
I did no exploratory mating  
I married the first one  
to come along / when you look  
at it this way nothing  
could be dumber / and to prove  
it I'm not married to her  
now / not even married  
to the one who came after  
how many women / perhaps  
not enough

Sunday, December 24, 2023

## Color

the color of friendship  
drained away over the years  
I am left behind now  
just a blobby gray

Monday, December 25, 2023

## High Granite

high on granite ridges  
places I cannot get to  
anymore / too old  
or at least too weak  
or too afraid / my last  
great hike though  
Mt Chocorua



Tuesday, December 26, 2023

## **Burning For You**

Winter chore is to pile  
up old fencing and the Christmas  
tree / the rest of the leaves  
and flammable discards / turn  
that pile into a pyre / smoke  
be damned

Wednesday, December 27, 2023

## And

the rocks at the base of the cliff  
seem to take the clumsy waves  
in stride / one supposes wear will one  
day soften their edges but not so far  
the salted water breaks white and foamy  
does so for hours and hours / days and days  
weeks and weeks / months and months  
years and years / decades and decades  
centuries and centuries / time and time again  
and just a little smoothing / unlike  
your devotion

Thursday, December 28, 2023

## The Drongs At Night

even though it's dead night  
the view from the Drongs cam  
shows the peat hills in living  
color / one can see the waves  
rolling onto the gravel shore  
to the left the lights of Lerwick  
far away painted on the bottoms  
of grayly moving skies / or  
are they loving

Friday, December 29, 2023

## Rain

rain all day is good  
for reading / hacking  
like the earth I absorb  
the refresh

Saturday, December 30, 2023

## **Dissociative Alter**

the dream intensity  
not very helpful  
and can it mean  
what it seems

Sunday, December 31, 2023

## By Ever

I waited for the square  
to fill up / Market Cross  
no one came except rain  
the covered colored tree  
disturbed by wind / the usual  
lights on / no one for the fourth  
or fifth year in a row  
the tide though came up high  
and little waves did all  
they could do / some fishermen  
heading out super early  
all goes on as it all must

# Flaming Animal Spirit with Vultures

Richard P. Gabriel



January 3, 2025

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Monday, January 1, 2024

## The Right Work

everything abandoned  
feels old / in movies  
a rusted car with no roof  
no windows in a back field  
informs the moviegoer  
that long time ago is essential  
to the movie and the moviegoer  
even if the rusted car couldn't  
have rusted that much / what  
I mean is that in a movie supposedly  
taking place in 1940 a rusted hulk  
of a 1937 Ford makes no sense  
unless you don't think  
then the moviemaker has done  
the right work

Tuesday, January 2, 2024

## **Bad States**

some states are making  
themselves small versions  
of hell / I don't truck  
with anyone from any  
of them

Wednesday, January 3, 2024

## Waiting

winter is the time for waiting  
when the warm sun and mild weather  
takes time off / my geese for instance  
stay in the barn waiting for the time  
to mate / the time when the pond  
is not frozen and he indeed can proceed  
I once put a pail of water in the barn  
and the gander proceeded to try  
more like Buster Keaton or Charlie  
Chaplin than a porno / everyone  
needed to wait

---

Thursday, January 4, 2024

## Struck Dumb

I wrote out the instructions  
for the solution of a programming  
puzzle and it worked after some noodling  
I worry my mind is going but I had  
the same troubles all my programming life  
I think it means I am not cut out  
for fine detailed reasoning / relying  
on relentless trial and error  
but I never learn

Friday, January 5, 2024

## **The Beautiful One**

she leaned forward as if to kiss  
I at first kept still then moved  
away / no one taught me what  
makes for love

Saturday, January 6, 2024

## Sweet Her

we sat on the porch talking  
for hours / her perfume  
a little heavy but everything  
about her else was sweet  
she wrote me letters / I bragged  
to my friends about them / my mother  
scolded me / as I said  
no one taught me how to be a person

Sunday, January 7, 2024

## Honesty

we stopped at the cake  
honesty box in a far-north  
North Sea island / her choice  
Huffsie Fruited Tea Loaf  
I reminded her of her  
favorite tattie scones but  
she stood her ground  
paying by QR code

Monday, January 8, 2024

## Last Day

I remember the day  
elementary school ended  
for me / walking to the bus  
the ride slowly to the west  
part of town / a section  
few knew / I learned little  
especially about kids  
fear / though



Tuesday, January 9, 2024

## **Just Me And Who Cares**

alone downstairs  
I made videos introducing  
conferences / I made  
conference programs / made  
up worlds for visitors  
to live in / into the night  
sometimes / night riders  
into the night

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

## Window Look Out

in the middle of a long talking  
in the car by the river after dark  
in November up north he placed  
his hands between her thighs asking  
for warmth / every part of this story  
reveals in many directions / take  
them all

Thursday, January 11, 2024

## Say By

the special places have fallen  
away one by one or in bunches  
as what people love are less loved  
special pizzas / burgers / lobster  
rolls / Thai food / frappes  
even the roads grow changes and fade  
the women who once had trouble  
saying goodbye are now on top  
of that

Friday, January 12, 2024

## Woman Over There

the river of course  
likes to keep going  
day and night though  
never giving up its indecision  
on direction / the bridge  
of course likes to keep  
over the river and let  
flows flow to four corners  
if time could remember  
it'd remember me four times  
a day on that bridge  
in search of someone like her

Saturday, January 13, 2024

## Bad Guitar

the guitar / I play it  
foolishly and simply  
because flair and musical  
knowledge aren't me  
I am a brick hitting  
a smaller brick

Sunday, January 14, 2024

## Boring Truth

standing on the pier  
close to where the ferry  
unloads I wait for a woman  
once close to disembark  
if she does we'll walk close  
by each other to the coffee  
place I found where I'll  
have a coffee and fudge  
and she will have tea  
and fudge / after a while  
I'll see her off back home

Monday, January 15, 2024

## Many Books

in the bookstore waiting  
for her to finish her class  
up the street I choose a book  
worth reading but not buying  
over the course of her course  
I'll finish it an hour at a time  
sitting in any comfy chair  
I can find and I justify it  
because I buy many books there  
so many my main chair at home  
is hard to find

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

## At SAIL

sitting at my terminal  
in the Annex hacking in Lisp  
from 21:00 till 2:00 or 3:00  
listening to music piped  
in through radio and shipped  
over cables to our green  
cathode ray terminals  
the speaker boxes on top of them  
a computer hundreds or thousands  
of times less powerful  
than the one I type on now  
not as late at night and not  
the other side of a cold  
break



Wednesday, January 17, 2024

## The Glow

the red glow at the tops  
of trees reminds us  
of night and its charms  
sometimes fleshy sometimes  
made of ink and woody paper  
its waves rasp over the tops  
of my thoughts of the day  
of the week / I wonder  
sometimes have I seen this  
always

Thursday, January 18, 2024

## Snow Glow

outside the snow is pushed  
everywhere and in circles  
and twirls / resting finally  
on boulders and after the clouds  
pass on toward a north  
the snow takes on sunset's redness  
a warmth no one deserves and a contradiction  
only the perplexed can love  
I found my way to this covered  
house and whether I'm let in or not  
depends she tells me on the colors  
reflected in my flawed brown eyes

Friday, January 19, 2024

## **Snowone**

the road filled with snow  
and too narrow for cars  
to pass by each other  
is a launching pad  
for forays into forlorn  
touching sessions  
to get there I must  
drive the snowed lane  
hoping to see no one  
so I can see someone

Saturday, January 20, 2024

## Rainish

the rain is constant  
the clouds it comes from  
doesn't care about the soil  
and what happens when it becomes  
mud under foot / the roofs  
I depend on rake the wet downslope  
puddles around the hut collect  
the disdain everyone feels  
all their lives / I walk  
the streets alone through  
the blue light spiked orange

Sunday, January 21, 2024

## Big Boats

the big boats tied up  
at the pier sway and rock  
to the wind and changing  
waves / even the ship  
do big it's tied three places  
I scale the gangway hoping  
the sways will assuage  
my other desires

Monday, January 22, 2024

## Coops And Goldenrod

those coops behind Nana's place  
I remember them but I never went inside  
cherry trees all around them  
and a big oak over the top  
of the hill filled with goldenrod  
down to the stone break to the unused  
field holding our pond / important  
fields but we never used them  
chicken coops too / barn hardly used  
the pear orchard up over that rise  
unused / most of my early years

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

## Green Up There

she thought the aurora  
would be out tonight  
storms millions of miles  
away kicking up green  
to our north already  
far north / so she put  
on her warmth and we headed  
uphill to a point where we sat  
above the voe and waited  
waited for hours / she never  
turned toward me

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

## About Us

in the little park eating  
sweet beach pizza while  
the river patiently changes  
direction I wonder what might  
have happened had the girl  
not far up the road from here  
instead of wishing for hunky men  
had looked my way even though  
I never told her outright



Thursday, January 25, 2024

## Her Picture / My Repetitions

in my cold music room  
Nana's old room  
I listen to vinyl and tape  
on a cheap Sears amp and homemade  
speakers / cold in winter  
sweltering in the hot days  
my parents probably noticed  
I didn't play tons of songs  
just a few dozen over and over  
sometimes there was a picture  
of a girl I'd look at while listening  
this was my poor imagination at work

Friday, January 26, 2024

## **Rocks Village Bridge**

the small world right  
next to the bridge  
where I sit with lunch  
when I'm back home  
and which once was a most  
beautiful place / the river  
of course is not sure but  
it's happy to rub the rocks  
to smooth

Saturday, January 27, 2024

## Circle Of Night

the piano in the lower room  
I'd play it late in the night  
some would call it practice  
instead I'd just noodle  
not learning / not improving  
telling myself I would one  
day be great / instead  
like a tune on repeat  
I just circled

Sunday, January 28, 2024

## **Alone By River**

sitting / looking  
listening / taking in the wind and its smells  
for an hour / for two  
the sun first above then behind trees and a hill  
day after day in summer  
back home and its reminders of how little I am

Monday, January 29, 2024

## **Explain**

when I cannot explain  
I think / it will be time  
to drop out of the explaining  
business / getting close

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

## Prettier Song

the roads the streets  
we need them to lead us  
to the places of red lipstick  
and a welcoming back  
and even she will one  
day turn to a road to a street  
when a prettier song  
sounds down the way

Wednesday, January 31, 2024

## Philo And South

flat land to all horizons  
brown stalks and rising dust  
finally a forgotten place  
the air devoid of moving salt winds  
the wind from the west vowing  
to never let go and the cold  
without ice without snow  
without the intelligence'  
of someone's muse

Thursday, February 1, 2024

## Alonely

tale of two of different ages  
lonely in a place neither could grasp  
except each other / in that place  
they turned in opposite directions  
toward each other and the exception  
was made



Friday, February 2, 2024

## Catchy

the talent on television now described as catchy  
is a good way  
I felt the nuance that could capture people's hearts  
I was a little weird so I looked it up online  
heroes

don't take / win hearts / call popularity  
cheating / cheating / peten's  
jumpy and whimsical  
quickly remember  
easy to remember  
easy to recall  
and four avenues emerged

I'm convinced that I was feeling  
a nuance that was overwhelming  
with a facial expression  
reflecting the spiritual culture  
of the Japanese people today  
it's even more crude to just say  
catchy / I guess catchy is Japanese / English  
don't hesitate to do anything

Saturday, February 3, 2024

## **Flaco The Eagle-Owl**

the bird set free  
thousands of miles from home  
to a cold concrete city  
the bird feels fear but soon  
finds a dumpsite and rats to pursue  
the bird's not afraid of people  
so lands on sidewalks but still longs  
for a mate a thousand miles or more  
away

Sunday, February 4, 2024

## Banked Meals

chilled air breaking on steamed glass  
even the strong heavy hood fan  
over the small restaurant kitchen  
can't exhaust the pork smoke  
from the meal we ordered  
neither the steak smoke  
from the adjacent dinner  
we sit / she and I / waiting  
for the meal or whatever  
duende's blood rust deems

Monday, February 5, 2024

## Duende And Tuning

adjustments can make the tube  
amp sing sweet like an angel  
or a muse in the same way those  
two make poetry sing sweet  
but Lorca doesn't like those  
two beings and rejects also  
duende as a being instead telling  
us it's something in us and like  
death

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

## Jill

larger but still pretty  
The Boss we called her  
she still lives in her hometown  
without her everywhere would be plain  
we placed her unobtainable  
hence unapproachable / she  
was our fear of perfection

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

## The Boss

I asked her to sign  
The Boss and she did  
she knew nothing  
of the perfection we laid  
at her feet / at her head  
and blonde hair / so perfect  
the art instructors asked  
her to pose for class  
and she did / my god  
she did

Thursday, February 8, 2024

## Dual Duende

the branch suspended in the river  
may be small but a thickening  
where it entered the water  
moving past it hinted at a profundity  
inconsistent with floating  
sitting by me by the water watching  
with me the scene / whether she  
saw the branch I cannot know now  
because she's gone same as the branch  
I'll never know either whether the branch  
in its mystery of profundity  
saw her

Friday, February 9, 2024

## **No One**

how do you know  
you were never famous  
once you're old  
no one visits  
writes or calls  
no email either



Saturday, February 10, 2024

## **Dream A Little Dream**

listening to my old radio  
stored in a cubby in my headboard  
an old tube radio tuned to a music station  
California Dreaming playing  
sixty five years later in California  
I am once again the one death forgot  
one day the one life forgot

Sunday, February 11, 2024

## **Loss**

my team lost again  
third time in a row  
better to not care  
any more

Monday, February 12, 2024

## **Stones Some Granite**

stones picked from fields  
stones placed in stone walls  
stone picked from stone walls  
fireplaces / fake stone walls  
the movement of stones  
reminding us of the crust  
dropping from our lives

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

## **Bad Cam**

too many bugs in the security camera  
why can't anything just work  
and it's too far from here  
to debug as usual

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

## Floriduh

I know an old guy  
who lives winters in Florida  
he does all the old guy stuff  
in silly clothes with piles  
of other old people and his wife  
he smiles like he's happy  
what happened to him anyway

Thursday, February 15, 2024

## **I Arrive Strangely**

in Hong Kong women wait  
long for happy days  
they ride the escalator  
up and down / the sidewalks  
are inside buildings  
they say Hong Kong cars never  
park / a man in white  
plastic boots serves our soup  
after we've washed our chopsticks  
and bowls in tea

Friday, February 16, 2024

## Hiroshi Sugimoto Like

Boston seen in blur  
a form / of abstraction  
detail dissolved  
do we get the essence  
or lose to gist  
on photo paper we squint  
to rid the blur / instead  
our reckoning falls apart

Saturday, February 17, 2024

## Firing

in the end they burned  
it to the ground as training  
the house my father built  
after teaching himself how  
the fire department that decades  
earlier let my mother's dog  
die in a Christmas fire  
if I could punch one of them



Sunday, February 18, 2024

## **Breeze Blur**

she sat on the bench  
I sat beside her  
she watched upstream  
and the wind swerved  
each strand of her hair  
just differently enough  
that she seemed a blur  
under it / I watch of  
course because for only  
this moment I love her

Monday, February 19, 2024

## **They're Gone**

funny how they piece  
together a compelling  
place from bits  
from all over

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

## Light Not The Subject

for years I stared at this same scene  
a harbor but really the space between  
islands / a pier / a parking lot  
seen from Town Hall on a height  
across the harbor hills on the island  
but this one time the just risen sun's  
light kicked into gear / the light is  
the subject is not

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

## Dark Meals

café by the North Sea  
she sits across as usual  
one of the few places  
we can eat though  
we love the islands  
fish every night  
she takes wine and I lemonade  
tea for her coffee for me  
she is harsh / she  
stays apart

---

Thursday, February 22, 2024

## Green Sky

repeating the song  
longing for death  
deadly feelings of love  
I had in me a deep song  
that grew in passion  
as I became a head without a face  
a body without form  
muscles without strength  
but the repeats overlap  
soon the grass and its soil  
will be above

Friday, February 23, 2024

## Her

my bicycle and I made  
our way to your house  
every weekday no matter  
the weather / you  
didn't take either of us  
as options and went for beauty  
and the deepest worn roads  
are you lonely now that you're  
old and far from that house  
far from me / I write about you  
and you?

Saturday, February 24, 2024

## Geo Detective

there's a man  
you give him a photo  
with landscape in the background  
and no hints / he'll find it  
using google earth and google search  
really fast / watching his videos  
he bumbles / strange

Sunday, February 25, 2024

## Mother Rite

my mother died  
a woman complicated enough  
to make fun of most things  
I did / after I found a comb of hers  
tied it to a chunk of mahogany  
from her headboard / took  
the inseparable pair to the river  
and after thinking about her  
with all the kindness I could  
marshal placed it without a splash  
in the turbulent relentless flow  
waited to watch it turn a bend



Monday, February 26, 2024

## Connection Fear

I'd walk to the phone  
hanging in the piano room  
cold nights hoping to raise  
the bravery to call her  
but fear held on  
I never called her  
I tried every week for years  
I'd stand by the phone  
for hours before going up  
to bed / giving up to bed

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

## Masks

the river water  
flowing over stones  
is smooth / the lichen  
yellowing granite  
is sharply etched  
never try to sharpen  
one / never try to smooth  
the other

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

## Sound Quality

suddenly the music perks up  
better highs / sounds  
silent before / what happened

Thursday, February 29, 2024

## Come Back

some of the days are like rain  
pooling by the side of a road  
the road I imagine was just  
resurfaced with oil and sand  
the sand pounds into the oil  
from cars running everything down  
the sand slips to the side  
of the road where it holds  
onto the rainwater that just  
glistened the pounded down  
road oil / cycle

Friday, March 1, 2024

## **Dangerous Crossing**

in front of a roadside shrine  
of crosses and trinkets and photos  
a young woman stood straight up  
I watched her cross herself  
in the Catholic manner / she  
had enough faith to understand  
a car hitting a pole / understanding

Saturday, March 2, 2024

## Parke Mathematical Laboratory

my first job  
four duties  
help the librarian  
put salt in the water softener once a week  
mow the lawn  
program the computer to locate  
submarines using only amplitude readings  
from a towed array

Sunday, March 3, 2024

## Pygmalion

when the computational world was young  
code was simple and short  
not much did a lot  
papers about early programs look rough  
hand drawn in many places  
fonts blunt and unappealing  
deep explanations are just hacks  
someone famous for something else said this  
the mysterious way in which shapes and marks  
can be made to signify and suggest  
other things beyond themselves

Monday, March 4, 2024

## **Pizza!**

pizza is the puzzle  
of dinner / deep  
dish / lots of sauce  
tomatoes for those addicted  
cheese not too melted  
buy it / bake it / heat  
it up tomorrow / all  
good



Tuesday, March 5, 2024

## **Put Your Head On My Shoulder**

her head on my shoulder  
just once in the waiting lounge  
tender without meaning  
whatever / it was / it lasted  
minutes then swirled  
to hate / I have that effect

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

## Writerly Winds

undulations on the islands  
barren but for homes  
excess wind / excess salt  
good place for warm-blooded  
loves and writers needing  
to write

Thursday, March 7, 2024

## Angry Red Planet

rocks and sand  
striations and layers  
it's Mars taken by  
a robot cart / signs  
of wind and water  
flowing / color adjusted  
for human viewing  
far

Friday, March 8, 2024

## Writer Stuff

the writer cut off her hair  
sitting on its own chair  
it refused to be unseen  
she kept writing  
all the while the scissors  
sliced / can you see what  
seeing her could really mean

Saturday, March 9, 2024

## The Dig

I made my way to the cemetery  
in time to watch men dig  
by hand the hole someone loved  
would be lowered into / hot  
day and hot work / the two  
of them got it done in time  
to find a shade tree to sit  
under and drink their lemonades  
under while people listened  
spoke softly / cried  
they didn't stop me when I  
joined them / shovel in hand

Sunday, March 10, 2024

## A Rag

the man / a dog wrapped  
in an Army blanket / placed  
the dog in a wheelbarrow  
once he was across the road  
wheeled the load across the big field  
then through a gate to the back field  
then down a road cut through pines  
to an old field just starting to cover  
itself in birches / like the two men  
in the previous poem he dug a hole  
but here it was all sand / my dog  
wrapped in an Army blanket / he  
lowered her down / before he helped  
her die with chloroform in a rag

Monday, March 11, 2024

## Out To See

water rising / a flood  
this one washing away  
the rubbish from the last  
people with little  
having even less little  
as what they had rides  
out to sea

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

## **PL CFPs**

rules for conferences  
I care nothing about  
are rules I should care  
nothing about



Wednesday, March 13, 2024

## Balancing

just a clown / deflection  
fear of being found out  
if they are laughing  
they have no time  
they have no room  
for hate and derision  
but to be the best  
clown you need a good mind

Thursday, March 14, 2024

## Call The Cops

suppose someone took the time  
to retrace steps in your memoirish  
story and then tells you about it  
in fan mail / do you answer  
or do write more stories but  
make them less traceable

Friday, March 15, 2024

## Hey Baby

working hard but unthanked  
the more famous person  
gets the credit and the thanks  
it makes me dream of the walking  
away

Saturday, March 16, 2024

## Second Hand

in the second hand shop  
she picks and I pick  
her taste is old / mine  
better than old / she buys some things  
washes them and wears  
them the few times we go  
out to eat and are happy

Sunday, March 17, 2024

## Howling

I dreamed of tangling  
with her all night  
while something akin  
to duende brewed outside  
our thick glass windows  
and down our hardstone  
fireplace chimney  
in a small box os how  
to think of it

Monday, March 18, 2024

## I & I

I walked the three  
miles from farm  
to bridge / at Hand Tub  
House I saw myself seated  
riverside at the table  
below the bridge ramp  
near under the bridgekeeper's shack  
tolls were taken / the swing span swung  
I asked myself which way the river  
was running / I said upstream  
thinking of the ones once loved  
I said downstream

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

## I. D.

I made coffee but she wanted tea  
thinking it's more refined  
more ladylike / more cultivated  
but the coffee I made was from beans  
grown on the farm Karen Blixen ran  
in Kenya by the Ngong Hills  
near where she buried Denys Finch-Hatton  
before returning to Denmark to become  
a writer my friend admired

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

## Bench Watch

near Victoria Pier there's  
a bench / one afternoon  
I decided to sit on that bench  
all night / first day of Summer  
watch the darkness shirk its boldness  
listen as boats came in / watch  
them go out to fishing grounds  
watch the Northlink leave  
watch a different Northlink come back  
she told me it was just a dream  
I told her it was just  
a dream of mine



Thursday, March 21, 2024

## Emo Guitar

the only times I could get emo  
was during leads at parties  
in front of people I couldn't know  
listening to the tapes now  
even in those duende moments  
I sucked / what did the emotion  
get me / sweat ripped strings  
and broken ears

Friday, March 22, 2024

## Dark Sitting

on her couch facing west  
sun almost hidden in its downing  
I asked her to sit next to me  
in her head she must have winced  
but I'm too meek to fulfill her fear  
instead we simply watched the dark  
take us over

Saturday, March 23, 2024

## A Way

being strange is an end  
to the means / let each one  
guess thus wasting effort  
for a gain soon abandoned  
when someone turns away  
I complete their wish  
and turn away

Sunday, March 24, 2024

## Cover

umbrella made for two  
popped over just one  
I'm nowhere near / sitting  
by a dock with smells of foods  
covering my space / she of  
course is lamenting every minute  
and the rain / the rain

Monday, March 25, 2024

## Water Trails

the boats leaving the harbor  
leave sheen trails visible  
for hours / a trail  
when I point this out to her  
she looks at the water  
then at me

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

## **Kissing**

pine boughs ice covered  
light salt of ice  
on grounded needles / in  
our small hut we are nothing  
but lumps under quilts  
the times she ventures her fingers  
toward mine are nothing but the start  
of nothing becoming something

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

## Caught On

it's important to notice the fences  
barbed wire / on the bottom wire  
plastic strips caught / strips  
from sheaths covering bales  
of poor hay destined to feed sheep  
and scattered domesticates  
the wind likes those strips

Thursday, March 28, 2024

## Stoorm

the wind then the hail  
the road covered as with snow  
some said it was a July tornado  
in the Merrimack Valley  
I was under trees watching  
the river move in every direction  
my camera was there but fear  
kept it in its bag / hail  
and leaves / green and white



Friday, March 29, 2024

## Keep The Faith

all dark all the time  
a dream that blends with real  
turn on the lights  
to find the spider my dream dreamed up  
real though not realistic  
I tried to read the Bible  
but every story said the world is made of hate  
or else Stephen King's the writer  
God damn

Saturday, March 30, 2024

## Only Stars

hail thunder flashes  
Mother and me  
Snooks in the garage  
in the Buick / clear  
Snooks and Mother are desperate  
of fear / she told the story  
of lightning arrowing past her head  
only to blast the head of Jesus  
above the fireplace / story  
or memory / she shaking  
in the Buick till storm's passed

Sunday, March 31, 2024

## Lord

I promised to help  
against the feeling  
after death / to hold  
or listen / to cry  
to stay quiet / the grass  
that will grow over the wound  
will remain a green only an Asian  
can paint or a poet can surround  
my promise is a small one  
because no work I do can work

Monday, April 1, 2024

## **Black Slacks**

without Ron who would I be  
colleagues only at times  
lead and bass / he believed  
four years ago he left  
dropped from a kayak  
bagels tossed after him  
then I let him down

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

## Birches

three birches linked before dark  
sitting nearby on a stonewall  
in the near dark light sounds rise  
higher and stars come into view  
recalling now the dreams I had then  
none came true / like all the no ones  
before me I dream of those darkened trees

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

## Games

when she sings her  
voice feints as if  
tears has torn loose  
the songs are hardly  
revealed chaos and I  
tear her dress off  
as if she had asked  
reverb

Thursday, April 4, 2024

## Impossible Dream

up in the choir  
I played their entrance  
and I played their exit  
Hammond up there  
Leslie in the transept  
I did ok but at the reception  
they put me by the kitchen  
door at a table for one  
all that practicing  
was it's own and only  
reward

Friday, April 5, 2024

## Harry Perino Is Not Maris

what is the worst  
for a lead player  
to be mistaken by history  
for the bass



Saturday, April 6, 2024

## Attention

when the past is filtered  
through a multi-headed self-attention  
transformation system  
the best parts of the world  
will be like the dried  
and rotting leaves littering  
a remote forest

Sunday, April 7, 2024

## **Snow Girl**

the beauty of lights  
on all night in heavy winter  
people asleep or dreaming  
snow gathering in ruts  
streets lit yellow and orange  
the sound of no sounds  
snow brushing past snow  
underneath it all / ice  
body healing

Monday, April 8, 2024

## Passing

once dark I wonder  
whether it will be light  
again / once sitting  
I wonder whether I will  
stand again / I once  
loved but the feeling's  
faded / sitting in the dark

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

## Jianzhi

wearing her black lace  
dress using large lobed  
craft scissors she cuts  
for me her depiction  
of how we met / she  
of blueblack hair  
and a difficult dance  
with language cuts  
a swath of longing  
from blue stiff paper

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

## Gonester

the ringing of strings  
under reverb playing in my ears  
I drive down the hill to Merrimac Square  
where turning left I head toward Skip's  
but in my head it's still there and in fact  
it's long gone / not part of my kidhood  
I found it into my third wife  
visiting every year until the Pandemic  
then it was gone / I head East  
for Newburyport Thai and a new book

Thursday, April 11, 2024

## Mom

she can't remember  
from minute to minute  
she hears people not there  
sees people not there  
repeats and repeats  
we can't figure out  
how to help

Friday, April 12, 2024

## Angels At Dusk

in the vacant lot as the sun goes away  
the friend about to disappear faces  
the other way / colors are faded  
or waiting for the next day to come to life  
like days' endings the friend is getting  
ready for darkness and loneliness  
that's how it seems to me who will be  
gradually left alone / not to her

Saturday, April 13, 2024

## August In Retreat

remember the water downstreaming  
the way she walked away  
and it wasn't a gimmick  
she made a remarkable impression  
on those she walked toward  
all these looks soaked liquid  
nothing was gradual / not  
even the sun's wet demise



Sunday, April 14, 2024

## Santa Food

so we ate at Paper Dosa  
and she had a large paper  
thin crispy dosa  
with masala on the side  
and some chutneys  
she dressed up / me  
not so much / our best meal  
she was warming up  
to hating me

Monday, April 15, 2024

## Rain Bushcraft

he teaches bushcraft  
tarps / silver birch bark  
betulin / feather sticks  
stick raft / a fire still  
ways to build tall fires  
on wet ground using dried  
branches still clinging  
to trees / the joy and dryness  
of a waxed canvas sheet

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

## Wild Bear

she's not fearless  
afraid of camping near people  
afraid of cows  
scared of heights  
likely to turn her floofy ankles  
but she is almost too much  
of a woman

Wednesday, April 17, 2024

## **Snowdonia**

climb / hike to a lake  
650 meters high and set  
up camp on a small island  
a few stepping stones offshore  
nervous and cautious she teaches  
us how to live life when scared  
she seemed ready to be beautiful

Thursday, April 18, 2024

## Mass Duende

in Merrimac Square as night pushes on  
the black of the clouded sky  
reveals the meaning of death  
replacing life / demons  
replacing angels / the darkness  
does this

Friday, April 19, 2024

## Cookers

in the woods I made a Swedish  
rocket stove from a dry dry dry  
cedar log drilled out with a scotch  
eyed augur with some pine resin  
fatwood / feathered chips / a fire  
still / with all that I boiled  
a broth and cooked up some bangers  
using three stones I found by the river  
as a cooking platform

she was impressed / almost as if  
I were a man

Saturday, April 20, 2024

## River's Death

the edge of the river  
the shallow sloped bank  
oozed black mud  
I step close to it then stop  
the color / the helpful water  
memory of a smell in winter  
I cannot approach closer  
even if she asked

Sunday, April 21, 2024

## Sss

the noise and the simplicity  
when a problem comes up  
a way around it drops in  
it reminds me of black water  
the way it whistles past rocks  
in winter / the sibilance  
and the ringing after



Monday, April 22, 2024

## **Walking Away**

no one can guess that the perfect  
woman walking away doesn't believe  
in the power of her own ass  
not to mention her front

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

## **Thrill Is Back**

black nights and clear music  
listening all night but the days too  
I wait for perfection of the sound  
when it comes the music is all over me  
I listen while pictures of women  
I could have loved scroll past  
dual doses in the sad pool

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

## End

she dumped me off off a sideroad  
off a sideroad off a little larger  
road in a desert that hadn't seen rain  
for a decade to let me spend my last  
writing with drying fingers in already  
finally dry red sand / as if a place

Thursday, April 25, 2024

## Eating

sitting almost sunset  
by the river ordering  
Thai then reading  
a new book from Jabberwocky  
meanwhile watching her  
with her shiny leather skirt  
deciphering and then phoning  
she alone / me alone  
the sun blurring us both  
she'll return and I'll leave  
reading / phoning

Friday, April 26, 2024

## Change

no personal remarks  
only the project  
no report on progress  
nothing about the house  
I didn't even look  
at her on the screen  
much and to think

Saturday, April 27, 2024

## Island People

he walks home in the rain  
she is there not far from his door  
right has fled and a wave lands  
behind them in a cinematic darkness  
her hair barely red / her silhouette  
perfectly foreign as she reaches  
to kiss / turns away / music fades  
to end titles

Sunday, April 28, 2024

## Pulpits

she likes to speak to the dead  
finding their place they form  
a community that makes no sense  
people in charge have placed  
them together as if they could be  
friends / she talks to them and they  
strangely feel permitted to speak  
as if the truth meant something  
some speak of loves / others of sights  
or a river they liked / she listens  
trying to make a family of them  
or a town / or a circle with her  
at the center / headstones

Monday, April 29, 2024

## Rain Sun

finally the story's ended  
what seemed like tenderness  
was really just not a fight  
beneath the thick earthen layer  
a strife made of granite  
music of hammers striking strings  
all in all a melancholy not far  
from sadness



Tuesday, April 30, 2024

## Wisp

her shrine to him down  
replaced by a white wall  
her face puffed out some  
he carefully mentions nothing  
about him / about her  
she's since left / another trip  
she plans to live another  
quarter century / brags about it  
why did she put up that shrine

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

## Spells

telling stories  
into a night  
holding loosely  
setting up the telling  
it's a rhythm / off beat  
from a distance / music  
sound track to a wordy  
romance

Thursday, May 2, 2024

## **Liars**

about half the place  
I live believes lies  
and they will determine  
the fate of me and those  
I love / the fact  
they are people doesn't  
sway me

Friday, May 3, 2024

## **Baby It's You**

her skirt doesn't care  
about me / how she fills  
it cares even less  
imagine a street in the Back Bay  
with her walking down the sidewalk  
away from you / that's what reality  
is for me / her / the skirt  
rear view

Saturday, May 4, 2024

## Stooping

sitting on a stoop  
waiting for someone  
to watch walk by  
someone to story over  
in an instant build  
lives meeting / staying  
together / then me at  
her graveside telling  
stories of her tears  
or she at mine

Sunday, May 5, 2024

## Round Trip

places we went / places we saw  
places we ate / places we slept  
places I drove / a place she drove  
sandstone / living rock and brush  
clouds that software revels in  
I found that my thoughts meant little  
hers all / we went saw ate slept  
drove / drove back

Monday, May 6, 2024

## **Mom**

tomorrow perhaps  
my wife's mother  
will move in here  
everything will change  
for the worse  
the much worse  
panic

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

## Key Note

tired of it all  
asked to deliver  
an important speech  
on any topic  
I can think of none  
that would make  
people happy  
years ago it would  
be trivial  
today impossible



Wednesday, May 8, 2024

## Mom

she pleads for help  
her mind no longer grasp  
help / we need to impose  
our ideas on her life  
we've made this all too  
hard on us by not stepping  
in earlier / how this ends  
cannot be envisioned

Thursday, May 9, 2024

## Ordinarily Strange

the muse / who is it  
nothing but the parts of us  
we cannot ask directly  
but which pushes at us  
when we drop the barrier  
all we can do is ask  
it to be ordinary  
or to be strange

Friday, May 10, 2024

## Sand

I've lived on hills  
a mesh of lights below  
stretches of red lights  
stretches of white lights  
each one a person or some  
I knew each as little  
as they knew me  
for cinematographers such  
means a peaceful night  
in a human world

Saturday, May 11, 2024

## Dementia

when the loop reaches  
thirty iterations  
when the mind can't  
recall second to second  
it's the kind of dream  
others wake from  
and get up to distract  
themselves to save  
themselves from insanity

Sunday, May 12, 2024

## Lineage

pushing forward  
father to child  
keeping on until  
everything slowly  
changes out from everything  
and what we are  
is no more  
and is ever more

Monday, May 13, 2024

## Eldering

fog / or far away  
trees like an artist's  
drowsy dream / nearby  
the river making its  
intentions known through  
its slewing slosh and rush  
in the fog of an old woman's  
mind as time runs out  
her needs don't include  
understanding

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

## Winter

maybe AI winter  
of our discontent  
is it worth a try  
do I know enough  
was she right when  
she said don't  
speak again

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

## **Pizza of Love**

the bench where I eat  
beach pizza when summer  
is upon the water  
and the bridge is expanding  
its joints / a cormorant  
dives in while I fold  
the carton into the receptacle  
drinking the last of the lemonade  
with a frappe on deck



Thursday, May 16, 2024

## Early Career

when the heat comes off  
the corn and soybean fields  
into our alway open windows  
late afternoon when my fate  
is frying on a low burner flame  
the sweat on my neck feels  
like any ocean breeze  
will chill me into oblivion

Friday, May 17, 2024

## Why

after settling into my croft  
the fog came over me  
I lay under wool covers  
sometimes the wind hinted  
all night I worried  
my life to the mat  
I had Diana Krall on repeat  
one all night  
my tube amp helped by revealing  
her just husky contralto  
the sun rose

Saturday, May 18, 2024

## Unstish

we're so far north  
that we burn under sun  
part time and chill like dogs  
another part of the time  
we need a stone house  
plenty of wool  
plenty of peat  
and a feeling we never had

Sunday, May 19, 2024

## Unexpectedations

I am disquieted by invitations  
slowing down doesn't inspire  
I don't want to drool while speaking  
at a podium / fear and the reality  
of giving up / giving in

Monday, May 20, 2024

## **Discontent**

tech and the creatives  
the gap will remain  
always until tech  
learns to feel  
arrogance

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

## She

she didn't do anything  
but she was more than  
I could tale / her face  
only / nothing much else  
special / her face neither  
but something / but something

Wednesday, May 22, 2024

## Gerry Comeau

someone in my school  
almost 60 years ago  
I hated him but he  
pulled himself up  
then his mind dissolved  
today he died  
after the pain  
who grieves  
who rejoices

Thursday, May 23, 2024

## **Katja**

she is no beauty  
but I fell for the structure  
of her face and unfailing  
smile / nothing special  
everything special



Friday, May 24, 2024

## Blank

McPhee suggests the old  
man project / keep working  
on it until time expires  
don't finish or if you accidentally  
do label it volume one

Saturday, May 25, 2024

## Newburyport Cams

on the street in a town  
near where I grew up  
there are cams looking  
in all directions / in  
summer I watch the one  
that shows for some reason  
mostly people walking away  
I focus on the women  
walking away / their flinging  
hair and swinging legs  
all those unstories  
the same as my stories

Sunday, May 26, 2024

## **Inn Street South Live Cam—Newburyport MA**

lines out the door  
at Simply Sweet  
mean in the evening  
it's hot even though  
the river is there  
the ocean is there  
I am not there

Monday, May 27, 2024

## **Illinois**

flat and hot all summer  
flat and cold all winter  
not much variation  
in what grows and what's there  
but the pizza is good

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

## King Kong

King Kong / I've watched  
it dozens of times / why  
was it the sentimentality  
the strange special effects  
how over the top it was  
the dinosaurs / was that watching  
it with my father meant  
we were the same

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

## Can't Find The Time

Ultimate Spinach  
Orpheus / Listening  
Beacon Street Union  
these bands  
and we  
were the music  
that went nowhere  
some called it  
the Bosstown Sound  
they wrote their names  
in graffiti script  
ours in sans serif  
gone so

Thursday, May 30, 2024

## **Baby Why**

is beauty the spawn  
of distortion  
of decay and time  
of side lighting  
then explain tubes  
old towns  
and good photos

Friday, May 31, 2024

## Grammar

people meeting evenings  
in a side alley where  
a little restaurant  
serves food till late  
and a drama fills the alley  
stares and glances  
a women chirps then runs  
away / ice cream in cups  
is melting / the river  
is slowing down / I listen  
for more and there is none  
some shouts an adjective



Saturday, June 1, 2024

## Stay Tonight

why is what's beautiful  
also run down or running  
there / and why what's  
pretty need the best  
perspective / in the end  
my amnesia takes a break  
and I remember how to bend  
strings into a slightly  
sharp vibrato

Sunday, June 2, 2024

## **Inn Street Pants**

in shiny pants  
she was too thin  
but part of a troupe  
posing by the tree  
another in tight pants  
a low ass as Carvey  
would say / watching  
on the cam at a hot  
day near Simply Sweet  
watching

Monday, June 3, 2024

## A Memory Defeated

fell apart  
falling apart  
I wonder my worry  
will land me in a landfill  
there's one near our toboggan hill  
good for our aluminum one  
and our wood one / even  
with dogs running shotgun

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

## Marriage Day

we married in a setting  
I believed would never change  
but they decided to refurbish  
the bridge and used the spot  
to store their trucks and junk  
killing all the nice sheltering  
trees and brush / made it a desert  
predictions / regrets / surprises  
the beauty was the river flowing  
like glass to the cold sea

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

## Mom

if she can't remember minute to minute  
and cannot take care of herself  
and wants to be taken home from her daughter's house  
because she didn't ask to go there  
and believes she can take care of herself  
then what can we do

Thursday, June 6, 2024

## On The Bus

done with his life  
he waits for the roadies  
to take what's left away  
his audience that is to say  
his family friends and those nearby  
applaud in the manners they believe  
make sense / his last chords  
ring out as reverberation in the memories  
of still warm minds

Friday, June 7, 2024

## Reach

she's unclothed under  
her bedclothes but I  
resolve to keep the book  
of poems open in front  
of my bad eyes until a break  
in the dreadful night happens to us

Saturday, June 8, 2024

## Narrow Cuts

how long will the rivers cast  
their lot down their valleys  
in a dry now place the ruts  
are like perfect sandpapered  
remnants / who wouldn't be afraid  
of them / shimmying down the weak spots  
the places where my feet fall  
on fine sand



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Sunday, June 9, 2024

## Tuscany

in a small apartment  
in a Tuscan hill town  
near the top with a view  
of grapevine filled valley  
everything almost works  
she has a small old blue  
table and a typewriter-like  
laptop she can write on but  
she never writes to me

Monday, June 10, 2024

## AI

AI is ready to chill  
another winter because  
the hype's so piled up  
that it's ready to fall  
over

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

## Fun Times 50 Years On

two women  
same name spelled different  
I loved them both  
in a specific order  
one was snatched from me  
I married the other  
we're still married  
they're not  
heh

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

## My Little World

her voice brushes like downy  
hair across a soft sweater  
her tone telling me it's OK  
while the sun is a slender  
shaft lifting flecks across the room  
a room I know as where I crawled  
through my first few years  
and all of it so long past

Thursday, June 13, 2024

## Plum Island Dusk

in the footprinted sand  
on Plum Island a rippling  
that seemed of water  
turned out to be  
a shadow of an arm in mid-story  
waving one way then another  
I nevertheless was enchanted

Friday, June 14, 2024

## Wander

I lost my way while looking  
for the bookstore in Newburyport  
I parked blocks away and the bricks  
and pockets of beauty lured me toward  
the river where my tears joined  
the rain / melt / and upstream tears  
of other men lost in thoughts

Saturday, June 15, 2024

## Lerwick

an unexpected kiss  
heavy rain by the harbor  
late or dead in the night  
a woman married  
a man without expectations  
the story someone wrote  
didn't want them

Sunday, June 16, 2024

## Santa Fe Down

I sat on her couch  
facing the sun setting  
through her window  
her books all around  
she had no feelings  
all I wanted to do was sit  
watch / linger / she made it clear  
though I was in her house  
I was not there with her



Monday, June 17, 2024

## Potsdam Spring

in a café in Potsdam  
espresso of all sorts  
pastries of all sorts  
the Potsdam women resembling  
desire in the squared off streets  
in places written Russian in Cyrillic  
dark smoke patches on buildings  
like those in cave and alcove  
based living in the Southwest  
how we knew people lived there  
years ago / the Germans did  
my friends did / some women did

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

## Laid

cooking she stood  
by the window blowing  
her hair through cracks  
and gaps / what she made  
tasted horrible but  
women were meant to cook  
she told me so I ate  
whatever she laid out  
as I took everything  
she laid out

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

## She Says

rocks and lizards  
she points a different direction  
a ridge follows us  
she never stops talking  
question by question  
we make our way to her house  
where she spends time with her friends  
and I work on our paper  
in my hotel room far away

Thursday, June 20, 2024

## State

rain on the street  
sloping down to the river  
reflecting lights from trending  
restaurants adds to the romance  
of women walking home  
hoping what they find there  
is better or more  
than the left behind

Friday, June 21, 2024

## Northerly

a warm house on a dense  
wood packed acre or two  
viewing a foe / walls of stone  
might be someone would pair  
nicely but who it could be  
is behind the fog coming  
up toward me / which bed  
will it be tonight  
a warm one or my usual  
cold

Saturday, June 22, 2024

## She's Not For That

when the heat comes for you  
respite is refusal  
a big hat helps  
wet clothes a temp out  
AC a cheat  
what about the river  
the ocean  
is there one near  
a walk where heat rises  
as a wind  
I could take off clothes  
but you dropped in  
thanks

Sunday, June 23, 2024

## Who Could

when we lived  
in that minor mansion  
in Champaign  
with its sunken living room  
ringed by arches  
restaurant quality and size  
kitchen / we had little clue  
what was ahead  
that clue was completely wrong  
but a cloudless sky  
and a distant horizon

Monday, June 24, 2024

## Cottage Grove

the second year was a cottage  
total footprint living room size  
heavy rain and our mattress was soaked  
a kitchen only one could stand in  
a couch and a table just fit  
storage in the other room  
remember our dreams or lack of  
the last year / link then with this now  
that was the derivative  
ended up working



Tuesday, June 25, 2024

## All Over Again

I mostly biked around  
Kathy had to drive  
because she worked for real  
as a OT so had to smell nice  
even in rain and snow  
sweltering or shivering  
tornado ish wind  
we believed / really believed  
in the future or at least  
a future / but

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

## Addiction

so many tomato plants  
the regular garden  
with ten or so  
then a separate one  
back by the woods  
with fifty more  
then across the road  
with a hundred more  
she'd can then in jars  
putting up three hundred  
to four hundred quarts  
my mother ate half  
me the other  
what lack were we fixing

Thursday, June 27, 2024

## At Her Side

the car in the drive  
the priest by the bed  
telling and reciting  
what's needed to move  
a woman from one world  
to another / age aside  
she counted the times  
she was happy / some  
under a man who sailed  
away once returning  
to his own solid place  
she counted the times  
she cried and halfway  
through the priest finished  
finished

Friday, June 28, 2024

## **In Kyoto**

his hand by her ear  
her skirt loosens  
drops  
annoyed earlier  
her hand heads  
for pleasure

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Saturday, June 29, 2024

## Next To Her

sitting on a granite slab  
Maine coastline acting  
cold and New Englandy  
she acting cold  
and New Englandy / saying  
nothing / waiting for a tidepool  
to show her life  
still abounds

Sunday, June 30, 2024

## Janis

a girl I could have loved  
could have married  
dead now  
almost thirty years  
like lather  
the sadness I might have had  
would still  
coat what remains  
of me

Monday, July 1, 2024

## Molly Red

service station on a hot  
road in Arizona / men  
in blue coveralls  
their names in red  
on white patches  
a girl wearing a cowgirl  
skirt tends the café  
bar / Whitey and Jim  
love her but only  
one man can lift  
her skirts  
he's not mentioned  
in this poem

Tuesday, July 2, 2024

## Daddy

he rode his bike  
every day two  
miles each way  
to get the paper  
and maybe some sundries  
slow / hills but small ones  
when I move back there  
now he's gone  
I'll ride it the same way  
paper / sundries / hills



Wednesday, July 3, 2024

## Tycoon Joke

ah / to be alive  
as the city on the hill  
dissolves is second only  
to the same honor  
at the fall of Rome  
and to think  
all this because  
of a mere merchant

Thursday, July 4, 2024

## **It**

after practice they'd drive off  
a highway as dark lifts  
find an exit with a kiss and ride  
stop and when they were done  
not with sex but only touch and kiss  
she'd pull out her spare panties  
so her husband would not know  
yes / she really believed

Friday, July 5, 2024

## The Beginning

always something small  
no great papers  
no great books  
no breakthroughs  
marriages that fail fast  
poor parenting  
hardly any friends  
ones that don't last  
people who ignore  
the end

Saturday, July 6, 2024

## Thin Pillars

tall / thin maples  
in swampy woods  
you cut one down  
peel the bark  
and it's slippery  
when the sun's going  
down behind them  
or coming up  
in front of them  
they're like small pillars  
fronting a fine stone  
house in a place like  
country France  
just not as slippery

Sunday, July 7, 2024

## So, What Happened?

storefront doors closed  
barred / lights out  
kitchen closed and cooling  
tables outside in a scenic  
alley covered for the night  
down the alley in a tony court  
two decide their futures  
kiss and walk home

Monday, July 8, 2024

## Merrimack Valley

I got a kiddie black raspberry  
at Hodgie's in a cup  
ate it with a spoon  
from Quux's while sitting  
at a picnic table under the pines  
then to Jabberwocky to buy  
any book at all but a book  
anyway / this even if Skip's  
is not an option / Rhythm  
Café not an option / living  
there again not an option  
all that and those I knew  
from high school dying  
the river still does its thing  
and me?

Tuesday, July 9, 2024

## Friday Night Dance

leaning at the cafeteria wall  
watching all pony  
a band from Haverhill  
with a Farfisa and Leslie  
they wore sport coats  
all the people dancing  
talking / laughing  
touching / kissing  
on the sly / I watched  
still do

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

## Riverside Near Newburyport

I made my way to river's bank  
sitting there I watched until  
the tide turned and the river  
reversed / when it darkens  
trees become witches  
the water black is oiled  
I sometimes forget my place  
dream of the one I could  
not ask anything of  
she of course left and ruined  
her life I think / she lives  
far away / I still make my way



Thursday, July 11, 2024

## Like Shelley

she was right about stopping  
everywhere / my fear worked  
against her / we didn't last  
she had no interest  
I had than was permitted  
now she's interesting  
with places everywhere  
I'm here waiting for complications

Friday, July 12, 2024

## For My Love

someone who knows how  
wrote a song about me  
and recorded it professionally  
I think she thought I  
loved her / nice  
not special

Saturday, July 13, 2024

## Many Days Or Not

in a small town  
people live from start  
to finish / nothing  
special happens  
wives / husbands / children  
unexceptional / they  
become small statues  
their legacy some genetic  
material and a grave headstone

Sunday, July 14, 2024

## Tripping

someone walking the pier  
to the ferry is hoping  
the fog will drift  
toward the strand and waves  
and the ferry will be empty  
but her to make room  
for her hopes and trembles

Monday, July 15, 2024

## Boxed

the port and islands  
were once my favorites  
but a broken bond  
scotched them / now  
there's no way to return  
a calm place / a safe place  
now there is no one

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

## That Way

run down church in a city setting  
paint peeling off outside beams  
and doors / concrete stairs  
with corners knocked off  
crosses covered in dust  
preacher wearing worn clothes  
reading from the oldest  
of revered books telling  
stories one is allowed  
to remember / God is funny

Wednesday, July 17, 2024

## Cast Back

at the edge of the field  
a sidedelivery and manure spreader  
a mower meant for towing  
when I was young they were rusted  
wooden parts nearly crumbling  
we used the mower / nothing else  
the barn was almost as old  
as the country / none of that apparent  
to me until now / when I  
am like they are

Thursday, July 18, 2024

## Haverhill Mess

these buildings  
still here on this street  
were here when my mother  
was young / she worked  
near them / she shopped  
in them / she banked  
in them / their bricks  
have since been washed  
with steam / now they're  
brick red / every place  
there now sucks



Friday, July 19, 2024

## **Inn Street**

when they stopped for ice cream  
the men nearby leered  
the women were dressed for summer  
in loose dresses or shorts  
the men's hardwired brains  
could not understand  
that these woman wanted to cool down  
not go into heat

Saturday, July 20, 2024

## Women On Sidewalks

sidewalks on a summer evening  
women walking this way  
then that / some with ice  
cream / others walking  
to their meals with special  
people / their skirts are tight  
but that means nothing  
what's important are the clouds  
building up to the west  
and the sun spurting pink  
and red on them / later  
it will rain / perhaps a storm  
the sidewalks will be washed  
clean / the meals forgotten

Sunday, July 21, 2024

## Farewell Fair Isle

red hair with background  
of dried wheat and rye  
I found her but too late  
she had left returning  
to her red home with red  
furnishings / she left  
a photo of her in a skirt  
each night I hold it  
not her in my hands  
tears on my sleeves

Monday, July 22, 2024

## Night?

why is there night  
not why answered  
by physics but  
by poetry or even prose  
can religion tell us  
or common sense  
or does it take  
two in embrace

Tuesday, July 23, 2024

## Stating

quiet street  
during the day  
a walking encounter  
many meet / cute  
places to eat  
sea coast  
East Coast  
river town I favor  
now that Haverhill's  
lost its charm  
to overexcitement  
and no toilets

Wednesday, July 24, 2024

## Bisbee

Evergreen Cemetery  
is never green  
being on the south  
side of Bisbee  
next to Shady Dell  
trailer motel  
imagine it  
a place with a featured  
abandoned Shell gas station  
and a main street that's  
a canyon / let's  
get some Perfection  
Bread

Thursday, July 25, 2024

## Wichita

plains / what else  
is there to do but  
work and write  
songs / stories / wheat  
weather won't give in  
urban those can never find me  
because it's no place  
to look / nothing  
there to see

Friday, July 26, 2024

## **Inn Street**

slow walking on a brick street  
unsteady gait / wavering  
cane in one hand / a simple  
but dull seed cap on his head  
he and I born around the same year  
our mouths can't taste no more  
our eyes are clouded but when  
the right skirt goes by  
our memories perk right up



Saturday, July 27, 2024

## Words

nothing like the silliness  
trying to explain a simple  
thing but botching it no end  
even with simple words  
and sentences no one mistakes  
but yes / mistakes / I make them  
my reward is try again

Sunday, July 28, 2024

## Art And Wine

the booths closed up  
the fair is taking  
the night off / ice  
cream shop at one end  
river at the other  
but my vantage point  
just a computer screen  
thousands of miles away  
my parents in their graves  
just fifteen minutes away  
from there / can I go?

Monday, July 29, 2024

## Ophthalmologist

eyes getting worse  
but the eye doctors  
seems unpanicked  
it's a race  
to the end

Tuesday, July 30, 2024

## Hubert Street

where is Hubert Street  
where was it in 1937  
the impossible search  
I found what I could  
using up time needed  
for more other things  
puzzle or mystery  
either way irresistable

Wednesday, July 31, 2024

## **She Don't Know**

the stones were well piled  
when we had the farm  
since they've been knocked  
and nicked by stonerobbers  
I even took one thirty years on  
soon the walls won't be  
only trees and the scattered bush  
and a stray metallic meteorite  
along that road of mine

Thursday, August 1, 2024

## Ellie

Ellie the hairdresser  
loves to make her clients  
yak / her memory is good  
so she asks about old yaks  
when she washes their hair  
she massages their scalps  
I imagine old guys  
fall for her / young  
hands on / listens

Friday, August 2, 2024

## **After The Same**

the red light born  
of fires to the north  
turns green leaves  
a funny color and behind  
them a red sky  
warns of danger  
promises a certain sound  
melodies prefer  
warmth / unneutral

Saturday, August 3, 2024

## Shawshank Scam

no one I heard of  
complained about the stone wall  
in Shawshank / Buxton Maine  
but not a single New England  
stone in that wall / stones  
from a landscaping place  
rough and western / not the smooth  
worn granite gray but red pink  
but rough and hard cut  
the oak tree sure  
the corn fields sure  
the stone wall / pure Hollywood



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Sunday, August 4, 2024

## Don't Fear

in 1967 I'd have  
a month before school  
and I'd be planning  
how I'd disappear  
before then and not  
the romantic way  
but the bad moon  
rising way

Monday, August 5, 2024

## Cables

silliness of audiophile listening  
expense / what to spend on  
every link can break you  
sound / judge your ears first  
see what you can hear  
listen to your ears  
does a little more clarity  
a little more airiness  
a sharper bass / the peanut  
butter sound of old bass strings  
do these things make your tears  
sweeter / then spend / buy

Tuesday, August 6, 2024

## Mom

she takes aging  
to be punishment  
for something she did  
that we keep her here  
is because of a bad thing  
she's done / where is she  
whose house is this  
who are you / are you  
my sister / when did  
I come to America  
who is Daddy / tears

Wednesday, August 7, 2024

## Jazzi

jazz sounds better with better equipment  
soundstage needs to be wide and accurate  
need a flat spectrum and quick response  
a good recording even streaming  
I neglected all this so far

Thursday, August 8, 2024

## Harsh Mistress

my father and music  
he studied it  
taught it / loved it  
but listening in that era  
was not possible outside  
Boston / so he tried  
every other thing a man  
can do and settled  
on little he loved  
did he notice me

Friday, August 9, 2024

## Peat Cutting

a pickup loaded  
with bags of peat  
heading for a storage  
croft and we'll burn  
it all winter for its  
warmth and Scottish odor  
we'll put a tall stone  
behind it to force its heat  
to us / outside the wind  
outside the sea-lead storm  
inside us and her warm body  
all night

Saturday, August 10, 2024

## Elder

words and wordings  
good but not great  
I spew and spread them  
because those around me  
are even worse I seem good  
I've learned all I can

Sunday, August 11, 2024

## Eucalyptus

adjusting / adjusting  
the realm of thought  
better in warm colors  
made a mess of plans  
but execution can repair  
there's a woman who laments  
something about us  
I stayed here / the better  
to deflate the past



Monday, August 12, 2024

## Her Silence

we ate side by side  
in silence except  
for one monk reading  
from a history or bio  
monks circled the tables  
offering food / terrible  
food badly cooked  
evenings were the Gregorians  
sung badly / most in robes  
one or two fresh from work  
in work clothes / silence

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

## A Trip To Skip's

they held a yard sale  
all the paraphernalia  
associated with making  
greasy 1940s food at Skip's  
a reason I traveled back  
there every year gone  
change and its offspring  
solidify the need for memory

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

## **As They Say**

wanting a cuddly companion  
I angled every direction  
not even the long sit  
by the river on a cold night  
achieved the hankering  
now all the options  
have been defaulted  
to nil

Thursday, August 15, 2024

## Builder

a sweet wide branching pine tree  
adjacent to a patch of maples  
in a boggy stretch of swamp  
I climb it and prepare  
to form a tree house from spare  
boards left on a pile  
nearby in a field  
however / I'd need skill  
instead I drop things  
mishit with hammers  
jam screws / cut wrong  
the sweet pine prepares  
for sadness

Friday, August 16, 2024

## Dope

he is so stupid now  
others will need  
to oversee him  
the only good thing  
he knows it

Saturday, August 17, 2024

## **Afraid Writing**

when will I be able  
to write again after  
falling into a pit  
of fear and depression

Sunday, August 18, 2024

## Old Man Fear

still hard time sleeping  
I wish I could be more optimistic  
reason says all will work out  
but my fear likes to win

Monday, August 19, 2024

## Maybe

made headway  
there is now a path  
it can still go wrong  
at least I can start  
practicing



Tuesday, August 20, 2024

## Of Roads

the world of roads  
is leading us to famous  
romances / stupendous  
opportunities  
sometimes to a band  
that plays a song  
that leads to a dance  
and then a clutch  
and finally a passel  
new to the world  
of roads

Wednesday, August 21, 2024

## **My Only One**

far hopes / times forgotten  
we all need finding and hoping  
warm place to soak or a massage  
people we don't know pretend  
to care / their hands warmer  
than a friend you hope to love

Thursday, August 22, 2024

## Michele Simonds

Michele and Bill  
walking toward a future  
toward Rocks Village Bridge  
on Bridge Street in October 1966  
Michele walking away from her  
future here toward a different one  
when the future is unapproachable  
what time is left for us  
how to time to write letters  
to that future

Friday, August 23, 2024

## Ended

when love is over for a woman you know  
because her life has ended and yours goes on  
you plan a trip to the ground she remains in  
because life is king and she is still queen

Saturday, August 24, 2024

## Unmanly

I stood by the phone  
standing on the two-step stairs  
it was brown hanging on the wall  
the room was cold and my plan  
made over and over for weeks  
was to call her and ask for a date  
I did this many times for many years  
I never dialed / I could not and cannot  
ask a woman for love

Sunday, August 25, 2024

## Benched

on a bench by the harbor  
on a pier crooked partway out  
big boat tied up and its crew  
sitting around a bolted down table  
eating snacks and playing backgammon  
I'm sitting there / she's with me  
after a long absence we blurted  
recent news and now our arms  
are touching / the boat rocks  
when ships pass

Monday, August 26, 2024

## Benched by AI

we sit together on a bench  
by the harbor  
perched on a pier  
it juts out crookedly over the water  
a big boat is moored nearby  
its crew gathered around a table  
bolted down to the deck  
they're snacking and playing backgammon  
laughter and the clatter of dice  
filling the air  
after what felt like an eternity apart  
we blurt out bits of recent news  
catching up on everything and nothing all at once  
our words slow down  
the urgency of updates fading  
now our arms brush against each other  
a quiet comfort in the touch  
the boat rocks gently with the movement  
of passing ships / the rhythm of the waves  
echoing the silent understanding between us

Tuesday, August 27, 2024

## Jazzy

in the jazz club  
a trio folds the music  
to their imagined  
origami making from the single  
sheet of a plain song  
a Dali crane or a bottle  
of oatmeal / that is  
my love song



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Wednesday, August 28, 2024

## Santa Foo

she wanted to travel together  
but once I agreed she make plans  
to visit and visit and visit  
I spent half the time alone  
in the hotel working on our paper

Thursday, August 29, 2024

## Waiting

a long wait for the ferry  
she'd booked it weeks ago  
to come to me on the islands  
to stay all winter she promised  
I waited on a nearby pier  
watching it come around the point  
deeply heading into a gale  
I had buckets of peat waiting  
waiting / waiting / waiting

Friday, August 30, 2024

## Good Shepherd

Fair Isle and birds surround us  
we made two friends here  
that was enough  
meals were lamb and today caught  
fish from down a cliff near our comforter  
night nest / when we sleep  
I sometimes loop my arm over her back  
turned to me / sometimes she kicks  
when I snore / you might guess  
we're touchy but only when  
it comes to ideas

Saturday, August 31, 2024

## Free Falling

I slept near her  
many nights  
though we never touched  
she came to dislike  
me as much as if  
we were long term lovers  
rubbing out hate

Sunday, September 1, 2024

## **Thank The Lord**

she came to my home territory  
declared it abominable  
harsh and depressing  
cold and uninviting  
later she came to my home  
declared it unspecial  
not interesting  
to think I admired her

Monday, September 2, 2024

## Turn Away

she hated the mountain place too  
hints like that I never got  
I believed them aesthetic facts  
not a comment on my repulsiveness

Tuesday, September 3, 2024

## Down

entertainer / writer / bon vivant  
my partner in speaking  
a serious scientist / everyone respects him  
my trivial flares are taken as his brilliance  
by the audiences who flock to him  
meanwhile I pack up

Wednesday, September 4, 2024

## On My Way To Friends

the water pump in the West  
Newbury Training Field  
lifts the coldest most  
refreshing water I've ever  
tasted / when it's in the 90s  
humid and the bike resists  
I stop to drink / no priming  
needed / perfection



Thursday, September 5, 2024

## Dreams Ago

my father would scream  
sometimes / his dreams  
I never asked about it  
my mother never spoke of it  
only a few times but I  
still can hear it  
a dream of death  
a dream of his continuing life

Friday, September 6, 2024

## Kind of Blue

old style classy jazz  
out of date perhaps  
listening to each player  
tapping / blowing  
plinking / I like  
it because it's like  
wandering through woods  
between rain storms

Saturday, September 7, 2024

## Luck And Strange

moon through nearly unleafed  
trees like fireflies  
under a tarp after a meal of curry  
in a public forest / sneaky  
sultry woman next door  
listening on earbuds  
to David Gilmour jamming  
in a barn / one of these  
means love

Sunday, September 8, 2024

## Flower Circles

dahlias / peonies  
cannas / my mother  
had circles of them  
all over our yard  
every evening in summers  
she'd tour them  
my father and I'd tag  
along / proud of them  
the weather helped

Monday, September 9, 2024

## Practicing

attention and practice  
seeing all hazards  
driving without fault  
am I able / can I see ok  
can I think fast enough  
will enough practice work

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

## Parked

sitting / watching the water  
the river / the wind  
feeling the air / smelling  
cut grass on the air  
remembering and then dozing  
until the time is ripe  
for me to cross the bridge  
head toward home / head  
toward where it once was

Wednesday, September 11, 2024

## Reason / Reasons

sitting / this is the reason  
I travel thousands of miles  
to where home was  
the cemetery too / I sit  
there / sometimes with a beach  
pizza / sitting 100 yards  
from where I was born  
where I recovered from surgeries  
looking down on grandparents  
whose bad histories / sad histories  
still reside in a mist  
sitting for reasons

Thursday, September 12, 2024

## Real vs Mood

songs simpler long ago  
more simply put together  
stronger melodies  
not pure atmosphere  
real instruments are too real  
you need digital ones  
to blur melody to mood



Friday, September 13, 2024

## Whistling In A Darkness

down the street & around the corner  
echoes and reverberations of a melody rich  
whistler / I imagine a backing band  
sidemen of light percussion and a wah-wahed  
guitar / perhaps a mellotron but imagine  
my shocked eyes when the whistler revealed  
herself / and what a blonde / at that point  
a sax joined in / secret seduction

Saturday, September 14, 2024

## Papa Del's

finding my way west  
first to Illinois  
where the simplified  
strangeness and diminished  
danger helped me learn  
some of life / having  
a woman partner righted  
my ever tipping confidence  
her bad decisions were decision  
nevertheless / righting  
those figured as maturity  
and the pizza!

Sunday, September 15, 2024

## Road Work

brambles and sumac  
along our space of road  
sand still odd from oiling  
ant hills spilling  
once I found a stretch  
of coins strewn and lonesome  
maybe a few bucks worth  
since then fear's my game

Monday, September 16, 2024

## Yell

keeping company all winter  
with a woman who dislikes  
you / just one big bed  
a stove burning peat  
huge winds / huge waves  
huge darkness / she never  
relents / you'd think  
they're friends  
from the way they talk  
but there is nothing  
human between them

Tuesday, September 17, 2024

## Guardian Angel

darkness as a state of flux  
suddenly there is no more summer  
coldness too  
I started to accept it  
a long winter on my mind  
I want to be able to be calm  
I thought age brought that  
instead more winters

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

## Why Illinois In Autumn

flat to very horizon  
dusty in autumn as combines  
cut and thresh  
what once took many  
now needs only a complex group  
of machines tied together  
and driven by one man  
but I ride by on my bike  
coming from a day of hacking  
and going to a night of pointless  
dreaming

Thursday, September 19, 2024

## Failed Romance

on a plane ride to NY  
I sat next to a woman  
from Sheepshead Bay  
I rented a car and drove  
her home where her mother  
urged us to date  
I didn't think anything  
of it until now some  
45 years later

Friday, September 20, 2024

## Moon's Pleasure

in the dark we looked for our rental  
the moon rose and a path of light  
arose / following it for no reason  
except the politeness of the moon's  
light we came to our croft  
where we spent the night in the absence  
of desire and understanding



Saturday, September 21, 2024

## Rainy Season Start

rainy season  
gale season  
wind punches our windows  
a salty aftertaste  
tonight the moon is to rise  
full and orange / a harvest moon  
I offer it my apologies  
the rain and wind  
make for a warm bed

Sunday, September 22, 2024

## **Tomorrow**

fear has grabbed me  
for weeks / tomorrow  
I will see what  
will happen

Monday, September 23, 2024

## Reflection

same as two  
years ago  
driving test waived

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

## Mouthway

our stone croft  
the mouthway of the door  
open to autumn wind  
whistling and whirling  
through it and out the chimney  
everything about this  
reminds me of her sighing  
voice calmly not telling  
me why she'll not return

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

## Wind Voices

one day / wind  
in the birches  
deep in autumn  
she told me later  
that sound was the mouth  
mimicry of the season  
speaking to all  
in a voice that flew  
away while time  
drew apart

Thursday, September 26, 2024

## **I'ce Storm**

up north at my place  
a place she hates  
winter drizzle forms  
ice on pines and waits  
with irritation / anger  
disappointment for the snow  
to seal all feelings onto fragile  
branches / she decides to read  
all night

Friday, September 27, 2024

## Wrong Death

bent over / slumped  
low / an upside down  
world where mother  
outlives daughter  
snow hanging on knots  
waits to fall  
wants to fall

Saturday, September 28, 2024

## **Eshanness**

cliffs define distance  
a woman waits by the car  
sheep trample feathers and peat  
I made my way there on invitation  
not a hug / no one better  
to say hello / these boulders  
were thrown here / she gets in the car  
rolls up the window / imagines  
me somewhere else



Sunday, September 29, 2024

## Peatland

so cold that the moss  
covering the peat  
has frozen much as hearts  
do with experience  
to get back home I step  
onto the frost until it's crippled  
and pushed down or away  
what does this have to do with spring

Monday, September 30, 2024

## East Wind

east wind combing  
through her loosened  
hair judging her  
and me / she's stern  
as a willow / trunk  
firm / her thoughts  
scattering

Tuesday, October 1, 2024

## Tarweed

the heat dropped  
from the sky  
blurs the trees  
and grass / tarweed  
in the sun

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

## **After Years**

after our last together  
meal her face out our  
window bashfully slinks  
away under a gale made  
haze hidden moon

Thursday, October 3, 2024

## Windsack

she tried to tell  
me that spring  
saved up wind in a sack  
letting it fly as summer  
approached helping  
the blossoms open  
as the swished in all  
directions

Friday, October 4, 2024

## Special Rain

no special season  
rains heavy as usual  
such a hard constant sound  
on our shared roof  
the blossoms are soured  
as is her mood  
upon my second return

Saturday, October 5, 2024

## Hair Spray

once upon a time  
she'd rub her hair  
against mine  
and I'd mine against hers  
our hair was so hard  
to please then  
now her hair's white  
and thin and mine  
near gone / our love  
?

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Sunday, October 6, 2024

## Loss

time to recalibrate  
I stake my self view  
on externals I don't control  
time to begin ignoring  
them / they ignore me  
seems only fair



Monday, October 7, 2024

## Drifting Geese

lower clouds drift slowly  
upper ones in a fit of layering  
blast past out to a waiting sea  
reminds me of us / and the geese  
who live near

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

## Pointers

sitting with her by the river  
just upriver from Plum Island  
I watched the sailboats  
slowly turn about their anchor  
points from pointing upriver  
to pointing out toward sea  
as the moon worked around  
its daily routine the way  
we used to

Wednesday, October 9, 2024

## Harsh

she wrote me letters  
now burnt on their edges  
her writing like rake marks  
made after reflection  
her letters loose on my desk  
falling or failing  
some wait for a strong wind  
to push them to the river  
where they will indecide

Thursday, October 10, 2024

## **Moon Watch**

slim figure of moon  
tonight we don't sleep  
there's no bedtime  
we will watch the white  
star band swivel in the night  
far from firelight and moonlight

Friday, October 11, 2024

## **Moon Sawn**

gazing out the window  
looking through our twined  
feet at the near end  
of a sawn log still white  
before the sap's yellowing  
behind it the moon coming  
up / so cozy yet unlikely

Saturday, October 12, 2024

## Peak Snow

readying to write  
pen in a holder  
ink in an inkwell  
sheets of good paper  
piled at the edge  
of her special desk  
facing west in a storm  
in the morning  
the peak was snow covered  
the sheets torn to bits  
except one with her last  
note to me

Sunday, October 13, 2024

## Rising

smoke from tea leaves  
burning in the hearth  
the sky responds by dropping  
rain which turns to snow  
which mixes with the tea  
smoke forming signals  
and signs fanned by the pages  
of the book she reads  
or did she write it

Monday, October 14, 2024

(E)

in my darkened listening room  
with speakers my father made  
I listen to classical on a reel  
to reel tape player recorded  
I imagine to high standards  
for the time / but aside  
from the music and the sound  
of it what I attend to is the tape  
slowly unwinding here and rewinding  
there / the motion



Tuesday, October 15, 2024

## Cousins

the cousin who worried  
she said  
that she had lost me  
has never called  
or written or emailed  
since she found out  
I didn't owe her money

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

## Less Like Love

when she first arrived  
she surveyed the rocks  
beneath a dynamite cliff  
above the sea / after a year  
she gazed into the rocky depth  
the cliff presented above  
the sea / after another year  
she saw the rocks / the cliff  
the sea

Thursday, October 17, 2024

## Nakedless

just out of the shower  
she's all there  
a long time ago  
she'd take advantage  
a long time ago  
my eyebrows would rise  
it's not that she's not  
alluring but that every option's  
been explored and now  
what we think matters more

Friday, October 18, 2024

## Greaterness

the mountain ahead of us  
it's too hard for us to climb now  
age and reticence in the way  
many times though we'd done it  
in each of our pasts  
we loved the climb and each other  
sometimes too / we thought  
this all was great and so did  
the great books

Saturday, October 19, 2024

## Art of All

she liked nice things  
as defined by her refined  
ideas of beauty and grace  
food and houses especially  
the only houses she liked  
were hundreds of years old  
and built on stone streets  
not one inch straight  
food had to be cooked  
roughly and by older women  
if she liked nice things  
do you think she liked me

Sunday, October 20, 2024

## Docking Time

there is an old dock  
I like in a lake  
near my old place  
and I'd like walking  
out to its end  
and watching water  
be water and wind  
and waves be waves  
and wind but now  
the planks that make  
up the dock have rotted  
and caved in and my favorite  
thing now is to admire time

Monday, October 21, 2024

## **LA Ever**

tired as hell  
from driving bad roads  
tomorrow to LA  
and my final talk  
ever

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

## Water Log

looking past her  
toward the narrow  
strait from this island  
to that / boats passing  
creasing the water  
which jumps at the dock  
boats heading to find  
food for us all  
boats taking people  
away or could it be  
here



Wednesday, October 23, 2024

## Prescott to Seligman

one day under the hottest sun  
in Arizona a woman so soft  
and kind was placed by a tree  
and a stone lifted there  
everyones' tears were the lone  
wet points / later her sons  
put a fence around her

a hundred years later I came  
by / down a dirt road to a path  
past a dead cow and rain dug  
tracks to the fence fallen down  
her name worn away and her headstone  
ready to topple / who was she  
does no one still love her  
I guess I will

Thursday, October 24, 2024

## **AI: Winter of Our Discontent**

talk today  
not a disaster  
but I felt lousy  
some said they liked it  
only my opinion matters  
to me

Friday, October 25, 2024

## Home Afraid

to drive home  
leaving here  
to go to an unhappy  
place though welcome  
is hard / wife and place  
just ducky / mother-in-law  
is difficult

Saturday, October 26, 2024

## Temporary Paint

the place I live  
has a thick wall  
covered in peeling paint  
uncovering a palette  
of pastels and sitting  
by my low table the voice  
on the other end of my mobile  
is telling me she's done  
at first her face was on  
my screen but she video  
muted it or is it blinded it  
maybe we can dance again  
one day when I get back  
and she stumbles onto me again

Sunday, October 27, 2024

## Rhythm Café

the best dinner  
I had with her  
was in Merrimac  
in a former bank  
near the Square  
run by women  
featuring heavy  
meals with heavy  
sauces / poor  
ventilation and so  
in November our meal  
was steamy in a corner  
that's the last  
time we were  
friends

Monday, October 28, 2024

## Princess

princess pines  
Decembers I'd  
pick bags full  
my mother used  
circled coat  
hangers and baling  
string / we called  
it wire / to secure  
the stems of several  
at a time in a circular  
formation to create  
the floofiest Christmas  
wreaths in all of Christendom

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

## Waster

when time's up  
it will turn out  
I slept through  
most of my life  
playing instead  
of accomplishing  
what a sad day  
I'll have for  
my last one

Wednesday, October 30, 2024

## Riverside

I'd sit by the river  
until the darkness  
was absolute  
I'd listen carefully  
to the stillest wind  
I'd offer to sniff  
everything green  
or flowering  
if only the people  
who knew me would promise  
to stand out of sight  
until that darkness



Thursday, October 31, 2024

75

slow day after  
74 years  
I wonder how  
time will unfold  
quiet day  
silent day  
alone day

Friday, November 1, 2024

## Hold On Tight

I sat in her darkened room  
looking out to a narrow bricked  
street watching local rain  
making slender puddles in the cracks  
upstairs in her warming bed  
she pulled the covers over her head  
to avoid the sound of rain  
and memories of me

Saturday, November 2, 2024

## Ely NV

on the walls mounted  
heads and antlers  
she ordered the lamb  
and I a random pizza  
we both had a savory broth  
and chunks of cake for desert  
when we left I held her hand  
as she crossed a patch of ice  
the best sex we ever had

Sunday, November 3, 2024

## **Effection**

it was funny how  
when we were waiting  
in Aberdeen for our flight  
to Amsterdam she put her head  
on my shoulder as a woman  
might do to express affection  
but she had another reason  
I don't know what it was

Monday, November 4, 2024

## Dead Of Night

when she fell asleep  
I pulled out a book  
she had written and read  
it until dawn when she  
woke up and made me  
recite the parts I  
loved

Tuesday, November 5, 2024

## Islands

we loved some islands  
we loved the rides and talks  
we were with each other day  
after day / yet we didn't  
love each other or at least  
she didn't

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

## **Worst Day**

to learn your country  
doesn't deserve your  
respect and to learn  
it so near the end  
of your life

Thursday, November 7, 2024

## **Distorted States of America**

the country will drift  
downhill and people  
who need help will receive  
scorn / a country once  
almost moving slowly  
toward civilization  
will fall quickly  
back to ignorance  
and anger



Friday, November 8, 2024

## Herring Girls

she is standing off  
by herself in the cold  
of the North Sea  
washing her dress  
with the other women  
after working herring  
but unlike them  
her shape is the source  
of life in the human  
world

Saturday, November 9, 2024

## CSN&Y

in 1969 folks loved  
folk music thinking  
doing that made  
them cool to women  
and the hip and good  
harmony showed you  
cared about your  
fellow musician  
the more the merrier

Sunday, November 10, 2024

## Homemade Speakers

in a dark room  
in a cold room  
I listened to music  
as if obsessed  
repeating songs  
for hours / sometimes  
holding and cherishing  
photos of girls  
I wanted to love  
but as night taught  
things got only colder

Monday, November 11, 2024

## **Brazil Nuts For Fun**

Thanksgiving always in South Boston  
two rooms and a small bedroom  
a large closet / toilet outside  
the door at the top of the staircase  
third floor / I was bored  
moving room to room / dozing  
on Boston Nana's bed / watching  
last minute cooking / listening  
to uninspired talk / my mother too  
bored while my father and his mother  
spoke Lithuanian / I found the stuffed  
hawk in the closet / it was  
not enough

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

## **A Love Like This**

a rain like no other  
dropping its small hammers  
in a rush on our metal roof  
and after the news of the decay  
of our homes we want to hug  
and hold but that would mean  
tears would join drops  
and all of it would just flow  
down to the voe and out to sea  
I lit a fire and hoped for warming

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

## What The Heart Wants

I want to live where  
night rules the day  
where darkness falls  
more than light / where  
rain is the norm and clouds  
blank the sun / melancholy  
and sadness make the sun  
go down and stay down

Thursday, November 14, 2024

## Replaced

the trees and woods I  
wandered as a boy  
have been cut down  
replaced by a field  
there are lots of ways  
to cry over this

Friday, November 15, 2024

## Cold

what happened today  
decades ago made me  
do what I am doing  
right now / typing  
this



Saturday, November 16, 2024

## Death Stairs

the alleys are narrow  
with steep stairs  
the only railings  
are the stone house  
outside walls  
I made my way up them  
every evening  
to a narrow bed shared  
with an unenthusiastic woman  
and every morning she  
and I would come down

Sunday, November 17, 2024

## More Enough

snow reaching above window  
level / almost to roof line  
still snowing but sounds  
are hushed and the snow packing  
keeps a lid on the cold  
we've enough food for weeks  
of this / enough books  
for years / and if we run  
out of things to read  
we will write more

Monday, November 18, 2024

## Above Powell

into a short evening  
we watched a movie  
streamed on my laptop  
in a hotel in Page Arizona  
you'd think this would be  
prelude but it was a completion  
we were too little / meant  
too little / and it was too late

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

## Manly Lines

some prose is tough  
as a manic man  
laced with jerky words  
so that even a woman  
with subtle but plentiful  
small freckles goes  
unnoticed

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

## Overlook

I showed her some trees  
I climbed when young  
oh sixty years ago  
as much as they meant to me  
was how little they meant  
to her / etc

Thursday, November 21, 2024

## **Snow Likes Her**

a lot of snow  
roads plowed  
after a long while  
meanwhile we wait  
by pot belly stoves  
using up our dried  
quartered wood  
piled under a lean-to  
by the side door  
the woman with me's  
upstairs under down  
quilts and wool blankets  
even such a storm  
can't fix things

Friday, November 22, 2024

## Stay

she stood on the plot  
we had up in Tamworth  
the place where I loved  
for the first time  
and she told me the place  
was horrible / terrible  
how could I tell her  
I loved it all the same

Saturday, November 23, 2024

## Guitar Player

he stood there alone  
on what could be called  
a stage and played soft  
guitar / a song of harsh  
sadness / we listened  
we sat / we mourned when  
we learned he died  
just days after  
the notes still reverbing  
into & through the room  
—all



Sunday, November 24, 2024

## Mid November In The North

the moon's a big factor  
strumming the tops  
of small wind waves  
across the strait  
distant lights signaling  
the actions of men  
in our croft we wait  
as always for the wind  
to drift off and one by one  
we'll drift off and then  
away

Monday, November 25, 2024

## Jeff Hoyt

he told me about my grandmother  
my grandfather and was stunned  
that his father proposed  
to my mother / just died  
the other day and all chances  
to find out more gone  
only four years older than me

Tuesday, November 26, 2024

## Her Law

she could never  
believe junky stuff  
has meaning so she  
deprived me of mine  
low class and lower  
a lesson I suppose  
I was required  
to master / never  
did

Wednesday, November 27, 2024

## Interweaving

sparse music delivered  
with clarity and resolution  
who knew perfection  
was in the hands and fingers  
of old guitar players  
and jazz drummers  
outside storminess  
and wailing winds  
clublike rain against glass  
the pulses of perfection  
against one tide of nature  
and she hits the sack

Thursday, November 28, 2024

## Having Fun

playing every week  
you'd think I'd be better  
other players watching  
us play thought I carried  
the band / it was how bad  
they were that made this true

Friday, November 29, 2024

## And Not A Photo

I wish I could go  
back and listen  
to this music as it sounds  
now but in the rooms  
where I lived as a kid  
so my melancholy  
would be based on a clear  
understanding of the deepness  
of sadness

Saturday, November 30, 2024

## Lineman Songs

sad songs go with the flat lands  
in the middle of my country  
Kansas / Nebraska / maybe Iowa  
because the views are long  
and hiding is an inner experience  
when the sun is killing you  
the burden of relentlessness  
demands a still running river  
surrounded by cottonwoods  
sadness is a lack of options

Sunday, December 1, 2024

## After Time

after years away  
I went home / the grass  
outside my mother's window  
was brown / dried by autumn's  
mastery / her hair was tainted  
white and her eyes set in creases  
days later I needed to depart  
she filled my hands with a treasure  
box locked with a wispy key  
never open it she said  
years again later on hearing  
of her death I passed the key  
into the lock / shadowy smoke rose  
out of a brooding emptiness



Monday, December 2, 2024

## Springing

coming across a foreign  
field of grass or grain  
after a week of dulling  
travel I stopped  
under a tree / on a stone  
wall / when a woman  
dressed in all colors  
came by I asked her first  
the name of these greenleafed  
grasses gesturing in the wind  
then I asked

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

## Explanation

I sat in the square  
all day / not speaking  
nothing to eat or drink  
I watched the women  
come and go / I watched  
the river come and go  
come and go / life

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

## Near An Ice Cream Shop

watching a child  
sitting on cobbles  
in a blocked off  
lane / sobs / something  
about the end of Spring darkens  
her sadness

Thursday, December 5, 2024

## Boxed

first tonight was a drizzle-filled  
sky welcomed by the dry everywhere  
later the harvest moon's floodtide  
surged up to our unwelcoming front  
door marking the start of our love

Friday, December 6, 2024

## Revised

why when they restored  
Notre Dame did they update  
some of it / everyone in history  
revises everything they touch  
no one can avoid it / my friend  
called it pissing eg on the code

Saturday, December 7, 2024

## **KnottGPT and Me**

a full moon pinned to the sky  
shape like an empty bed  
glass windows rejected close moments  
behind each mirror streets whispered  
of dust and echoes remained  
what we could not wake nor bear  
left

Sunday, December 8, 2024

## **Bad Morning**

hard to know how little  
love remains as age claims  
the last bursts of envy  
the lovers part while  
one wants and the other waits

Monday, December 9, 2024

## **Ever River**

what a wonder  
that the river  
continues to flow  
decade after decade  
even in rain lean years  
water comes from everywhere



Tuesday, December 10, 2024

## For Her

she asked me to fetch  
a bucket of water  
from our deep hand-pump well  
cold water and a bit hard  
bitter too is the cool air  
coming down the hill I  
climb / my bucket half  
filled with water is half  
filled with some of this cool  
air

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

## Hillsiders

we live among hills  
between us and the sea  
between us and everyone else  
the town's near but over  
a rise / near its square  
a church uses its bells  
each evening and noon  
but we've learned  
to not hear it / wrong  
reminder

Thursday, December 12, 2024

## Contrasts

looking down on a widened  
city at night from my arriving  
plane / the blue hour  
with yellow lights / cars  
white coming / red going  
big / crowded / lonely

Friday, December 13, 2024

## Voe Says

walking past rocks  
past stones and walls  
made of them / when wet  
they form jewels in the sun  
but we struggle while wind  
celebrates / in my head  
complicated songs unfold  
and the tune of the stream  
filtering by us invites  
us to bed under a warmth

Saturday, December 14, 2024

## Brush Sizes Up

facing the empty canvas  
my brush draws up paint  
inspired by the ice melt  
starting to flow to sea

Sunday, December 15, 2024

## Icefish

for fun / for practice  
I set up by the river  
and pulled out icefish  
piled them by a fire  
I made from shaved tree  
meat curls / after it hailed  
I cooked them up and ate  
while a nearby crow  
headed to the town market  
figure the connections

Monday, December 16, 2024

## Back To The World

when I last saw her  
she was on the pier  
looking toward Bressay  
her back toward Lerwick  
the wind behind her billowed  
her coat and flung her hair  
toward the reach of water  
I wondered / was her back  
also to the world

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

## Anyhow

one day something  
will happen to the very  
all of us one by one  
anyhow / somehow  
snow alights on leaves  
preparing to become  
left



Wednesday, December 18, 2024

## **Funny Love**

I took her to the north  
end of Hampton Beach  
my foot in a cast  
after dark I asked her  
later when I sat on my mother's  
bed end I told her we were marrying  
she said something like tell  
me something I don't know

Thursday, December 19, 2024

## Sway

bare trees loaded / branches  
gripped by ice / snow  
they crave it / nearby fields  
a man tills forward / back  
mows back / ahead / craving  
the last chill to grip his arms  
his remembering / his last self

Friday, December 20, 2024

## Cooling Freshness

a cooling freshness  
arriving minutes  
before the relent  
attributed to the end  
of autumn / start  
of replenishment

Saturday, December 21, 2024

## Stone Seat

up on Chocorua  
spacing out on the view  
of roads and lakes  
the coolness late  
in the day seeps  
into the granite  
seeps into me

Sunday, December 22, 2024

## Austin 1984

I drove her to my motel  
all that she ever wanted  
I granted / she was a surprise  
when I called for my car  
to drive her back I told  
the valet to not say  
a single word / the next  
day was wiped

Monday, December 23, 2024

## Fountain of Age

what's nice about Merrimac  
and all the towns around it  
is the hidden monuments  
statues / water fountains  
guarded by goldenrod and milkweed  
until the day / the time  
you stumble on them and it's like  
the people who made them  
can step out / say hi

Tuesday, December 24, 2024

## 1960s Christmases

we favored simple blue lights  
for Christmas in our window  
no one drives by / we were so far  
out / a tree not visible  
from the road / wreaths  
made from princess pine  
strung around a rounded  
coat hanger held with baling  
wire / we called it  
Boston Nana and Mike  
came up / we played cards  
maybe toboggan rides  
up on Hoyt's high hill  
nothing much / nothing special  
not for me

Wednesday, December 25, 2024

## Lerwick

checking morning smear  
over the strait / tall ships  
highlighting the blue scene  
lights like flares on sprinkled  
windowpanes / cars caught  
stationary under the light  
reminds me of a woman  
who chose everything else



Thursday, December 26, 2024

## Underlying Truth

there's always a way  
to remember the life  
that makes you into the hero  
and a way that shows you weak  
neither is the truth but who  
ever cared about that / which  
is the better story / it's never  
obvious which it is or should be  
but I'm guessing it's the one  
with prettier sentences

Friday, December 27, 2024

## Melancholy & Holy

life's a sequence  
of injuries and pains  
in the end everyone  
is their scars piled  
on each other / why  
sadness is the most  
popular sort of song

Saturday, December 28, 2024

## Lone & Love

called an elder  
I turned away  
from spotlights  
away from questions  
even when my works  
are called exquisite  
I turn away still  
long past I'd sit  
in a dark cold room  
listening to music  
on repeat / these days  
I repeat again

Sunday, December 29, 2024

## Enclave Living

what would happen  
if a husband and wife  
become father and mother  
didn't bother their only child  
with the idea and practice  
of love / how would that boy  
approach his own wife / his  
own children / and what if  
that experiment was conducted  
on you

Monday, December 30, 2024

## Hello Goodbye

here's that song I played  
two caveats / "an' knew  
for the rides" is almost certainly wrong  
but the closest I can get  
"a new horizon" makes more sense  
but doesn't sound like that  
one of you can figure it out

the chord F#m aug3 is the notes B C# F#  
but is not right  
maybe one of you can figure  
out what it really is

Tuesday, December 31, 2024

## Grow

in Paris I found a way  
to eat oysters and never  
sleep / I learned the plan  
that makes a dull woman superb  
I found out how cities  
clean shit out from under our feet  
in Paris I saw that quality  
weighed more than a pile of cash  
not to mention the paintings