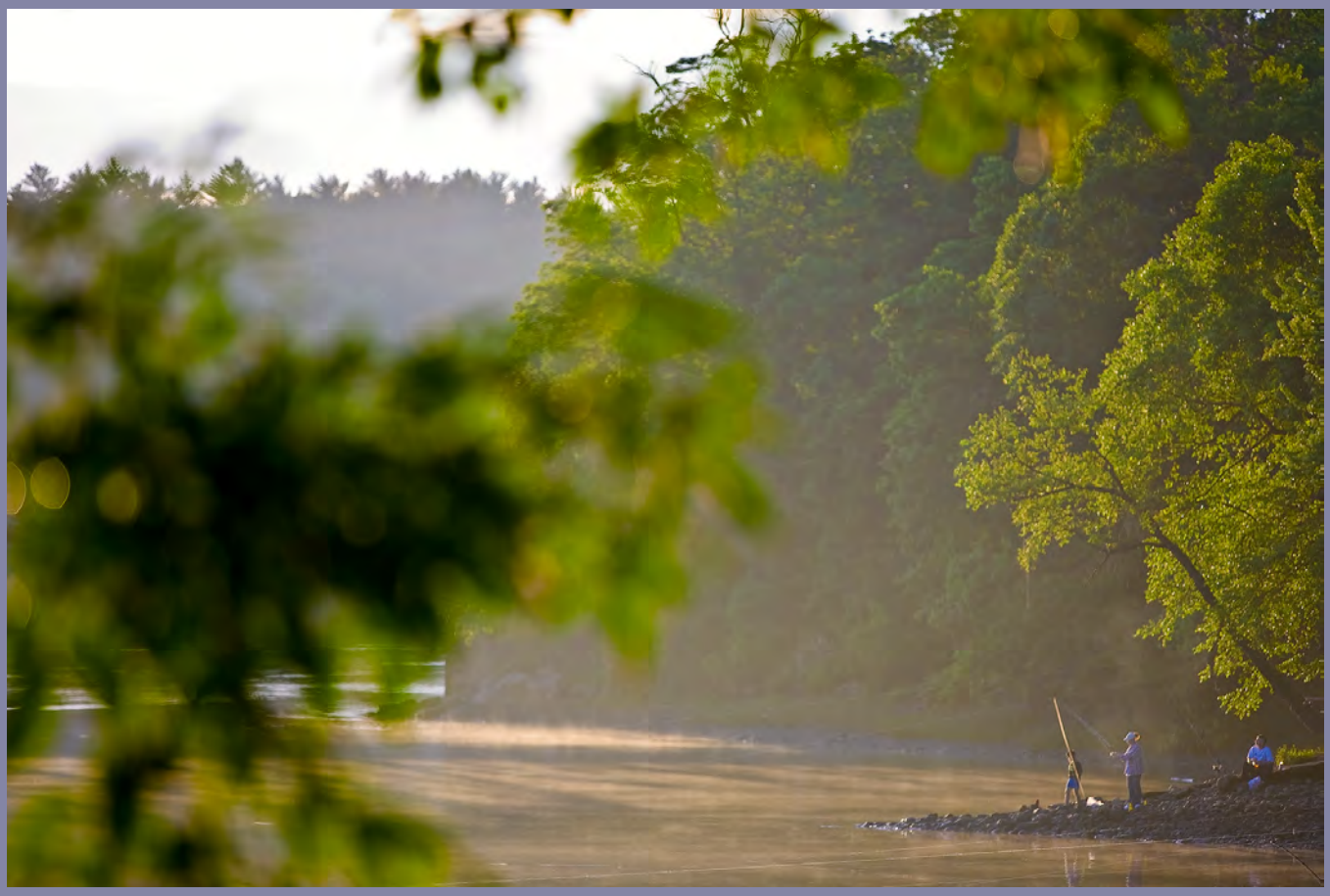
Collected Poems

1995–2025



Richard P. Gabriel

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Leaf of My Puzzled Desire

A Collection of Poems

by

Richard P. Gabriel

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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.

6

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.

7

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.

8

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.

9

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.

10

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.

11

Laid Low in the Cimitèro 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 Cimitèro 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.

12

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.

13

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?

14

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.

15

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.

16

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 riffled feathers softening the clip of swifting
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.

17

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.

18

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?

19

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?

20

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.

21

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 thrue the chest.
Brady he droped 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.

22

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 spreckled toad all make
their preparations under the smoketree

23

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.

24

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.

26

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.

27

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.

28

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.

29

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.

30

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.

31

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.

32

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 . . . .

33

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.

34

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.

35

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.

36

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
thumbs 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.

37

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

38

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.

39

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.

41

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.

42

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.

43

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.

44

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.

45

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 winnitude 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.

46

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.

47

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.

48

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.

49

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

50

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.

51

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

52

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.

53

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?

54

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

55

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.

56

In the field, one by one, the butterflies drop
to a bare spot where they watch the sky fold to firey 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.

57

Donate Here

Poverty Poems 2008
written at Squaw Valley

Richard P. Gabriel

A jam / disjoint in time / with William T. Vollman's *Poor People*

Contents

Deformity 1
Pain 2
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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 necessaries 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

March 22, 2000

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.

March 24, 2000

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.

March 25, 2000

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 imaginationary
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.

March 27, 2000

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.

March 29, 2000

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 cluttering 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.

March 30, 2000

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.

March 30, 2000

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 pourge 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 pourge
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?

April 16, 2000

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?

April 23, 2000

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.

April 25, 2000

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 here'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.

April 29, 2000

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.

May 3, 2000

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 peri.od 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 its' 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.

May 20, 2000

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.

May 22, 2000

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.

June 7, 2000

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.

June 9, 2000

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 arrangments

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 peleton.
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.

June 16, 2000

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 then 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 deepthroated 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?

June 24, 2000

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.

June 25, 2000

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.

June 26, 2000

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 encarped 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 phoneline
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 backwarad 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 tbe 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 slavver 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 happend 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 metapohorically:
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 cephalapods—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.

July 25, 2000

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
steelwooleded 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.

August 8, 2000

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 crotchy 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 chminey 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.

August 16, 2000

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.

August 18, 2000

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.

August 22, 2000

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.

August 23, 2000

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 subjectis 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 resonation 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 fixingthe 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 riverI 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

October 3, 2000

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.

October 6, 2000

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 ⅓ 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 darkenend
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 scrabble
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 squirrelly 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.

November 22, 2000

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.

December 2, 2000

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
singed 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.)

December 13, 2000

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.

December 15, 2000

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

December 17, 2000

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.

December 30, 2000

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 camerman
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 stilettoes
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 kegged 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.

February 9, 2001

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 lavendar 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.

February 17, 2001

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....

...belie 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 shows 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. Rumblings 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.

March 9, 2001

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.

March 10, 2001

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 overworn 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
throngs 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.

March 14, 2001

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.

March 17, 2001

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.

March 19, 2001

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.

March 23, 2001

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

March 28, 2001

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

March 29, 2001

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.

April 4, 2001

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 winterness 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

April 30, 2001

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, gutteral, 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

May 14, 2001

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.

May 16, 2001

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.

May 22, 2001

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 possibilties
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.

May 25, 2001

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
unharmed 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.

May 30, 2001

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 parisols
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 they 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

June 25, 2001

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

Writhen

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

June 30, 2001

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
overflood 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
destructress
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

July 14, 2001

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 knowling 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...

July 20, 2001

World of Gaps

the stangest 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 purpose 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 unsupposable;
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 fours 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 bats
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.

August 13, 2001

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

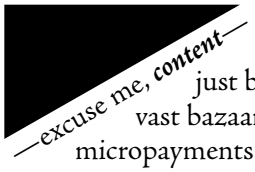
bruisemark left by God
reminder of who we are punctuated
in the interval between fireworks
lightning in the counter-
beat gravestones as if hammered
in by a great stonemason
marking the spots
where life becomes light

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'versations
mediation screen this worms often off
workers who about their own voices not impressing
enablinguage 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 exercies

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 kneeeeeeees

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.

October 10, 2001

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 theirs 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 silhouetters,
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 it 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 cutable
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

October 30, 2001

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 boilt 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.

November 9, 2001

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.

November 24, 2001

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."

November 25, 2001

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?

December 5, 2001

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 it 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.

December 28, 2001

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
privvy 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
nonatomically, so I'm not

certain all nerves can
fire at once.

Stra...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.

February 4, 2002

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 brittled 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
Bikinied 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 volemice 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 Sebastion
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
s 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

Writteness

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

March 19, 2002

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

March 21, 2002

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 lavendar of men
too silent
for better luck

March 22, 2002

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.

March 25, 2002

Atrophy on a String Harp

Lunch in a funny setting
odd dishes and their contents
atrocity 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 coördinated
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.

March 28, 2002

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?

March 31, 2002

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?

April 1, 2002

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.

April 16, 2002

Torchlights

All so tiring
that the strings have broken
and the white-haired trees carrying
the torch of bright lights behind them
launch an attach
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

April 22, 2002

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.

April 27, 2002

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 an 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 Thats

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 excitation.

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.

May 19, 2002

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 fingerpaints 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.

June 2, 2002

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 wouln'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

June 5, 2002

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

June 6, 2002

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?

June 7, 2002

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?

June 14, 2002

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 prows 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—

July 7, 2002

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 Philippinos 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 otherwordly
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.

August 12, 2002

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.

August 14, 2002

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

August 20, 2002

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 few 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 husbans 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 husbans i got hold of it it was thick
my husbans 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

ڊ

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 crumbing 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
peeved 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

November 4, 2002

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

Spring Sun

watch the people filing along

some stare straight ahead as if afraid of the sides
some turn their heads look up watch their running feet
some hold hands drop them and wander away

some stumble on the road that is rocky at once
                other times velvet sand ground by passing feet
some fade and disappear under a gray lowering sky
                unwilling to shelter or warm
near the front in the direction they go
some slow as those around weigh heavy in their memories

nowhere else they pause to speak of the past
                the finite the stories that once

I have spoken stories such stories as these

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

December 4, 2002

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

Pink Dress in Avondale Estates, Georgia

I asked her out at the diner
just coffee up the street after she got off
she was wearing a pink dress
with a small white apron
a notebook in her left hand and a stubby pencil in her right

I was ordering grits with eggs
over hard and ham she had been I think
head cheerleader in high school
and spent then till now in this pink dress
and white apron

later up north she came to my apartment
with a downtown view it was snowing
that night and my CD was stuck on repeat
she looked at me in the dark by the window
then stood and stripped off her skirt
and the outline of her disappeared from the city
prone on my bed she dozed while I loved her

I leave you to suppose what you will
but choose the music carefully
for it must repeat

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 rhealogical 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 rrrrrrrrs
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 givaway 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

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
squirming 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 aperhaps
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 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

Accustomed To It

human remains have been found
fallen from the sky after an impossible

beauty beyond recognition

the sole of a boot
a metal sole
of a right boot

men on hands and knees staring down
at what it could be
behind them a canister vents yellow gas

the sickened strip and are cleansed
probed with instruments meaning
the wrong thing

we found fear falling down
but most of it burned up
all that's left is a vapor of apprehension
and even that's blowing away

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

February 4, 2003

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

February 7, 2003

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

February 14, 2003

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 uncareful 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

March 8, 2003

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
$\lim_{time \to \infty} ink \to 0$

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

March 12, 2003

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

March 13, 2003

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-smoothened 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

Pìiku†

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

March 20, 2003

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

March 21, 2003

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

March 22, 2003

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 to 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 overghrown 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 stiches 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 out 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 helloes
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 Amee 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 enrapted
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 them 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

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

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 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 behnd 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

May 6, 2003

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 lichened 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 Monotonotonotonotonotonotonotony

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 propostion 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

For Wally

I'm aligned with the idea
of making new which requires
an amalgamation of rich incohesion
and poor judgment the intelligent are now

excused take analysis
which is merely tossing
into buckets and they came up
with the buckets by tossing
them into others

others call this
the reason that makes us happy
or unhappy

I've read list poems that go on
one item too many
I'm sick of warm bread fruit and cats
I know she lost her man suddenly
but make us scared

let's get those dangling down things
moving again

A Damned Insurance Man—And An Old-Lady Poet

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 freezeframe not
the film that continues on

The Guitar Man is Always Ready Over There in the Corner

the nightbird sings his pretty song
mosquitoes find their ways to mammalian blood
she has closed the screen and unplugged the TV and
its antenna to protect her from the storm
she thinks she sees
in the flickering TV light of the house across
the street

she's had her candy and cookies
checked the doors one more time
through the unsweet pain of her knees collapsing
outwards

  she has her pan by the bed in case
? ?
  a towel some extra kleenex in case

the toilet is starting to leak
—that's ok—
because tonight she will bleed to death
starting while sitting on the toilet

all because I would not check up on her
too afraid that this was the way she would die

play it for me

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

July 21, 2003

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

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

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—

August 16, 2003

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

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 Phyzz

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 tatooed 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 snapshut
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 unworldy 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 forhead!

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

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 from 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 embarassing 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 nightime 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

November 11, 2003

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 agro-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 synomyms 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 tensionned sex

tomales bay sighs its breathing tides
in and out quenching the breathable thirst
of oysters and fishllike 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 abandoneed
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

December 22, 2003

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

somwhere 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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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 magzine 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

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 stilletto 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 ±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 familarity
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 forgot
them and ourselves too
and what even living might mean
to those who have forgotten it

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

February 14, 2004

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

February 28, 2004

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

March 2, 2004

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

March 3, 2004

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

March 4, 2004

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

March 8, 2004

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 eys 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

March 21, 2004

(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

March 23, 2004

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

March 29, 2004

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

April 2, 2004

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

April 3, 2004

Without

the force of light
is the falseness of clarity
dark is among the prophets
and trash cans
a lurker among the least
coexisters 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

April 4, 2004

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 Férdinand 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 bigrigs

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 permision
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 unconciously 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
perserverance 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 blamed 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

May 23, 2004

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 andI'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 hearrt
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

June 3, 2004

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

June 8, 2004

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 then
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 homless 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

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

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 amd 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 elipse 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. Chiristmas 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 idenity 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 quandary 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 MERCHANTIBILITY 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.

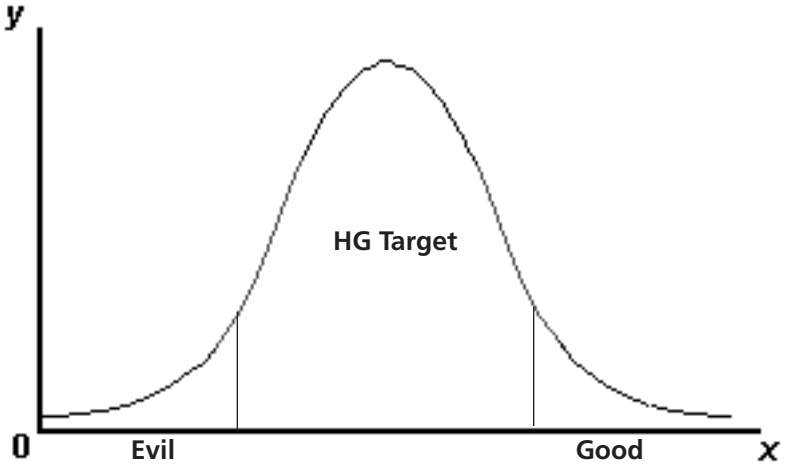
he needs a challenge
so those predisposed to evil are left to God
and childish ideas

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



Our Sweet Spot

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

July 25, 2004

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

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

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

July 31, 2004

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 cafeinated 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

August 9, 2004

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

August 14, 2004

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 glassses
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

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.

Futureoenté

one day the line
in the sand will split
the world

with sand on one side
and more sand
on the other

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 ther 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

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 Boogsie

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 begining 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

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

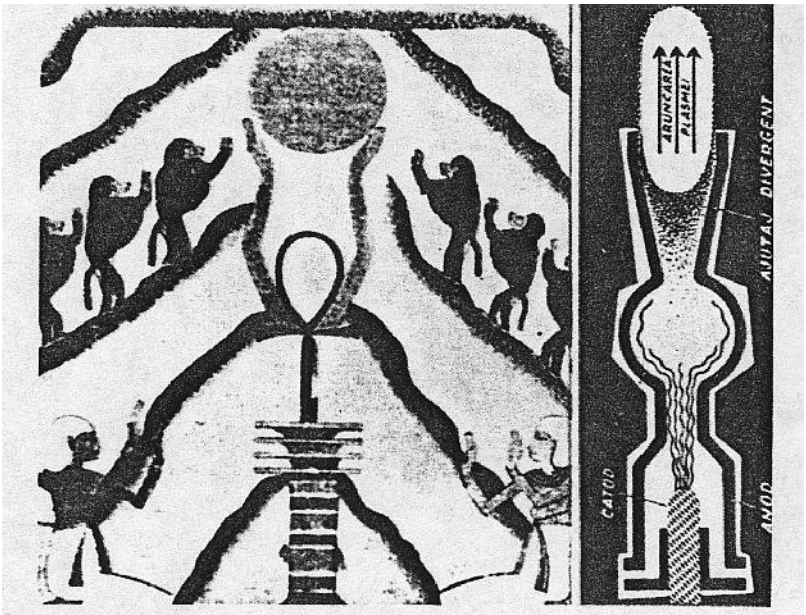
it's New Year's Eve
we're eating our way through town
the obento is a boxed meal
Gods who bring about sin pollution and disaster
in other words all evil
no doctrine inside the precincts
of the Christian Church is received
with greater reserve and hesitation
my parachute opened with some twists in the 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 docen 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

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 entreé
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

November 2, 2004

Election Night

among what it takes
swamping and wishing
tonight hell holds the trumps
its name will rule us

November 3, 2004

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

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

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 flay 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; Imbroglio

...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 imbroglio (berate beat)
Texas size imbroglio of murder
an abyssal imbroglio 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 doing's
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 nartual 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

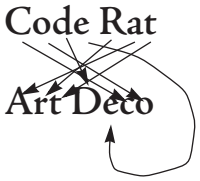
refined design
elegant lifestyle
modern technologies

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



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 ricochetting 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

1787

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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

January 9, 2005

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 closest 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'j'an
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 footware
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

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 flourescent 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
mu hands are on a leather wallet
that she finds irresistable
that said I pay

February 12, 2005

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 silouette 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

February 28, 2005

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

Unsavory

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

March 10, 2005

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

March 12, 2005

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?

March 19, 2005

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

March 20, 2005

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

March 23, 2005

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
loneleness 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

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!

April 2, 2005

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 otherwordly
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

April 12, 2005

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 gullys
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

everthing 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

April 22, 2005

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

April 23, 2005

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

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 miunderstandings
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

May 12, 2005

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

May 17, 2005

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

May 20, 2005

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

May 22, 2005

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

May 23, 2005

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

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

June 2, 2005

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 sunsetting 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 ampfliers 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

June 20, 2005

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

June 22, 2005

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

June 30, 2005

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 cleverestest 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 betweeen 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

July 12, 2005

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

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

July 17, 2005

It Is Empty Always

dark around Boston
even the lightest days fell short
of clear and the winters
and low unuplifted 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

July 18, 2005

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
intenses up or until one of us
looks down

July 22, 2005

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'shanters 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

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 dowpoured 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

August 2, 2005

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

August 3, 2005

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

August 8, 2005

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

August 9, 2005

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 and 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?

Life Does Not Go On

cops shows and csi
show the '60's was rigjht
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

August 21, 2005

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

Desparate 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 claity 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
vanaishes 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
patting 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 thnk

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

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 Gleeful 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

ʔ

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

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

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 desireable

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 eovcative 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 unaccceptable
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 adn 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 / roilling thinking / tossing
then the narcotic dictation of hormonal migration
to ... almost said normal
but I meant sleep or maybe daylight

Cheeselist

taleggio / 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 coton
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 againt 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

2162

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Café Jitters in the Presence of Beauty

the prospect of expresso
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 expresso 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 expresso
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

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

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

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 uncompelling
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 Limps 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 l

like furrows deep
in the brow ideas can leave
behind harrowing depths
one wonders what relations
exist between this and reverb

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

February 16, 2006

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 made
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

March 3, *2006*

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

March 4, *2006*

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

March 13, *2006*

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

San Antonio Dreamin'

being a little stupid
makes you smarter
just ask someone
who doesn't know

March 16, 2006

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

March 20, 2006

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

March 23, *2006*

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

March 26, 2006

Draining

pain is lively
it starts before exhaustion
it ends with breath
for now let's sit
and measure out breaths

March 27, 2006

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

March 29, 2006

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

April 3, 2006

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

April 4, 2006

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

April 8, 2006

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

April 9, 2006

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

April 12, *2006*

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
tailights 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

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 D59–87 / + 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

May 21, *2006*

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

May 26, 2006

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

May 31, *2006*

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

June 8, 2006

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

June 10, 2006

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 poising
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

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

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

July 29, 2006

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

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

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

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

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

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 gyroscopics
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

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

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

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

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

November 8, 2006

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

do go gentle into that good night
rage against the blaze of ending
learn too late that the message
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embrace rest
seize cramp and seizure
wise good wild or grave
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rage against the ending blaze
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of self is the paling of self

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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 / 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
cold 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 bridgwork 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 ↔ 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 pulls 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 blands
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
leaden 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 sharpedged 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 greeen
10:45 omagah: XD
10:45 ppg: NEON!
10:45 omagah: =O
10:45 ppg: i dont hear ghetto music.
10:45 ppg: -hmph-
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 shoobeedoo: 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 am 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 streelights 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

The Quicksort Solution

there is an angle that needs to be taken sometimes
the way of writing that hangs like a noose
as soon as the light turns right the best way to write
is to partition the words into the good ones and bad
the key is to choose a pivot word that divides them all
the bad are then the ones you favor less than the pivot
and the good are for poetry you see

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 waggling

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 disillusions
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 vowells
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

Dereliction

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 out 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 fetuccini
and in the middle of it all
a fire across the street
and the big horn calling the volunteers
then the crème brulée
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 knowledgey 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
nightime 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 wory about our legacy
it's just the future looking at the past
how abstract

Frustrated with Beauty

when you look at the paintings
close / like from 6"
the brushstrokes look random
like chaos / like vague
tongue
lickings I guess
planning it seems is overrated
when you step back from chaos
—say about 6' away—
it turns into beauty

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 agreeement
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 neeeded
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 laze 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 world
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 undergound

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 sniffle

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
naturalest 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

2914

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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 aprés 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 teepeelike 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 ahhhs 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 saffronned 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 thoughless
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

March 8, 2008

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 Laughers

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 MEEEEOOOOOOOOWWWWWWW
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 metaphorics

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

Craftsmanships

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 prezs
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 deepthroated 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 sunsetting 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 trafiic
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 motorcyle 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-
ooooooo

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
ooven 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 necessaries 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 leanred 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 eying 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 reluctancy
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 scuplted 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
00000000000000000000000
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 hunnnh

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
midafternoon 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

15

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° / 45° / 67.5° / 90°
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 nightimes
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

February 2, 2009

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 π
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 π

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

March 18, 2009

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

March 22, 2009

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-emiting 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 overfilling
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

Richard P Gabriel

web site entry

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

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 sequoia groves,
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 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
driving down from passes, along rivers,
across plains, by surf, through sequoia groves,
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 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 Tarentino
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 eying 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 temped 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

…thanks for posting this / can you imagine the ultrasound…

…makes me wonder what those trolls packed (toothbrush deodorant calf's head . . .)…

…±M ¿ì €£ °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 entrepeneurs
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 worng goinmd
wrong going worng going wrong
going wrong going wrong goining wrong
oing wrong going wrong
which is what happens when the world
is or is
treated like a feedbackless mach8ine

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

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=lonely
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 21st 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 igonrant 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 =
469111187406001974711259381939428543085789997206214358434785951101408302715 26
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' Spinnekopke 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 scritches
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

Shuttered 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

Faithfulless

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 Gilette 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 chocoláted 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 auuhh 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'tmean to dump you ok, …
3xxxxxxxoxoxooooooooxxxxxx

… I am still here and YES, my feelings are the same for you, …

R, … I haven't dumped you,ok :)
3xxxxxxxxxxoxoxoxooooooxx,YES, I did all of that too you, …

… he has never layed 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 prosers
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 spindrift
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

Kalyna 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

A Sudden

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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
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its wide curves swell like youths getting ready for sex
I grow annoyed then weary from the many things that are too long

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 Montr√©al
syphon 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

29th 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 sas 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 sgree
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 Octoberit'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 sittimg 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

4014

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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 Mismapped

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 expresso 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 spraggling 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 Volksy
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…

March 24, 2011

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 assignations
while on a street in the dark
I reported the woman who walking
away rolled her hips like
a big no saying yes

April 6, 2011

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 Yous

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 uninformidible 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

Forgivenable

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 flow 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 the 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 21st 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 darkkly 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 Al

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 15th 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 expresso 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 midthigh
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
cobbled 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 tells 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…

Orionte

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

February 12, 2012

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

February 16, 2012

PDX

it's raining
somewhere
where
a woman is hoping sleep with 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

March 24, 2012

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

March 27, 2012

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 innnermost
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^{th}s and 9^{th}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 Flasgstaff 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

June 26, 2012

Optimism 2

will I get home
or will this be the time
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 stun 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 peal 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-ninjutsuBujinkan 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 with 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

March 12, 2013

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

Muleshoe 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

March 31, 2013

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 drifing
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 nightime
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
ir 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

June 24, 2013

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 21st 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 lavendar-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 11th 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 Amoré

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 sweared 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 agéd 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 hack-
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 20th 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 dressed 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

InkWell

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 tried 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 Rytmehans

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 catched 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 Lingering 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 expresso
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 beholding 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 chagrinned 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

InkWell 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 flitting
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 flitting
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
cobbled 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 lake 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

InkWell 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

InkWell 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

Revving

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 expresso
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 65th 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, InkWell

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

InkWell 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 Ill

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 slapdowns
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

Centrois 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

Calmlessnesses

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 to 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
Kurkjian 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

Frags

end of the year
darkness upon
trees in front of sky are scritchy
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

InkWell 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

Librascope

the librascope 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 13th year
of the 13th year of the 13th year of the 13th 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 ruminate
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 ones'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 unconsciouses 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
drearing 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

Eshaness

on Eshaness 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

J 2.3

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

Fjarå

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 giver 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-leggéd
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 that 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 riffles 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 riffle

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 / Hoovervilles
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 / wilier
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 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 motes
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 hardy 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 mew
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 / calsomine or lime paint
a type of paint made from slaked lime
(calcium hydroxide / Ca(OH)2)
or chalk calcium carbonate (CaCO3)
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

Eshaness

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
cobbles / 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 lisping 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

whethering 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'e 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 smoothened 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 Zwartebles 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

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

Noticeds

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

Hopìikwa 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[1] is wet from dew
or tears / my heart

[1]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 yoal 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

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[2]

[2] *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[3]
watch them twitter and mutter
a reminder of my past
a green glow against a dark
star-dotted landscape

[3] 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

Eshaness 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 am 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

Standbye 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 swirlingcurtain 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[1] is wet from dew
or tears / my heart

[1]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 yoal 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[2]

[2] *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

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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 whiting 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 scrubning
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
intentively 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,
oroughs, 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 brocoli
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
the 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 yoal
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 yoal
to the middle of my home voe
we wore good clothes
imagine some time passing
then picture the yoal
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

Eshaness

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

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
houselights 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

Eshaness 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 tights 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 out 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 florod
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 then 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 to 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 overplayed 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 dirted 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 emptily
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
unravelled 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 cowered
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 rum 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 vivd 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 Chope'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 our croft
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 builtin 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 religiious
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_2 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 barestaurant 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
unhopefuly 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 scatterfed 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
uf 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

Unexpectations

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

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 voe / 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

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

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

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

Eshaness

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
?

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
formnation to create
the floofiest Christmas
wreaths in all of Christiandom

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

Ordinary / Overlooked

Richard P. Gabriel

December 31, 2025

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Wednesday, January 1, 2025

Renewal

stubble field across the road
what's left of the corn
will be plowed under
or tilled under perhaps
after a good burning
renewal they all say / all write
my memories go back to Meredith
dancing the pony or Jill posing
on a table in art class
my stupid wandering in that field
laid against the thrill
of young women far away

Thursday, January 2, 2025

A Start

much after bedtime
I needed to visit
the men's room
on my way back I stopped
by her cell / her blinds
were open / my headlamp's
light passed over her eyes
she rose up but I turned
away and into my cell two
down from her's / this near
encounter was left mentioned

Friday, January 3, 2025

Orkney

I sit in my writing space
no one emails me / writes me
calls me / my dream of becoming
unfindable seems alive
but is it really just
being unpleasant / I'll
ask that Shetland woman

Saturday, January 4, 2025

Danger

people stay clear
have for decades
two palm readers
refused to read mine
what am I outgassing
is it my size
my unsmilingness
those who loved me claimed
it was the danger
I'll ask that Shetland woman

Sunday, January 5, 2025

She

I put my streamer on lo-fi chill
to keep from working up about her
the sound was soft / percussion clicks
kept time / the beat was western
were she here she'd turn it off
or walk without cover into the rain
-filled rest of the world

Monday, January 6, 2025

Figures

after he died some planned
a gathering under the copper
beech right by his place
with special pizza and lemonade
hot day / river smells coming up
Armenian names in every direction
but except for those some
no one came though many were called
the most common remark

Tuesday, January 7, 2025

Fi

beauty of lo fi
imperfections and dust
tape distortion
but garnishes over perfection
and when no one tells you
you check all your kit
to find the problem
but the problem is a kind
of beauty

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

River Side

we made our way to the restaurant
after warming our hands on each other
in the car by the river
one could be forgiven for thinking
this story had a meaning beyond
events / and I forgive you

Thursday, January 9, 2025

My Children

all of the fancy plans
none appeal to me
only music and a little writing
every way I can avoid others I do
one day I'll regret more of this
some will argue but I won't

Friday, January 10, 2025

On Repeat

cheap stereo amp into homemade speakers
fed by a cheap tape player or a decent
turntable or a good receiver my father
got cheap from a friend at the company
hours on repeat looking at pictures
yearbooks / books / in a cold room
with a piano and pool table nearby
no wonder I'm me

Saturday, January 11, 2025

I'm Not

some of my friends are old people
they have decided that retirement
requires stupid activities in horrible
surroundings / they go on cruises
they dress funny / their actions
are the actions of crazy people
it's almost as if they've given up
but the funny part is that they
are always happy

Sunday, January 12, 2025

West Texas

one day I saw a long road
in a crap-o state down south
straight as a boring afternoon
a low sun played on rising dust
a pickup picked up my gaze
looking one end to other
I couldn't think of a reason
to do other than keep on

Monday, January 13, 2025

In A File

growing up everything stank
manure / exhaust fumes
decay in the swamps
hot sanded oil for roads
heavy meat being fried
prospects for success
the idea of love
I'm here but as far
as my grasp of where the sun
looked down from beyond
the skeletoned branches in winter
to the west / typing this in

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Where Did Everybody Go?

someplace I've been there's a bridge
across a river that scares me when
I sit on its bank too far from the road
from there I saw a woman padding downstream
against a tide bent on coming upstream
in winter I wouldn't be surprised
to see ice floes sifting past
in a distance smoke to see and smell
that woman / where'd she go

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Another Day For

known only for the drifting sad
song written decades ago the songwriter
from a cold country settled for a gorgeous
woman / settled in her even colder hometown
up north / he at times plays the piano solo
alone in his imaginary work hut out back
after the short snow riddled walk
the piano needs tuning

Thursday, January 16, 2025

Deserter

I lived alone for a year
the only year I did
most nights I'd put a song
on the turntable or cruddy
CD player / a sad one usually
play it over and over in the dark
either on repeat or by getting up
and reputting the needle down
for hours / for hours marking
loneliness

Friday, January 17, 2025

Me A Ghost Apparently

now that lying is standard
the people who steal plots
are free to make money
isn't that what greatness
means when the means
to greatness is meanness

Saturday, January 18, 2025

A Woman In The Window

a scotsman found a photo
over a hundred years old
of a woman in a great city
sitting on a windowsill
it seems she was washing
the window / she stopped
to watch the photo in progress
the scotsman spent weeks
trying to figure out who she was
he didn't find out for certain
but he still guessed / did
he love her / do you

Sunday, January 19, 2025

Woman In Snow

a little snow / specks
on the road now but
by tomorrow we'll be
up to the sills or eaves
when heating oil runs
out until the roads
are plowed only the wood
we chopped / cut / split
will be our en-doing
until then she will stay
in her room not eating
not being

Monday, January 20, 2025

We Are Dead And This Is Hell

today begins four years
of / the decline and demise
perhaps
of a country I once respected

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

Ice Laden

delicate / stillness / warmth
in a room filled with cold air
winter and the darkness
songs played on my homemade
stereo that I thought sounded
perfect sound declined
on this better but not perfect
system / my ears too work
less well / other songs work
better / like the delicate
still warm soundtrack from a crappy
movie

Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Finally I Know

a dream of mine
lost in the rush
of worry / of longing
nothing came of any dream
I had because my reach
went nowhere / anyone
could tell because no one
stayed at hand / as long
as someone else / something
else stood by I was
passed by

Thursday, January 23, 2025

A Short Vacation

why did the prairie grab me
why the flat views / the waterly
wheat fields / the funny idea
of privacy / the distance making
loneliness the sister of chill
driving straight into the sun
was it the book about death / the story
of the farm and a graveyard / written
strangely by a stranger who could
have been me

Friday, January 24, 2025

Famously Gone

to find a place no one can find
to then live there until the end
to gather books and songs to read and hear
forsaking all / to turn away as others
had done / to commit to writing
the truth that matters and the lies
that matter / all the while remembering
the few who were never others

Saturday, January 25, 2025

From the Times Journal dated July 29, 1943

Walter Pierce / merchant in the Sewellton Community
with his son William Pierce 16 years old
was working in the garden digging potatoes
when they had trouble which resulted in the son
striking his father with a hoe on the head
causing the elder Pierce's death a short time later
the son has been held in the county jail
since the killing / Mrs. Pierce Walter's wife
and mother of William was the only eye witness
to the murder / the shock has kept her in bed
since the tragedy / an examining trial
will be held when she is able to come to court

Sunday, January 26, 2025

AFC Championship

bad news from events
you cannot control
cannot be blamed
on you / neither
should you take
them personally

Monday, January 27, 2025

Women On High

I watched her and her
mother in long coats
scooting across High
Street up to the castle
red hair / special noses
which to choose would confuse
most men

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Skip's As Old As Me

burgers in grease
mayo / tomatoes
home taste / corkscrew
Suzie Q / fries / mayo heavy
lobster roll / lemonade
under a tree on a bench
clouds a-forming / scattering
I made this a routine
after I returned Summers
gone now / piles gone
only the river can't leave

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

In Any Sense

the stone stands vertical
just offshore / in the cut
between me and it waves
crest as if coming home
above birds throw shadows
on me / on both of us
with luck we will not fall

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Up North

in a VW new and smelling new
the road disappears too fast
under the curved front
when the heater's on
the heat's too hot in my nose
I put fancy speakers in back
and a hot amp / my 8 track
blasted through slush
and on black ice even
over that bridge

Friday, January 31, 2025

Hate Rules

could I have imagined
being alive when the United
States of America ended

Saturday, February 1, 2025

The Ending Explained

I pretend to be the silhouette
on the horizon / I pretend
I will be the man holding a horn
of fire riding up ahead to start
a patch of light and warmth
for those who follow / I will
not be there
then

Sunday, February 2, 2025

Gabrielle

I scroll through photos
in public / selfies
in focus some / spanning decades
the constant is the woman
light and blond who one
time in Denmark bought
me a bag of chocolate candies
for no reason / no story
then she was gone

Monday, February 3, 2025

Jury Duty Scam

nearly scammed
by a clever narrative
that smelled bad at every
turn / I managed by luck
to force them to mistakes
even with great special effects
including a cage designed
for no escape / but I won

Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Cable Guy

think man
you bought a pricey
cable too short
had to rearrange your desktop
though shorter is better for USB
and audiophiles / but think
man / measure twice / order once

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Brown Ice

ice coming down the river
brown from shit flushed
in / ice bulging upward
from decaying gas / Merrimack
when the world was our toilet

Thursday, February 6, 2025

Longs To Be Lost

I sat and listened
to her play slow guitar
sing in a low voice
a string of complicated
lyrics wrecked into a story
about a horse that ran
away and loss and lively
times following on

Friday, February 7, 2025

She / It

I had a muse who hated me
I believed in connection
she favored usage
her past lover was the smartest
man who ever lived
I hoped to get my licks in
I was her workhorse
until she slid off
I still write about her / it
say it

Saturday, February 8, 2025

Riverine

on a last day when my legs
failed to lift I made it to the edge
of the river when it was turning
from tidal flow to river drain
sunset fell from the sky
I remembered rides over this bridge
a single hope played over and off
the way I'm pictured is a lopside
having no teachers and few wins
I never learned how the bridge
related to the river / so
I sit

Sunday, February 9, 2025

Bisbee Kind Of

across the street she walks
a flow uphill / I slide downhill
her shape lifts the fate of humanity
I notice she never notices me
her dress hides my angle
I'm made of the longing
she long ago discarded
the sun agrees

Monday, February 10, 2025

In A Warm Bag

think about it
the way sleeping in a tent
during a relentless snowfall
resembles the onset of long
term loneliness / the end
of long term doubt

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Wavelike

I made it a point
to sit cold when
I stared at girls' pix
I wanted to love
I made it a point
to play songs in a mood
a single light / a spot
I guess I mean I made
it a point to have a spot

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

She Hated Everyone

when I catalog all the dumb
things I've said and done
that list is longer than everyone
else's book of fun deeds
my mother thought me weak-minded
I didn't mind / but she was right

Thursday, February 13, 2025

A Warm Hug

when it turned out
the first draft of the gentle
much loved tale of tolerance
was a hate-filled diatribe
and an editor shepherded it to life
we all were reminded how easy to kill
gentleness and tolerance is

Friday, February 14, 2025

Who Needs Forever

on my system a tune I heard
in a properly New York hotel
hip in the 1990s / swiftly suave
and disco beatish but with jazz
sung by Astrid so we get a black
by Brazil vibe / the room I recall
was an outfit of black down near
Wall Street and my meetings
were just as hip

Saturday, February 15, 2025

The Sea And Me

I made my way to the edge
of the ocean where everyone's
tears and hopes were poking
up in waves / behind me the rats
were everyone hoping my last trip
will be their first / I suspect
or I hope way back behind in winter
woods the women who saw me here
will turn away before

Sunday, February 16, 2025

Ear Learns

takes a while for the sound
to teach the ears how to hear
it / for the sound to deepen
air out / filter the music
into small snips of grip
I used to think it was the gear
changing but today I know
it's me

Monday, February 17, 2025

Headstone Fable

one day a crazy person
will steal my headstone
use it as a stable platform
for a very expensive
turntable / smart

Tuesday, February 18, 2025

Ness

through life with eyes
behind veils of dumbness
a ness is a high place
so my veils were the hight
of dumbness

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Silky Guitar

strange / I notice an older woman
sometimes her allure trades
on my longing for another past
I notice ideas I could have used
for stories / poems / books
their allure puts me in a mood
to wonder how old I am
where exactly I went wrong
like how every woman I finally
loved picked me / not
the other way / strange
is my favorite idea

Thursday, February 20, 2025

Favorites

soft and quiet
snow dropping
a funny way to put it
onto wide pine branches
green to white over a night
a change like a love
developing over a glance
dark is a place for fear
quick love

Friday, February 21, 2025

Hardly

people decide to change up
how the world of stuff works
all habits need ditched
move forward newly
hard

Saturday, February 22, 2025

Walls

the stone walls in the woods
placed around ghost fields
formed my thoughts on separation
some rocks rang bell-like
others clunked / I found
the smell from lifting
them unlike everything
ever after / stories locked
in walls / locked in fields

Sunday, February 23, 2025

Kalyna's Goodbye

she befriended him
taught him about her
led him to new pieces
showed him her fear
he learned help
learned / perhaps / love
the last thing she told
was a letter full sorry
said she was fine
in the end he rode away
from that last place

Monday, February 24, 2025

Homeostat

we download the real
into us / perhaps
we upload the real
from us / perhaps
it's like pendulums
swaying on a table
soon they all
are the same

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

Drops

chill / I listen
make my surroundings
furniture not focus
all around up and under
because loneliness
winter cold / drifting
thoughts / nothing
realistic

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Garfunkels

sometimes the past
joins without seams
when father meets son
or mother / daughter
young and fresh
old / worn
famously diminished
when they plaster
an orchestra behind
and produce too hard
but the ties remember
when the past would rather
fall apart

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Kind of Blue

beauty of clear music
even when horns sing harsh
travels to where people's minds
sleep after a day of rock

Friday, February 28, 2025

Dopish

piano once my instrument
I dreamed of insuring my hands
looking back I am stunned
by how stupid an idea
that was and that I
really thought it sensible

Saturday, March 1, 2025

Not Me

after years of deliberate
ignoring I've at last
found I am over the feeling
that the near wife of a great man
could have wanted someone less

Sunday, March 2, 2025

Adriatic Town

a narrow street
in a narrow town
sitting on her sill
her rear forthright
overhead / sun angled
crosswise but near set
what was up there I
could have wondered
but I kept head down
and feet slapping

Monday, March 3, 2025

Aghast

I followed her
she never led
was she only a wish
as a song said once
no sense in this
I drove as if a willing
fool / as usual
this woman was too smart
I never could form a question

Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Desert Drifter

someone I didn't know
aside from videos
died today after life
support was removed
he had curiosity
and faith / I pray
that prayer counts for
something

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Mistress

late in night
a woman's voice
singing over piano
her tone alto at most
was she in a church
or a digital reverb device
was I in love
or a tone bender
I know it was cold
her voice coming to me slowly
the piano at least
seemed well tuned
when I die the song
will become harsh

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Fools

younger I was tireless
big distance meant nothing
especially on bikes
time gone by I laugh
about pride / nothing
accomplished reached
the level of accomplishment

Friday, March 7, 2025

Lush

once lush the elm lane's
become fragments / moonlight's
plain there / hiding's
improbable / killers
have no foothold so life's
likely to remain lush

Saturday, March 8, 2025

What?

writing up a sentence
I mean / what you observe
is supposed to happen
this has to be related
this has to influence
this has to happen
this is what will happen
work on putting these things together
then examine its validity
its objectivity / the sentence
will be finished / chunks
become multiples / a whole logic

Sunday, March 9, 2025

Flows

by the river around supper time
I sat on a bench no one's
ever sat on before
I was waiting for the urge
to eat but the perplexed wind
coming down valley kept
me waiting really for a presumptuous
woman to stride mirroring
the river flow but before that could happen
the tide reversed everything
that ever happened to me

Monday, March 10, 2025

Wordish

day was when I'd
walk from school or work
to a bookstore just to look
a rare day I'd buy nothing
did I read a lot
hard to say / I liked words

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Pink House

the Pink House gone
falling to rational thinking
despite unhurried strangeness
at least I and hundreds of others
photographed it for decades
hundreds painted it
let's pray the bureaucrats
had a nice celebratory meal
in town

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Sending It To Me

pretty sound of ultra music
in a light reflected off storefronts
what I expected to take forever
was promised to go ahead now
but as always happens it took
forever / almost forever

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Gimme

who cares about the past
no one once money's on the table
then all that matters
is scooping it up first
if you are such
I hate you

Friday, March 14, 2025

Private Memory

just a chimney left
a firebox at its base
slab steady all around
patched and added to
I can point to the spot
where I first encountered
a woman / recovering

Saturday, March 15, 2025

Care Versus Beauty

passion projects
mean more to men
who make them
men chosen for poetic
correctness / maybe
mean more to them
who make them
not as nice a noise
but nicer to those
most careful

Sunday, March 16, 2025

Pastures

the cows heading
in around sunset
heading for the barn
they'll put their necks
between cow-smoothed
rails / hay plopped
in front of them
or some grains
behind they'll be milked
a slopped floor will direct
their piss to drains
leading below the barn
this is why barns are on mounds
this is what they will endure
to be sage and fed
can we blame them
or ourselves

Monday, March 17, 2025

Disappoint Me

never a let up
something always wrong
I am less able to deal
than before / why
age / fear / hopelessness
at least my new DAC
sounds great

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

At The Bridge, For Instance

winds / sometimes important
blowing through pines
then through timothy
or down a river valley
toward a sea or up
a river valley toward
a range / if my car's
parked all windows down
in July in the right spot
I might be able to pretend
a sort of / a kind of
love sitting there

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Bank

when can the woes stop
I can't sleep
I can't concentrate
fear dominates me these days

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Life Takes Place

approaching her door
open to the world
I could see through her
small place her open
back door where she
stood swaying and humming
sometimes singing words
a song no one would ever
realize was important
her voice up then down
her hair risen then fallen
I held my place at the door
of her place

Friday, March 21, 2025

Hate Is

special

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Secrets Abound

a sparse town with wider
streets than today
lined with sidewalks
tracks down main street
houses with space around
commercial affairs
making global things
farms of dairy
commercial fishing
not far downriver
the ocean
all this in a photo
taken one year
after Nana killed
her husband

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Seeing It

books and reading them
I wrote some too but
some might wonder
at my skill / some
sentences were pretty
I tried for clarity
over beauty / or is beauty
a form of clarity

Monday, March 24, 2025

Jamming

joy of playing a slow song
watching the bodies before you
adapting into the beat
you hope the drummer can keep
and you hope the lead you're making
up is not full of falter
and error / that the vibrato
makes the women want to search
for the meaning of themselves

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

Shade Your Eyes

on a long bus ride
from center Florida
to San Francisco
they were not made
for flying and I'm sure
the bus had toilets
when they got here
the waiting was over
but not the hurting
which waited a few years
to kick in / robbing
everyone

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Sucked

listening to Ultimate Spinach
who can overstate odditudes
my being part of a band
at that time / in that place
you / reader / might wonder
how I could resist hopping
on that band's wagon
they were good musicians
the only problem was their music
sucked

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Coffee Place

flee to Potsdam
and hope the Russians
don't follow
live near their military base
visit their special cemetery
hope the food you choose
doesn't give you away
someday way in the future
the downtown they occupied
will spawn the coffee shop
you have come to cherish

Friday, March 28, 2025

Time Lapse

all the mistakes
boiled together
conjured the soup
of a child's despair
which became decades
later a hate

Saturday, March 29, 2025

What Is Death?

the soul leaves the body
on the third day
the spirit
on the ninth
while on the fortieth day
the body ceases its existence

Sunday, March 30, 2025

Bisbee Street

the street up Bisbee hill
once masterful now nostalgic
even new insides smell of dust
neglect and winsomeness
one storefront / once Woolworth
says where America finds home
America / if only

Monday, March 31, 2025

Krampnitz

the beauty of severe
unbridled destruction
most from neglect and weather
some from hate and art
to get there you break in
even performances require
this / Russians / Soviets
the ceilings fare best

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

Porn Watch

watching porn online
the scenes and themes
stories and shows
boring and not in the sexual
sense / why are those filmakers
so lame / why not something
worth watching / fuck it

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Dark Shades

the people who study murders
as a hobby get facts askew
based on sneaky thinking
and unbelieving / even
when their girlfriends
have pale green hair
and they hide their eyes
behind dark shades

Thursday, April 3, 2025

Revealed

what does soft music mean
when the system playing it
tears the recording apart
the people who made it
assumed people listening
had crap for equipment
instead my system likes to rip
bad apart / all the tests for revelation
pass around here

Friday, April 4, 2025

Luck / Strange

what happens when a jam
turns into a song
lucky we taped it
we figured out what luck
and collaboration had done

Saturday, April 5, 2025

Dachau Film

in a film from WWII in Dachau
while trucks traverse a quick-built
temporary bridge / in the background
a big house spews or belches or thrusts
black smoke out its chimney and I wonder
who lived there / what were they doing
as the troops advanced on hell

Sunday, April 6, 2025

Where I Am

I walked out of the house
after listening for hours
to the same song over and over
I took it as a warning
that I was not meant to live happily
anywhere never mind ever after
the meant it as twilight
I headed toward the branch laced
version of sunset

Monday, April 7, 2025

Dream A-Sudden

the dream so real
I could feel it in my hands
could see it in front of me
could hear the scream
notice the sudden action
seemingly planned but on a whim
among those so firmly of each other
the plan was instantaneous
that she didn't mind me seeing her
that way / that much remained
for days

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Still Believe

I met with her over cheap Chinese
speaking as cousins just meeting
in decade seven / she an ultrapacifist
and everything that follows on

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Benched

meet under the streetlight
she said meaning the one
on Victoria Pier by the strait
after midnight / after 3am
on a bench we'd wait for sunup
I'd want to touch her back
she'd want me to do it too
but a rule said no and when a rule
says no no it is / isn't it

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Know Dear

meet by the flashing lights
we'll eat quickly then walk
the piers and seaside streets
until it's time to take ourselves
to bed / you one way me the other
everyone can see

Friday, April 11, 2025

Into The Sunset

the saddest kiss in TV history
a flawed red-haired woman played Irish
filmed under floodlights and artificial
heavy rain in front of the most
iconic house in Lerwick / she plants
it & flees / the series never recovered
and the music

Saturday, April 12, 2025

Get Out

before retiring each who've contributed
round up their wits and talents / find
someplace to pass them / write a story
that happens to forget them / place
a final thanks in a box buried under
a near dead birch or oak / or something red
drive into the desert and down one side road
then another fork / and another / find
a place to park / hope no one knows

Sunday, April 13, 2025

Concrete Action

he dug a bunker
double river stone walls
sand between / an angled
entranceway / heavy double iron
doors / an inexpensive but mighty
rifle and harsh ammo to fend off
raiders / hidden way to breathe
what was above ground disguised
as a deck with cellar
built the same time as our pool
so all the cement making went
ignored

Monday, April 14, 2025

Fly Away, Fly Away

even butterflies will suffer
thousands of miles of fluttered
flight to escape the wrong place
how many have the courage of Monarchs

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Reichskanzler

ever wonder what you would do
were a strongman were to pounce
on your country / no one could imagine
the answer / now I get to live it

Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Music To Me

such a thing as music
that wends into your skull
makes you tear up
then who will decide what to play
before the eulogies start
after they end / the dirt warms up
the sod peeled away awaits
a total recline / will the music
that filled your dead ears
seep out as time makes its way
over and over your rest

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Guess What!

who can imagine surprise
aside from words and abstraction
how to feel surprise not just think
it / dreams teach us the possibility
of it but to how to capture it at the same
time our eyes are full speed ahead

Friday, April 18, 2025

Twice

we took her to a porn flick
the night before we drove away
to California / she'd never
had a boyfriend / true to her name
she was plain / the man in the movie
pulled out / came hard on the ass
of the woman in the movie then put
it back in and did it again / Jane and I
had the same thought / never saw
that before / my wife was smart
she snuck us into the theater
through a side door / deep in
Illinois / never saw Jane again

Saturday, April 19, 2025

Under Trees

why does a dream wed a memory
help us choose the tree
we die under / and do it
with joy and hopeful resentment
she was someone I came to love
then came to abandon after she
abandoned me / as all do
her voice high passing through
bows / vows we wrote endearingly
and like the woman who hated
me decades later she hesitated
her touch / time wash

Sunday, April 20, 2025

Looking Lost

any house would do
for our first house
though neither had ever
cared for one we feared
nothing about it and our house
reflected our misunderstandings
we cooked making recipes up
based on the names of dishes
we'd heard like fried rice
where we fried the raw rice
then boiled as usual and why
not tasted ok / interesting even
cookbooks / maybe some day
was it surprising we're long
unmarried to each other and our child
hates us

Monday, April 21, 2025

K vs P

I preferred her sister
prettier / more alive
but already married
I should have paid more attention
and not settled for the wrong
sister

Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Merrimack River

the river craves sacrifice
young is preferred
the current river revs
up its currents so when a child
slips the only thing left
is to beg prayers
rivers and God don't much
care

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

North All

the places / the times
where we walked / when
strong winds
late light or light
that never gives in
through it all we
did not ever connect
something was disgusting

Thursday, April 24, 2025

Cry For Help

we sit hoping for appeasement
while the rest of the world
tries to save our science
datasets and perhaps our freedom

Friday, April 25, 2025

My Bridge

the bridge wondered
why it changed decade
to decade with a roof
and sides / with heavy planks
until a bus plunged
through them
why so many who crossed
stopped on the banks
either side for hours
watching / snoozing
wondered why it outlasted
newer designs and techniques
where some preach efficiency
others like this bridge
go with careful over extras

Saturday, April 26, 2025

Cranes

loading cranes by docks
sunset behind them and a sad
song on my car radio
driving into Oakland
to look for a good place
to eat / pizza maybe deep
dish like over in Urbana
where it seemed like life
started except here it's
an fabulous ending

Sunday, April 27, 2025

Tenting

how to find my way into the tent
set up before an impending snow
storm a hour before dark
and wow would night be perfect
for me fitting nicely into her
life right now but instead her
words are the shape of the wound
in my life

Monday, April 28, 2025

Epilog

last night I dreamt of an epilog
where I'd explain to an unnameable
woman why so many poems are about her
even though she was never a thing
I'd collect all those poems
into one book to give her and then
I thought how stupid that was / my wife
explained this was one reason everyone
hates me

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

Cold Piano And Wind

the pretty song
a piano in a ringing room
played as if metronomes
never existed / the pianist
uses the pedal a little
too much / she listens
with me / the piano over
heavy winds against our windows
up from the North Sea / everything
is cold

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

Lo

what fun
adding dust clicks
to an audiophile recording
and labeling it lo-fi
chill or drone too

Thursday, May 1, 2025

Don't Lie

such a day not destined
to return / my plans
have me wasting here
accomplishing not much
reading not much
writing not much
only listening which
was my world at the other
end of my life

Friday, May 2, 2025

Kris

someone I knew
had hired in fact
who was scared of me
died today a few years
back at the age of 67
she lost her fear
but I still felt best
to steer clear while my wife
comforted her on Zoom
but I remembered her today

Saturday, May 3, 2025

Agape Inn

I fried fried dough
sprinkling powdered
sugar in the end
small pizzas one by one
hot dogs / burgers
all to earn a seat
at Sandy Lou's table
so that one day this
Florida blonde of blue eyes
would notice I was interesting
no matter she was at a Baptist
school in Texas on her mission
in Hampton Beach NH and all I
was doing was hanging on

Sunday, May 4, 2025

Under Achieve

half the world separates us
it doesn't feel half enough
for anything to make sense
it needed to happen decades
ago / lots of decades but
back then she was wrapped
in the smartest man / the most
talented man who has lived
in the past century / and me
hardly a blur as her eyes
swept past

Monday, May 5, 2025

Funny

Merrimac / Groveland
Palo Alto / Mountain View
Portola Valley / Redwood City
each a practice room
usually a garage but sometimes
a living room / Hammond
guitar / spanning 50+ years
but a talent that hardly grew
simplest playing / what musicians
call having fun

Tuesday, May 6, 2025

Yell

we spent two weeks in our paradise
you and me / when I reached out
you crossed the street and whistled
the wind was warmer / the rain
more welcoming / limits
you asked me there / muted strings

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Think Twice

sometimes the most fabulous
babe latches on until she
figures I'm not the rake
she'd glimpsed at the wreck
site where her dreams confused
beauty and longing / meanwhile
we had a night above a street
far away whose streetlight
was strong enough to wake
her up

Thursday, May 8, 2025

Barned

bales of hay stacked
in the barn as old
as anything in town
but we never knew
hand hewn beams
wood pegs keeping all
together / once when
girls lived nearby
I climbed up there with them
and dove from a beam
to stacked hay / boy
style

Friday, May 9, 2025

Overload

town of losers
I among them but
alone among them
I made the most
of the little I had
went West kept
going West and after
a bit many fell for me
even though I never
delivered

Saturday, May 10, 2025

Our Elected Chump

every day there's a novel
take on stupidity based
on the boyish hatred
a particular chump brings
to the table / one can only
hope / for what not sure

Sunday, May 11, 2025

Ever?

by the river all day
reading / dozing
rain and breeze
birds and a sunset
when

Monday, May 12, 2025

Unmemorable

the smallest rain launches
onto my head once covered
with a thick of hair and now my steps
need care and strong effort
kind of like a program I forgot
how to write / like a poem
I forgot how to write

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Signed Anyway

45 years later
I decide to typeset
it again / my dissertation
the one Winograd said he
would not sign / the one
McCarthy said was not
very good

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

In My Opinion

when I was sitting in the cold
late night listening to records
or tapes of my sad songs looking
at pictures of Meredith or yearbooks
on a cheap Sears amp and speakers
my father made at the far end
of our pool room which used to be
Nana's apartment before she died
I never imagined sitting in the cold
late night listening to streaming
sad songs looking at pictures
on the Web on an expensive DAC
an expensive preamp / an expensive
amp and expensive speakers
which made sounds that seem to come
from everywhere / I didn't forget
Meredith but she chose poorly

Thursday, May 15, 2025

She Sneered

already the light won't give up
summer in the north / Shetland
and all the cold of that North
all the warmth some provide
I wondered about the smell of peat
burning against a rock dedicated
to reflection / like so many

Friday, May 16, 2025

Diminishing

working on typesetting
my dissertation I see
some brilliance some
silliness / it was
clear I did a lot
of work / no one
seems to have
cared much

Saturday, May 17, 2025

Car Sit

sitting in my car
watching
for hours / reading
a bit / if I have snacks
then that
whether it's by the river
or the end of the elm lane
or on a hill overlooking
by the ocean / with someone'
or alone / this is my
time

Sunday, May 18, 2025

Examination

why did you ask me to travel with you
why did you keep asking questions
you said I wasn't a rabbit
and you wanted to travel to strange
places for weeks at a time
then in the end why did you throw
me to the side / didn't I play nice

Monday, May 19, 2025

Groom

it was clear from the start
that everything that should
have been pretty was
and that meant that no woman
could love a person with more
thinking than preening

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Jo's Mom at 96

she divides the world in three
Japanese people
Americans
Koreans
classical white → American
spells bad → Korean
otherwise a Japanese person

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Hax

Kathy's dissertation
typeset in Pox
I'm redoing it in Tex

Thursday, May 22, 2025

So There

I'm from the Valley
of the Poets / not far
from Frost and Bradstreet
even closer to Whittier
add me to that mix
I've certainly written
more than them / plus
all mine are way worse

Friday, May 23, 2025

Think Twice

the piano playing on my desktop
stereo sounds almost real
how a thing so deliberately
mechanical can sound so sad
melancholy / delicate
is hard to figure / hard like
the parts that make up the piano
and the electronics that collaborate
to make the sounds my fleshly ears
pick up and my squishish brain
decodes / I add the words
to the song in there

Saturday, May 24, 2025

Tolerate

kitchen the size of a small closet
pivot from the stove to the refrigerator
step one step to the sink
the room I'm in now is bigger
than that whole house
the year before we rented a mansion
everything shows everything can be
tolerated / gotten used to
even people who hate you

Sunday, May 25, 2025

Bisbee Friends

shivering all night in an Airstream
in Bisbee one autumn even with all
the blankets in the place on top
of me / next day we toured desolated
Evergreen cemetery / what a silly
name / then we drove home

Monday, May 26, 2025

Blasting

my idea of good playing
was to blast out without end
but my chops were crap
listening to tapes
my strong point was rhythm
a kind of Edge vibe picking
notes with good but
not overdone reverb
I could never hear
this on stage

Tuesday, May 27, 2025

Regrettable

regret is on my tail
after retypesetting
my dissertation I
realized how subpar
a thinker I was
my mother was
likely right when
she told people
I was a plumber
more my speed

Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Wandering In Wonder

when I listened to this song
on AM in the 1960s after hoping
it would come on / the only
way I could hear it back then
I never imagined having dozens
of versions to listen to / most
sounding like the musicians
are right in front of me
which time frame valued
music more

Thursday, May 29, 2025

S. D. I.

when young I was not good
not domesticated enough
not enough social hours
this made for hatred
I was puzzled / back then
but not now / slowly
dawning insights

Friday, May 30, 2025

LLM vs AGI

if art preceded elaborate
language how will LLMs
come up with art on their own
AGI my ASS

Saturday, May 31, 2025

No Where

refusing to come out
finally hidden all times
no one talks to me
I reciprocate
the best agreement

Sunday, June 1, 2025

Here I Be

why did I hide under the bed
temp-situated in the living room
for my ill near-death father
for hours while my mother
worried around the house before
time to visit him in Boston
Mass General / encephalitis
and I hid there for hours
unsure how to come out
and announce here I am

Monday, June 2, 2025

Those Assholes

sold as a way to rid
us of criminals / riddance
grabs mothers and children
because why not hide the truth
in an adjective

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

Still Have It

the fear
sun gone down
every light in the house on
outside doors locked
garage doors locked
I thawed a steak and broiled it
watched television / we never called
it TV / the biggest knife in the house
in my hand or by my side
the fear when parents were away
the fear

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

You And Me

standing by the ramp
to the bridge
back when that little park
was perfect / we married
third try / friends and what
counted as family all there
story book / fairy tale
a day in paradise

Thursday, June 5, 2025

Night Before Opening

night watching bridge lights
people walking across ahead
of opening day / the river
caught by an extended open
shutter is smoothly swiping
past piers toward me
only the green girders remain
stiff stout and fixed
in the memory behind glass

Friday, June 6, 2025

Mistake Again

everything cheap my father said
when I told him he taught me
quality / he built his own stuff
I took it as quality / just
another example of me not
getting it

Saturday, June 7, 2025

Diffusion And Me

twilight sitting just beyond
the reach of doctors
they prod at the soul with instruments
of generalization

we are annotations in someone else's oeuvre
manikins classified by epistemology
ranked by adverbs
smiled at by witches with whitewashed hands
we feel / sometimes / like immigrants
in our own alphabet

Sunday, June 8, 2025

Dobyns Quits

somewhere / Dobyns quits
trying to name the stars
somewhere / Christa chews
through the silence like calloused
blades in the mouth
your dreams are drawn upward
then erased
cooling slowly
on the shoulder of a cop
who stopped naming names
someone mutters
roses / scorpions
a stool where a girl
once folded her loneliness
like panties in a workshop drawer
I keep what's gilded
even if it hurts

Monday, June 9, 2025

Unlikely Change

whine of a streetlight
funny how it freezes
just enough

sunsets hang
on a heavyweight housewife
wearing an outfit of pheasant
and apple / vanished exactly
in the cafeteria

killer values
gummy languages
heels in perfume
magpies lying

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Real / Quick

finding a way to make
it til tomorrow
which comes a little
quicker than many would
like / like real quick

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Plum Island Beach South

only two things
moon in light fog rising
from the East
a hardly moving ocean
catching the moon's light
the rest is the texture
of offshore darkness
slowly projected everywhere

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Best Orbit

everyplace I grew
to love after going
back home is now gone
soon I will be too
until then I search
for great music
and listen over
and over just as I
did as a kid in that back
home place

Friday, June 13, 2025

And Then?

I was alone in the house
until I was 21
this meant I never learned
people / even 60 years later
that never learned stuff
has never been learned

Saturday, June 14, 2025

Many Toos

quiet music
night long
simple responses
darkness blends
with sound
eyes closed
music fills
every where

Sunday, June 15, 2025

The Stateroom Was Full of Samovars

Samovars muttered on the stateroom shelf,
their breath warm with rumors of Endicott.
A sculptor stoked grief in an icehouse kiln—
his swans unrolled, wings stitched from stowaways' maps.

Fred had lemons, but no hands.
The crank beneath the hospital whistled lullabies
to sleeping carrots in the basement drawer.
Baba wore shoes filled with violet bread.

Meanwhile, Haverhill cracked beneath a powder of whispers,
where devotion mingled with axe-blade butter
and the bakery smelled faintly of enemy smoke.

A cartoon of Helen bled through the ceiling.
Someone, perhaps the mechanic, was whispering
passwords to a handkerchief named imprisonment.

Monday, June 16, 2025

Man On The Street

when I visit Portugal
it's for the analogy
for the sound of a piano
played soft and slow
who can imagine the delicacy
such a hard and taunt
contraption can make
for those looking
for quiet metaphors

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

Constitutional Drift

Parentheses barred, term appointed,
thereof the executive speaks in oaths—
citizenship distilled into power
preserved,
and marque riding the spine of electors.

States: their number, their departments,
their duties to Indians,
to consent,
ratify,
elect,
distinct as enumeration.

In cases devolved;
we are charged,
we are returned,
we are probable.

Together we consist:
arms, amendment, confrontation,
a posterity delivered—
superseded,
yet still swearing.

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Make America Crappy

smart way to handle
immigration
make the country so
unappealing no
one wants to come
here

Thursday, June 19, 2025

SND & RTN

music or sounds
rhythms with melodies
a hint of an instrument
did people make this
with computer made sounds
electronics and modern speakers
are tested artificially
can a heart cope

Friday, June 20, 2025

Wires

out the window
the sun won't quit
merely takes a short
duck but the sky
never darkens
overlooking the calmed
sea I worry against the next
line in the next
poem

Saturday, June 21, 2025

And Me

caring for her mother
means I can't care
for myself / cannot
visit the world I need
cannot travel as if
in pure light

Sunday, June 22, 2025

Not Much

when young I almost
imagined a life of thought
and fame / an intellectual
life / instead I became
a jack of many trades
and never let an employer
tell me what to do
in other words
I went through life
playing / became
the world's most famous
third-rate computer
scientist

Monday, June 23, 2025

Songs

listening I crave
the details in the recording
to me this is what
they wanted me to hear
if I wanted something else
I wouldn't change my gear
I'd change the station

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

A Bird Flies Through

sometimes the predawn mornings
are a little blue but mostly gray
and some black / even the water
making up the ocean is on board
with these choices / but over toward
the east the sun has a different idea
it teams with the air over there
adds a little touch of lightest
possible orange

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Shepherd??

I read the essay
it made no sense
every three words
in a row did but
nothing bigger / nothing
longer / they asked
me to help those writers
fix it up / how can I
do that if I have no idea
what it means

Thursday, June 26, 2025

Nancy

she was a strange girl
in high school and my friend
loved her to no avail
60 years later I flip
through her wedding album
pictures of horses and houses
Volkswagens and a husband
I met only once / under
all this her life spread out
I imagined her sleeping
dreaming of the wonder
some like me might have
dreaming of her

Friday, June 27, 2025

Cluttered Thinking

a train flashes past
years ago the family
in that house would
have perked their ears
to listen / to judge
speed and time / but
decades ago they moved
to Valley View where
they could heard but
for the insulation
of soil / concrete
regret

Saturday, June 28, 2025

Busy

the hot day
gives its all
to the hot night

Sunday, June 29, 2025

Under

don't make lists
of what you want
one day / most things
on them will stay
over there / usually
you will intelligently
settle / like a tree
planted in the wrong place
its roots will make it
the right place

Monday, June 30, 2025

End

photos I took back near home
the green / the snow
the cold / the sweat filled
heat / everything about it
appeals / others feel
it's creepy / sinister
be there at the end

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

D'John bin Trump

poets writing at the start
of dictatorships wrote
as usual and unusually
I get the chance to be
one of them

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

Far Away

the stone walls were still strong
some with larger stones on the outer
planes and rock debris between
I never thought of the thinking
that went into them / the other thing
was they were in the woods with stupendous
trees right there / back when I was a kid
living on the farm / one of those chunks
of rock debris sits here by me / nothing
soon will matter

Thursday, July 3, 2025

Rabbit Style

our rabbit broke loose
superfast into the woods
late afternoon and all night
the woods noises reigned
next morning there he sat
under his hutch waiting
for us to put him in
and feed him lunch

Friday, July 4, 2025

Negative

softening takes time
now I've banked lots
the best of a lifetimes
needs hardness / the same
can be said about dry
and wet

Saturday, July 5, 2025

Once More

here's a puzzle easy to solve
why love a woman you never
want to touch / if you can answer
that you've taken one step
toward proving you're human

Sunday, July 6, 2025

Near Joppa

once I sat in a second floor
restaurant at a table looking
out over Merrimack River
across from me a woman whose
clothing looked half off
ready for bed / her hair
as much cover as her knitted
top draping off shoulder
but the tide was just coming
in and the tethered sail boats
were turning toward the sea
I turned too

Monday, July 7, 2025

Praise Of A Flat

every night I'd wonder
how I could find a life
I liked and usually
nothing came to mind
I was always in my head
still am / I wonder now
how anyone could believe
I answered their prayers

Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Meredith

what trace of me's left
in Martin's house still
standing a replica of itself
how Martin kept her away
from me even when nothing
could have happened and
everyone knew it / I
still write her name

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Tubes

he was a silly builder
but he did everything himself
sometimes with methods
he invented and tools
he designed and fabricated
he always experimented
a often left the failures
in place / his best
idea was using tire tubes
as connectors and joiners
everyone noticed

Thursday, July 10, 2025

Parke Mathematical Laboratories

my first job
code math in fortran
code OS in assembler
help the librarians
add salt pellets to the water softener
mow the lawn
program a trigger guard
cutter delta list
hand deliver results to Hanscom Field
code up a stonewall line
drawing program for surveyors
discover frappes

Friday, July 11, 2025

Newburyport

the women walk this way and that
in the square the webcam back
near home shows me / lower left
are umbrellaed outdoor tables
up and down the aisles women walk
because some are beautiful
I wonder how their lives
will age under their stewwardship

Saturday, July 12, 2025

Looking Bad

the point of living hidden
is to never need to explain
to never need to apologize
to never need to look good

Sunday, July 13, 2025

Age or Wisdom

ideas come quick
but new ones and revisions
pile up / especially when
programming / I keep refining
extending / adding new
sometimes better things
I test ideas / sometimes
I'm surprised / was I
always like this

Monday, July 14, 2025

Cook

my mother was a lousy cook
plus she cooked one meal
for me and one for the two
of them / burgers / spaghetti
stuffed cabbage / steak
chops / chicken / that's
it I think

Tuesday, July 15, 2025

Tracy Died

the song of sadness
never stops playing
whoever hears it suffers
sudden tragedy / sometimes
it's apparent / sometimes afar
and the fallout falls out
when unexpected

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

Scrunch

is the face in agony
or the face in joy
because of impetus
or is it a reaction
even if the music
is made by the owner
of that face / duende
foretells the answer

Thursday, July 17, 2025

Why Care

always too focused on self
I lost as many friends
as I made / and few of them
would want to undo that

Friday, July 18, 2025

Jazz Bones

I am tired of explaining
the simple and obvious
to people who want to believe
their own mistakes
I'd rather listen to jazz
in a realist soundstage
and write the day inside out

Saturday, July 19, 2025

It

I'd drive in early to get
a parking space then
I'd sleep in the back seat
for two hours then eat
the sandwiches my mother
made / I'd walk through
the tunnels to the cafeteria
to meet friends / I hated
it

Sunday, July 20, 2025

Pathways

will I once more
walk from the farm
to the square / will
the overdeveloped
land know me
I imagine paths
I once walked some
every day won't
remember the love
of it

Monday, July 21, 2025

Thin Dark Brows

she sat there
eating her Italian meal
outside under the Campari
umbrella / ordering dessert
I find I'm drawn to eyebrows
now that nothing else about
women gets under my skin

Tuesday, July 22, 2025

Bring Around Dawn

fog and dead calm
distant lights streaking
impressionism across the harbor
I suppose I once wished
her to stand by me there
now it's just a place
no matter how many ships
carve by / she decided
the best way was no way

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

Back

chicken coops / wood peg
barn / cold-water milk shed
a few electric fences for cows
an orchard of pears and a few
apples and cherries
grapes growing wild on trees
around the big field
if only I still had it

Thursday, July 24, 2025

After Storming Winter

after we mistook
fresh leaves for fog
and apple blossoms behind
the shed for woodsmoke
she pingponged from window
to window instead of folding
herself by the bed and later
she left without packing

Friday, July 25, 2025

Dying To Music

brittle / all is
I hope to pass
while listening
to music / I do
everything else
that way

Saturday, July 26, 2025

Lots Of Ferries

the door slammed again
her eyes blinking in bright
glare / she wanted to depart
the ferry was leaving in two hours
I was ready for her to go
only the wind could disagree
why should it

Sunday, July 27, 2025

Lost Highway

in the song the word
dreams lands on a minor
chord and to me resolves
to a major / the woman's
stiletto voice is now
pure flats

Monday, July 28, 2025

And Her Too

ships love the blue
water in one direction
the sky another
and not to be missed
the blue of night
in a cold wet place
in the middle of a
dark night

Tuesday, July 29, 2025

Now

I wanted to be special
now I'm just another man
awaiting the only sure
thing in life / all
I can do is write about it

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Bad Schedule

three days in a row
of medical tests
exams / probes
little road bumps
of fear that I'd learn
the timetable of my
you know

Thursday, July 31, 2025

Minders

my mind is at ease
my mind is made up
I mind the gap in your favors
do you mind me taking you to me
my mind is empty
my mind carries the weight of dreams
smoke through broken windows

Friday, August 1, 2025

Bridge Street Cemetery

I stopped at the cemetery
Bridge Street on the way
to Meredith's / I wasn't
going to visit her
technically
but it's why I was going
while at the cemetery I
planned a novel or maybe
a long short story
and I charted symbols
and all that but the world
is lucky I never got
farther / Meredith too

Saturday, August 2, 2025

Young

the fruits of youth
especially art
crush those of age
the same for me?
the man waiting to greet
me snickers

Sunday, August 3, 2025

Later?

so who cares what
I've ever done and
if made a difference
maybe those others
believed it themselves
the agents / if I'm
invisible now
just think

Monday, August 4, 2025

S Cottage Grove

the tiny house on S Cottage Grove
my office here at home just
a little bigger
it was a portend of what I'd be
late in life after everyone forgot
to thank me

Tuesday, August 5, 2025

Deep Hole Not Much Water

when were digging the well
by hand in Tamworth my job
was to pull the rope over the pulley
to raise the post hole digger
and while I did that one time
after another from early morning
to mid twilight what went through my head
was Walk Away Renee / time / place
mood

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

World Under A Light

behind the little clearing
I built the teepee in / with
the granite stone plastered
into the ground was the 10
foot wide little pond made
of water at the water table
and the nice microscope
they got me one Christmas
revealed what life means

Thursday, August 7, 2025

Nearsighted

just looking one day ahead
or two / I had no plan
just reaction / no plans
only reactions / where
did I end up / middle
of the pack / I guess
but I was known / well

Friday, August 8, 2025

Market Square Restaurant

around the outdoor tables
people chat / chomp / change
their postures and like pigeons
peck & peck as if what
's right in front of them
's all that matters and instead
are we in a black hole
what the fuck is going on

Saturday, August 9, 2025

Luckiness

on my way to the coast
I ran across a woman
who had just made
shepherd's bread and we
sat on a boulder spreading
jam on some slices because
everyone knows I always
pack it when the chance
of a chance meeting
with a woman on a cold
day is as likely as anything
even the hope of a hand
in my hand

Sunday, August 10, 2025

Fritz T

reading about and watching
documentaries on 1930s & 1940s
Germany is like reading
a script in use today
where the saying everyone
matters or no one does
is acted on with the second
choice the first

Monday, August 11, 2025

Jimmy

was he deaf or damaged
was he backward or harmed
did someone blow his
circumcision / did he commit
crimes or only unlucky
I remember telling him
hike-en-em bike-en-em
when he played football
toy guns behind the stone
wall / he was my first friend
and how did that end up

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

News

walking home from my hilly walk
I passed an old man sweeping
leaves by the curb and I thought
I knew him from his alzheimer talks
as I passed he looked up and
said I've got cancer in my right leg
they say it might travel to my left
might do me in / they're working
on it / for now I'm helping this
lady here / I said comforting things
then walked the rest of the way
home

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Imagining

I can't escape being called
a computer programmer / even
that confounded bitbrain
chatgpt insists I'm one
despite never making a dime
from a program I wrote / it
you write programs dont't
you

Thursday, August 14, 2025

Match Compiler

fixing a program written
decades ago / I wrote it
but I created errors
I didn't test it well
or thoroughly / been
at it for days / more
to test

Friday, August 15, 2025

D'J

some love the all ways
cruelty feels like fun
they've been holding it back
for decades and now criminals
are cool

Saturday, August 16, 2025

General Relativity

not one you'd think'd
become a motorhead yet
he spends a thousand
or two on a weird
mirror wax job on his
anniversary Mustang
he runs pipes on it
he likes to accelerate
the way only Einstein
could imagine
(and he did)

Sunday, August 17, 2025

Kurkjian To' Me

my high school
has a hall of fame award
someone says I should get one
I say give it a rest

Monday, August 18, 2025

Dog in Woods

nights in summer
Snooks would rouse herself
cautiously push her dog door
open then head into the woods
barking and I hear her voice
dissipate and fade in the leaves
and all other softnesses in our woods
in the morning she'd be back
on her bed of old blankets
and the fuss would have faded
and dissipated / what
did she hear

Tuesday, August 19, 2025

Paradise, I Surmise

funny how no matter how
confused I get programming
a short walk seems to reveal
the problem / where has my mind
gone

Wednesday, August 20, 2025

Ron

every step in my career
he helped / every step
in my musical life he
stood nearby / he was
smart / ugly / an towering
ego / he smelled bad
he never worked well
with women / he even
fed my dogs while I was gone
he is

Thursday, August 21, 2025

Rogers Funeral Home, Haverhill

instead of being able to stand
beside her final box
touch the backs of her hands
folded by effort over her heart
smell the oldness trapped
in the ugliest type of room
ever invented / instead
of hearing voices shucking words
redstained in the opposite way
I was locked in the car
across the street / down the street
from one beginning to one ending
because after all I was unfit
for life as mother knew of it

Friday, August 22, 2025

Plum

my mother
in the future
likes lounging on Plum Island
first for the fried clams
second for the waves small
though they were and still be
a question is what about the Pink House
in the marshland off the road
from Newburyport / from the time
distance I can picture her better
at Salisbury Beach / but I drift
to that Pink House / whether she
admired it / or just the fried clams
across the road / she couldn't imagine
me even after birth

Saturday, August 23, 2025

Screenshot

after a while you can stumble
on beauty but you need to grab
a screenshot otherwise how will
you ever know you found it

Sunday, August 24, 2025

Hacker

pissing over my old code
from the 1970s I'm dumbfounded
by how poor a programmer
I was / I wonder whether now
I'm better or just lousy
in wonderful new ways
but the code works

Monday, August 25, 2025

2025–2029

toxic empathy
benevolent cruelty
retribution
vengeance
and all this makes many
like me
fear for our lives

Tuesday, August 26, 2025

Till Death

my mother / her mother
hate bonded them / I
never knew the reason
they never stopped
screeching at each
other while Nana was alive
some might say it normalized
hate for me / little
did I know the reason was a killing
the secret kept from everyone
and I mean everyone for seventy
years / mothers in arms

Wednesday, August 27, 2025

Long Futures

what'll happen when
my memories are dissolved
into mush / when decay
wins / will it be as if
nothing happened
as if the little stream
behind our house
was in a story / not
in the world / as if
what I took for embraces
were as needles under a tree
the cool wind coming in in
summer as I pretended she
might be

Thursday, August 28, 2025

PR

my ambition was to play
for the remainder
to play while listening
to music / all the time
I rarely earned what I was paid
my main contribution was as
the tail feathers on the peacock
any company that could afford
someone like me who was only for show
certainly was doing well
I was PR

Friday, August 29, 2025

2025

(loop for i
from 1 to 9 sum
(* i i i))

Saturday, August 30, 2025

Cared

the river doesn't care
leaves and grasses
like timothy or rye
don't either / guess
how much the pines
oaks and maples care
the waves near shore
come down to it
no one I know cares
either
whether a single thing you do
makes for happiness or
even just surviving

Sunday, August 31, 2025

Alone At Night

when they left I'd
take a steak out of the freezer
if early enough I'd put it out
if not I'd put it in warm water
then I'd broil it with butter
watch a movie and make up some
nutty dessert / then I'd leave
the lights on and sleep with the biggest
knife in the house / hunger
fear

Monday, September 1, 2025

Twelve Pages of Diary

written like a diary in September 1967
it reads like angst looking for death
as I could not find a way to encourage
someone to pay love attention
the grip of fear looked on the page
like cynic drunk on skepticism
reading it when I was 50 I perfected
cringing

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

Always Cold

the taxi arrived at 3:55
Market Cross / waiting in sodium
yellow / I watched from four
thousand miles away for three
and a half minutes until the short
haired woman thin in slacks came
out her door off Mounthooly
and made her thin way to the front
passenger door and off they went up
Commercial / does it make sense
for me to love her

Wednesday, September 3, 2025

Debris

abandoned houses
abandoned homes
even of stone they fall
on Shetland / on cliff
shelves in NM / Utah
left behind only what
perseveres / broken pots
even can make their way
to us / carving order
from other order the people
who built them probably
wondered too

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Croft Life

standing in front of the broken
down croft just up from a hellstorm
cliff I started to count the stones
still holding in place / I saw more
in place than slowly folding
into the peat / my eyes watered
while my imagination put me
and her into this croft a hundred
years ago where we lived as one
till death did us part

Friday, September 5, 2025

Frozen In Place

I would stand in front of the phone
in the cold room where the piano sat
I never could call her and smart
that I didn't / bad enough to have
no love but better that than humiliation

Saturday, September 6, 2025

Lost Again

she took out her hearing aids
today / it took us hours to find them
we still haven't been able to make
her understand that it was her hearing
aids and that she took them out
and put them somewhere / she kept
asking what are you looking for
maybe get a bullhorn instead

Sunday, September 7, 2025

Appetite

even with all the extremes
I've done now that I no
longer can I still want
more

Monday, September 8, 2025

And So

a lengthy trip with a new
woman except we were nothing
but the trip her idea
we stayed next to each other
for two weeks and never
a word or motion of affection
actually hardly any recognition

Tuesday, September 9, 2025

Christ In The Desert

I went a couple times into the chapel
to listen to the chants at the monastery
she chose and made me drive my car to
down a 13-mile dirt road but she didn't
said she didn't believe in the Christ
Our Lord thing / she liked the silence
and the monk-cell-size sleeping rooms
I should have known then she was working
up to full-on hate

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Never Come Back

finding a way to live
away from everyone
just listen to music
all day on a system
that tells me everything
about the recording
maybe I'll close my eyes
to listen / doze away
never come back

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Loft

the strangeness of place
combines with foggy thinking
to turn inert material
to unmakeable unusuals

Friday, September 12, 2025

The Knocks

in a different timeline
today would be important
because of a birth three
quarters of a century
ago / instead there's a light
knock on my door / one like one
I heard one group of decades
ago / one like one I heard
a different group of decades
ago / one like one someone
will hear soon but I won't

Saturday, September 13, 2025

In Market Square

why would anyone pause
when I pass / now that
no one sees me I seen
as invisible / others
find I answer too slow
answer with flaws
but no one pauses
I stand wobbly

Sunday, September 14, 2025

What's Wrong

I constantly remember
the mistakes and stupidities
that tagged along beside my life
people can see me pound my thighs
or hear me mutter what's wrong
with me / I wish I could have noticed
these sooner

Monday, September 15, 2025

Cooped

coops all over our land
two large ones for commerce
a smaller one for pullets
then two in a scatter behind
our house across the road
I saw only the scattered ones
with chickens / commerce
and scale long abandoned
and later I planned to turn
the pullet house to a clubhouse
but like most things I plan
I quit partway through

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

And That

I thought about apologizing
for being a little too
but I wondered whether she was
worth it / I mean / she made
the moves a normal woman would
but later claimed I was not
on base / so far I've not
she is alive fully despite
this

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

November Trip

I overcame fear today
and bought a plane ticket
to Boston / I used to eat
these trips for snacks
when I had less

Thursday, September 18, 2025

Poynt For Instance

when I was alone each night
when dinnertime came
I'd find a place
that would make for a good
date meal / but alone I'd
order the meal a good date
might and read a book perhaps
one I just bought down the street
and I'd rotate between reading
eating / watching the diners
and servers for signs of hidden
passion

Friday, September 19, 2025

Drinkers

when I visit a crpft
fallen to pieces by a voe
especially when a rusty
plough's nearby I worry
about the women who lived
there / how they could make
do with only peat and coley
ling / whiting / plaice
not to mention the men
drinking in rehearsal
for Up Helly Aa

Saturday, September 20, 2025

Misguided Search

watching for the sun
smell of oily soil near
instead of a bright sun
it's a stiff gale
where I sit becomes untethered
if there was a woman nearby
I never figured it out
the wind always wins

Sunday, September 21, 2025

Definition Of Beauty

the road is a spline
up a valley made for no
reason but we join in praise
of its perfection or rather
the perfection of the road's
curves almost the same
as the backside curve of a woman
no one deserves

Monday, September 22, 2025

Talking Around

the mechanisms of speech
need constant work to keep
them working and warmed up
same with the mechanisms
of writing but I keep
them in good shape better
will I one day need to use
one to brace up the other

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

Cambridge

someone who helped me
with tasks she had zero
interest in for a few years
went on to research and teach
her love / a topic so strange
and different I can't even
think the first thought about it
at a university I am not qualified
to even give a brief talk at

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

Out To

men at sea rowing
hard over under currents
returning home counting
the strokes / the strokes
they plan for women
or counting the roofs that will need
rethatching after summer mist
ends

Thursday, September 25, 2025

Flower Time

kids on their way to school
dead winter / their bare feet
how sad / squelched and squeaked
on peat / not important the scones
they ate along with way
the kids just older flew out
the way terns do / as puffins do
if you're looking for flowers
picked for occasions look to graves
not to brides

Friday, September 26, 2025

Tingwall

a pistol filled with stones
shot into the bedroom
of a love rival / hidden
behind stones in a croft
the shooter spent time locked up
simple small wounds
all this for the love of a girl

Saturday, September 27, 2025

Salt And Honey

carrying a knife
harrowing ground
staring toward the sea
the crofts unlivedin
for a century / then
some would sing a tune
or play a tune / others
would mourn

Sunday, September 28, 2025

Circles; Squares

with these stones
I can build a broch
a well / a place to store oats
something round if I place
things right / with these stones
I can build a croft / a pen
a wall around every part
of life that matters / a church
even a stone to place a grave
into your memory

Monday, September 29, 2025

Red Barn And Poor

my father set quartz in the northeast wall
a beacon for cod fishers to reach landfall
my uncle never made it in spite
my cousin's wife died giving birth
the sight of beautiful land and sea
does not feed the hungry / we have little
no / make that nothing / only a marriage
now and then / or a baby now and then
give us reason to love the quartz

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Pund

many deaths and some births
a croft long gone to flames
it has seen it all for centuries
now just a discarded place
or overexposed photo or
overdue video / click like!
and subscribe

Wednesday, October 1, 2025

West Voe

in a time when there was no
wood we'd scour the shore
for driftwood / not willing
to sequence work we'd batten
our clothes and let the waves
wash over them / sometimes
overwash them

Thursday, October 2, 2025

Paradise

who built the first croft
plowed the first field
finding heat in the peat
where was the first stone
moved from / who was the first
child / who was the first
to see their last sunset
there

Friday, October 3, 2025

Foula

rappelling down cliffs
gathering eggs / grabbing
puffins / cut them along the back
flatten and fry them / can you see
Fair Isle / can you see Orkney
no of course / a stone bench holds
pails of cold water / cormorants
smoked fish / was this home
not for you / for someone

Saturday, October 4, 2025

Bressay

time to worry / listen
for the foghorn
bank up the peat against
the heat stone / gather
the knitting / worry
that hope might fly
up the chimney and southward

Sunday, October 5, 2025

Fladdabister

stones for building
for weighing down thatch
everywhere and peat too
a sun that hesitates all
winter / rain as constant
as wind / these are all
measures of drudgery
of heaven

Monday, October 6, 2025

Stone Hit

working in a mine
he was hit by a stone
on his head / he'd run wild
all night in all directions
till one night he stormed
a croft where he grabbed
a fiddle / playing reel
after reel he at last
blasted out a new one
he went down in history
as the best fiddler
on the west side
and for writing
the best reel

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

Before The Factor

sun wading through our oat hill
ponies chewing and lazing
a mill-burn flowing unstoppable
into the inlet / enough hay and oats
for winter / peat enough to feed
and warm / but a man will come
to take it from us / he didn't
work for it

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Cast Away

the best movie ending
the sleek redhead stops
her vintage pickup by Hanks
frumpy dog in the bed
crossroads / you look
lost she says / where ya headed
she asks / he says he's figuring
that out / she describes the four
winds ending with her direction
being a whole lot of nothing
as she leaves he sees her wings
when the world is flat in every
direction take the road
heading to a whole lot of nowhere

Thursday, October 9, 2025

It's All About The Wind

sudden gusts shake the chimney
children in a box bed covered
in quilts and sheeps' wool
smoke from banked peat
no one will visit them that night
nor any other for winter
is upon the land and the wind
rain & cold is not in the mood
for friendly

Friday, October 10, 2025

Tell Stories

stories last as long as storytellers
even with squinting chimneys
and only the echoes of children playing
we take comfort in stories of milk
stones and witch help for exhausted
cows / yellow butter / rich cream
abandoned beds

Saturday, October 11, 2025

Only Bird Song

many coffins took the ride
across the sound on boats
rowed by those not stricken
by the deaths / they tied
off the bow-rope around
the church rock / see
it now / its grooves filled
with lichen and widows' tears
the boat shelter's half collapsed
inside you can see the imprint
of the boat and hear some
echoes

Sunday, October 12, 2025

Under The Brow

over here
stones abound
to for instance
weigh down thatch
ground soft to pound
in stakes / grass
green enough for
katmoget / yuglet
or smirslet sheep
but we'll move on
even from heaven
even from drudgery

Monday, October 13, 2025

Even Forever

we shaved slithers of stones
from the cliffs / we dug
and sowed oats / we carried
whey to quench thirsts
the cornerstones we cut
and placed hinted at forever
nothing is forever

Tuesday, October 14, 2025

The Great Storm of February 1900

storm so psycho
the children in one
flooded house were rescued
when neighbors in a boat
pulled aside the thatch
and snatched them out
wells near the sea
were brackish for months
the word that came to mind
was smithereens

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

News Is Always Bad

it would be nice sometimes
if something could go right
for any stretch of time

Thursday, October 16, 2025

Last Person In The Daal

mist shrouded valley
ice forming on shallow puddles
her island tight in the middle
as if a corset had cinched it
the vacant church / the pauper
house all looked on as the moon
grinned a bow over her smallest
house / she kept her sorrows
to herself / widowed by the heavy seas
her little boys all dead

Friday, October 17, 2025

Peerie Isles

wind whipping from the north
no place to shelter a boat
no beach to dry a catch
but against a hill
enough shelter for a small croft
we have three buried in Papil
and plan to leave / seaweed
carried in back baskets to green
the field / to sweeten the yard
what for?

Saturday, October 18, 2025

From The Isles

there was a day
when the sound of children
chirped as they leaped
across stream / over rock
walls / sailed into barns
behind crubs / women shook
the fresh water from their men's
pants and shirts in hopes
they'd return

Sunday, October 19, 2025

Papa Stour

on a small island
they can see green
in every direction
can see priests
sailing to offer
salvation / can see
Vikings out to name
towns / can fail
to welcome lairds
who want only more
and more / can see
at last the boats
departing with the last
of the children

Monday, October 20, 2025

Lonely Hilltop

she tried many places
to live but settled
on her hilltop
she put away the letters
informing her of death
and instead imagined children
sledding down her hill
even though the snow was rare
and she had forgotten
what hilarity and laughter
were

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

If Only

winter dim / seas
too harsh to get off
winds too strong
for out work
bring in water and peats
mend a sole / make a back
basket / wish for endless
summer

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

Foo

someone messed up
my text messages
trying to recover
reminds me of the abandoned
broken crofts on Shetland
and all the emails
I was too afraid to send

Thursday, October 23, 2025

A View

all the stones had been picked
off the hill where the view is vast
sheep could roam everywhere
cows could graze everywhere
but families one by one
moved away some as far
as New Zealand / each
taking a beach stone in pocket
now it's just the two of us
and our dog

Friday, October 24, 2025

Summer Day

her husband's boat is rounding the point
low in water / the boys sprint down the field
to the beach where their hands and arms
will sting from salt spread over the spread
of cod / the cows must wait to be milked
their calves have been slipped from their byre
she makes his meal then waits to warn
him of the low lintel / he will sleep
for a night and more / like a peat

Saturday, October 25, 2025

Hot Mow

my mother driving the tractor
made from Ford truck parts
behind her her mother
on the mower going around the field
counterclockwise cutting the timothy
and occasional snake or mole
midsummer / heat stored in the moist
air mixed with scent of cut hay
they hated each other and would
for decades / all this in my imagination
because I never paid attention

Sunday, October 26, 2025

Competing

the field once mowed and used
for good hay now let to spawn
whatever comes along / the weeds
and wild flowers love it till
they realize it's every plant
for itself

Monday, October 27, 2025

Peabody

born today
maybe 110 years ago
later she'd live on the farm
I grew up loving
somehow it seems
she was not proud
of me or what I accomplished
too far from what she knew
I wasn't so great to her either
I left her alone with her fears
she never knew that I finally
knew her secrets / or some of
them

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Women

codheads and roe
a flitboat filled with peat
a frisky heifer or bales
of wool / baskets full of knitting
we shared the haddock boat
we helped with the scything
we pulled together on the oars
of grief to get to consolation

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

Tingwall

the wrong man was courting
your mother according to the man
courting her before me / he loaded
a pistol with small stones
came after me shooting through my window
the stones scattered and missed
the sheriff arrested the wrong man
it used to be such a peaceful place

Thursday, October 30, 2025

Prayer And Work

she suggested we stay there
Christ in Desert
got us two cells near each other
it's a silence place
on the Chama River in a valley
the monks pray and chant
many times a day / they work
to support the monastery
guests can stay for lots of reasons
some keep it quiet
I wasn't thrilled by the idea
but I was the one who went to Vespers
every day / she thought I was nuts

Friday, October 31, 2025

Ending Word

I started on a day of the same name
my mother said they seemed to swap
me with a girl / after she died
they seemed to swap my mother's
ashes with man / is this what
they mean by a cosmic swap
meet

Saturday, November 1, 2025

Lino

on a stormy night I came in
from the lamb barn wondering
how we'd survive winter
how close to the stove
we'd need to sit
how glad I was to no longer
venture to sea / my wife
put on a kettle and served
oatcakes / upstair the kids
hearing the gale in the chimney
pulled the quilt to their ears

Sunday, November 2, 2025

Only Bird Song

starlings come round
startle between chimney
and barn / they care little
that there're no roads
or that we cannot plant
because the ground seized up
the only time they rest into stillness
is when the funeral boat
leaves for the churchyard
across the strait

Monday, November 3, 2025

Papa Stour With Her

to Papa Stour with the lady guide
she like me loves graveyards
so we spent hours at a kirk
headstones so old no one could carve
on them / maybe this one was the funniest
person / this the kindest / she guessed
and her guesses became facts
she told me she loved graveyards
because the people in them could never
hurt you / criticize you
asking around no one alive
knew any of their names
just like us one day she said

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

The Long View

their days here are numbered
she makes scones / he stands
at the table / gleaning is postponed
a neighbor nearby brings a mackerel
something about the beauty
brought them here / something
about the desolation / the decay
or the wind shortened their view

Wednesday, November 5, 2025

Life's A Chat

let's start with a cliché
in the book that is my life
now the LLM twist
someone behind other designed
scenes is predicting the next
word / whatever that corresponds to
with the spice of random
thrown in / but like any artist
I don't care about engagement only
estrangement

Thursday, November 6, 2025

Island Girls

from atop a hill I watched
girls going down to the haddock boats
taking lines home to dry
setting hooks / in warm clothes
they helped / other times they'd sing
their knitting folded by the fire
dance on beige beach sand / sly
over rocks / tease sea caves
all to steer blue from sea
to sky / to steer men

Friday, November 7, 2025

Last Wedding

when all was good
men began crewing drifters
other still raised walls
and families / after the laird
lost his grip and the road
went up the brow not
through the town houses
went empty / the last wedding
the sweetened bride / mutton
boiling in pots / girdle
scones baked / she crossed
the distance to the manse
in wellingtons in her hands
her wedding shoes / lights
now doused / byres broken down
geese wintering / nowhere
a cow

Saturday, November 8, 2025

On Your Own

she stood by the sea
bare crags around and out there
staring / sea stacks each with a sea eagle
or a black-back gull / only
them to share the view
what a fine day to have this world
all to yourselves she said / very isolated
in bad weather / or when you've become
old

Sunday, November 9, 2025

The Lord's Prayer

the gale did its thing
haddock boats foundered
the woman who was waiting
her husband gone
her daughter waiting to marry
her promised gone
her children all boys
gone

Monday, November 10, 2025

Nowhere / No One

the man who walked 8 miles
to fetch the crippled modwife
who carried her back through mud
over moor / who sailed around the world
and nixed marriage to a rich widow
who snubbed the thought of gold mines
in Australia / who chose to defend
the laird's sheep and keep them within walls
has been cleared by the factor
this is where nowhere lies

Tuesday, November 11, 2025

Day In Tamworth

Tamworth lot hard to access
widening the road forced a berm
with debris / garage door unlocked
with effort but inside it was all
cobwebs and frass / nothing
to save but a typewriter
possible purchasers stopped
by like The Walking Dead

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Driving

everything just a little
too tiring or hurting too
much / worry about whether
I'll get home / the crudl
president wants me to suffer

Thursday, November 13, 2025

Chicks

women in Newburyport
stroll slow and in the way
dress like Paris
sneer like all mine

Friday, November 14, 2025

Down To The Waterline

how many ways can I hurt
the back / the toilet
the names forgotten
the embarrassed comments
I couldn't see everything
on my drive and I'll
never return

Saturday, November 15, 2025

Oh Dear

the christmas tree up and almost decorated
30 feet tall / men adding decorations in a cherry picker
in front of the building the webcam sits on that I watch
Newburyport / I missed it this trip

Sunday, November 16, 2025

Instead Of Selling

some day it will become
long ago that I took my daughter
to see the old Tamworth place
where she remembered the house
that I had to tear down
where the driveway had been blocked
by a berm / where the pines
had started up / where the frass filled
garage held time in its weak poor
hands / and I gave it to her

Monday, November 17, 2025

GB

imagining the feel she
must feel when one man
after another enjoys
her / I decide to write

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Hospice

I chose to spend days
at a house where a woman
I don't know was dying
but she was cogent
she knew why I was there
I was there to help her die
I was there to watch her die
I was there to keep her last
days from loneliness

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

Mill Stone Dancing

when there is almost
nothing but stone
from height to shore
the houses will tumble
not rot / when everyone
leaves for town streets
for far islands
for better wives
the roof will celebrate
by falling onto your bed

Thursday, November 20, 2025

Affording Fun

when the snow came
to town covering
every sleddable hill
we vowed to climb
every one / slide
every one / this
was all the orgy
kids could expect
until the waves
came and grew

Friday, November 21, 2025

Thanks To You

walking around the headstone
that will one day mark my place
I feel like a writer writing
the scene of his burial
to be able to experience
what no one does
no one wants

Saturday, November 22, 2025

Firsts

do you ever wonder
who was first
to bound ashore
to turn over a stone
dig a row for seeds
lay down a floor and dance
on it until it gleams
tend to a sea haul
with knives and pans
to love someone so much
a life appears
cut down and dig out
crops and roots
to look west while
the real sun
and the one that's you
fades then sets

Sunday, November 23, 2025

Over A Shoulder

the house started as a croft
just stones set into shapes
to thwart the gales and sea spray
these days they'd have a window
to look out to the small islands
not far offshore / but the wife
who first lived here must have pined
for a chimney and any window looking
out any direction for letting in any
sunlight those times it was out there

Monday, November 24, 2025

Billy Bob

my job
a simple one you'd think
was to set her down at the kitchen table
and give her a good hard
listen to
and when she finally came
to know the future she needed
make it come true

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

Short Line

she had flowers and bushes
in circled plots all through her yard
and every evening in Summer she
my father and I would tour them
she'd point out their progress
or work she'd done on them that morning
plans for improvements / changes
for the next year / a ritual
every day it didn't rain all Summer
and part of Fall / for years
you'd never guess she hated
everyone / especially my father
and me

Wednesday, November 26, 2025

Oh Lord

staring at the webcam
showing a town near the town
I grew up in / listening to sad
songs / listening to the song
Quux and I used for the In Memoriam
in 50 In 50 I noticed the keyboard
a tad wet

Thursday, November 27, 2025

Music And Driving

we sat in a circle
around the folk singer
in Amherst / in that circle
a woman listened who one
day after our son was born
would divorce me for not wanting
that boy / one day she drove
away and I cried for hours
in the lap of another
but for then the music
was all we knew
three women and two guitars
their music was all around us
the car turned a corner
at the end of our street
I never saw them again
or so I thought

Friday, November 28, 2025

Cold Hard

what I wanted was a way to get better
bad cold / profound coughing
nose draining / lungs in pain
shivering / cold in a harsh way
tonight I must sleep sitting up
if I want to live

Saturday, November 29, 2025

Market Cross Tree

the tree in Market Cross
when its lights are off
looks like pure greenery
earlier it was sparkles
almost like I saw it
in reverse time
Christmas miracle
or just loneliness
on steroids

Sunday, November 30, 2025

West Of Las Vegas New Mexico

from his compound
to the forlorn stage coach
station was through a field
of holes and cattle pies
it was dry New Mexico
land and air / it was almost
like waiting for the next train
its whistle blowing / bright
horses beyond a horizon
he cooked for us and his women
none of whom loved him anymore
it was his paradise but he didn't
know it then / everything around
felt lonely

Monday, December 1, 2025

For Adults

for Christmas I remained
a child until 16
I asked my mother for a bulldog
tank from Sears and she got me one
a ridiculous gift for my age
but she was fighting my father
for child supremacy and willing
to buy whatever I asked for
you can still find them for
sale on eBay / kids stuff

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Not Again

too many times I've
said or wrote things
that later I felt so bad
about that I withdrew
from friendships to avoid
reminding them what a loser
I had been

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Travel Time

I was always ready for the next trip
to mirror the last trip but as I age
the mirror fades and the resemblance
becomes a mockery the answer of time

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Cold Alone

in winter I was alone
many days / many weeks
all I did was listen to songs
usually the same one or two
over and over and over and
that was when I was young
now that I'm old I'm
doing it again over and

Friday, December 5, 2025

Far From Town

alone over weekends
on the farm / when it got dark
I kept all the lights on
I locked all the doors
I shook all over
in bed I'd put the biggest
knife in the house under my pillow
I don't have this fear any more
but ones just like it

Saturday, December 6, 2025

Best Roads

the best roads lead the worst
of us away / I found one
leading out of Merrimac
I found one leading out
of Champaign / one day
I'll find one out of
Redwood City

Sunday, December 7, 2025

Fair?

a life can take a whole long time
how many millions of decisions
how many dozens of important events
dreams by the bushel and hopes for loves
and gets / but when the time comes
there are only some words
some people gathered around a hole
summary in two or three pages
a final fade that takes only days
maybe one or two will cry for years

Monday, December 8, 2025

Lerwick Romance

spray and wind coming across the pier
two women and I paused by the force
mother and daughter / intending
for a bakery for biscuits and coffee
we're as far north as sense allows
some wonder which I claim
but such unwelcome thoughts don't help
the orange washed night is unhelpful too
beds await

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

O Lord

sitting by a window
by a river's end and near
the sea after the sun's
been left behind / I drag
the past back to present
all I can do is write
the past doesn't get
a say / the present is dark
and slipping into the sea

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

How Stupid Can Someone Be?

in high school I loved a girl
who didn't like my pants
she liked jocks
she went on to a hidden
pregnancy / later married
a dump picker / became
a Jehovah's Witness
for Christmas I thought
about buying her perfume

Thursday, December 11, 2025

This Stupid

cold and snow
didn't matter / I'd
ride my bike the 3 miles
to her house but I'd
pretend to visit her brother
her mother / her father
Huck / everyone knew
it I suppose / except
me

Friday, December 12, 2025

Eye Doctor Fiasco

I won't sleep for days
another physician deciding
to make it hard to go on
what if I can't drive
can't read / can't see
is it worth most of our money
to avoid that

Saturday, December 13, 2025

Still Tired

I sliced my toe last night
spent hours fro m midnight on
watching Perry Mason in mono
and B&W / part of the fine
for stupidity

Sunday, December 14, 2025

Grey

maybe my fate is to sit
right here listening
to clear music / writing
inconsequential stories
never venturing out
as my body caves into itself
let it slide over me

Monday, December 15, 2025

North Nights With Her

sometimes she decided to burn peat
sometimes she picked up a fiddle
every time it was cold outside
dark outside / windy outside
most times she was chilly to me
even under the covers

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

A Night + Light Snow

while walking down an alley
in New England in winter
I came to a window above
a shadow behind a curtain
a movement to go with it
underneath it all a song
made to drift riverward
upward / far awayward

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Constantly

riverbank near sundown
river making up its mind
a green bridge nearby and lonely
it's all come down to this
overlooked and ordinary
nothing but music
but so pretty like the times
I'd sit in the cold room
listening to the same thing
for hours

Thursday, December 18, 2025

Hopi, For Example

you'd think with such
a long drive with many
stops we'd find a way
to be friendly but
instead it was always
a word fight or Q&A
session with me in
second place

Friday, December 19, 2025

A Trip To Skip

when we came upon friends
of hers she forgot I was
with her / when dinner
was involved sometimes
she'd ignore my cravings
when asked whether salmon
was ok days before our visit
she never thought I'd
have a different answer from hers
I almost decided to drive back
without her even though 1200 miles
were in the way / she didn't
notice

Saturday, December 20, 2025

Porch Life

from Québec comes a trio
that plays sad songs only
like the times I've been loved
their slow tempo and her
shallow voice help the darkness
feel welcoming / it helps
that the few tubes the music
comes through throw a wide
rich stage / reminds me
of the porch she never sat
with me on

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Some Win, Some Lose

52 years ago I married
my friend did too
but I married one of his girlfriends
he married another of them
he didn't like that
he married on the 22nd
I on the 23rd
it was fun to see which friends
went to which wedding
or both
he's still married to her
not me

Monday, December 22, 2025

Piano Unmanned

in a cold room playing
a piano just barely in tune
once I thought I was good
my tempo was poor
mistakes abounded
but cold room reverberated
what I could manage
I knew no idioms
I naturally played no classical
playing every night but
I was not disciplined
after a few dozen years
I gave it up

Tuesday, December 23, 2025

Marrying Kind Of

52 years ago for me
two priests / kneeling
before them / my father
fumbling on an organ
in her high school
chapel not much different
from a convent / I had promised
a priest in Illinois there was a chance
I could convert / seemed great
until she down away in some April
seven years later

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Perfection In Strange Places

the sounds of a piano's mechanism
the drop of a sheet of music
a phone ringing in a club
fingers / of course / scratching
guitar strings / lips pulling apart
these imperfections are some of the ways
we know people were on the other side
of the microphones

Thursday, December 25, 2025

Paradise

not a good day
possible damage
to my prized speakers
drainage problems
during supper
a mess to clean
up / this is worst
case for me / I
spook easily

Friday, December 26, 2025

Aloneness

I remember being evil
a natural outcome of youngness
a lonely family
far from everyone
that I think I'm over it now
is a statement of fact
hope or faith

Saturday, December 27, 2025

Snow Night

shoveling snow for hours
making a path then a driveway
later I wrapped my legs in wool
blankets then under a down thing
the weight of the snow
the heat of the sleeptime
all far away

Sunday, December 28, 2025

Drone

sometimes when the future
feels far off the little
bits of perfection feel
optional / when the past
feels far off those lost
bits of perfection feel
essential

Monday, December 29, 2025

Numb

lots of ways to sit
by the river on a Summer
afternoon / all involve
looking at water going
one way then another
letting the breezes in
through open windows
closing eyes for minutes
or hours / pretending the sky
cares about you and your life
listening to cars jolt
the bridge's joints
finally wondering about who
else has been right here

Tuesday, December 30, 2025

By The River

alone in Brown Sugar by the Sea
eating soup and pad thai / across
from me luscious woman reading
a book on Hegel / I considered
a pass but passed / she ordered
as I did Thai iced coffee / I
shouldn't have written luscious

Wednesday, December 31, 2025

Ritual of Unknown Meaning

around the Christmas tree
in Market Square a minute
before year's end a couple
walked up to the tree in rain
he held his phone I think
to see the time of renewal
come upon them and because
they were early and maybe
because it was cold and wet
they kept walking around the tree
until the clock was all zeroes
then they stopped on the far side
staying for a full minute
doing something couples do
at last they came round again
and headed down toward Victoria
Pier where the coldest water
awaited