

Nothing To Inscribe But Stones

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Saturday, January 1, 2022

Lover's Bell

inscribed on the church bell
is my lover's name / spot-welded
on by my closest friend one weekend
every Tuesday three minutes before dawn
I climb to the belfry on a ladder
and sound the bell just once
the sound's beauty starts with
the name on the bell / the name I love

Sunday, January 2, 2022

Cliff Ends

the end of this island
is a steep hill ending
with a sharp cliff
many lovers no doubt
have ended here too
to get there you walk
miles up the long hill
sometimes you pass
three tall stones
they are there
for your wonderment

Monday, January 3, 2022

Sunless

I imagined her in her
swimsuit tanned rough
by the sun over weeks
of Summer / I imagined
her stripping off her
bottoms and tops whiteness
her sunless skin
the same white skin
as the day she was born

Tuesday, January 4, 2022

Big Poetry

I wrote in brushstrokes
the poetry of forgetting
the tip of my brush small
in beginning firelight
later that night
as the fire grew my poems
became fat and furious

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Cleaved

in frosty mountain country
she stayed in her cabin
while painting her memory
of Spring day after day
while clouds basked above
one morning the sun arrived
heating the southern face
of her cabin and she decided
to open / the door to face the sun
her kimono to warm her hidden self

Thursday, January 6, 2022

Site of Mirages

she got in her car
one desert morning
she had packed and prepared
and the car was full
of every thing
on the road away
heat waves rose and her car
and she became for a time
mirages / as if never happened
she / her car / every thing

Friday, January 7, 2022

Night Ball / Haverhill

in 1960 the first time
I saw a baseball game
played at night over
in Haverhill the field
was lit from three directions
by panels of lights held
on posts / the light was unreal
as many things artificial then were
and the light on the players and field
formed a mystery more alluring
than the game itself

Saturday, January 8, 2022

Grief

after she died I fell
into grief spending
each day in a chair
looking out and each
night in that chair
looking out / one night
someone walking by
stepped on a withered
branch and the dull snap
of it deepened my already
immeasurable sadness

Sunday, January 9, 2022

Hedge

along the road to town
a rose hedge sat low
and when I rode by each day
the roses would redden
my day / but come night
heading home the low hedge
was invisible / only stars
above and redness below

Monday, January 10, 2022

Ice

our small home
small pond next it
we next to the sea
in Winter once
a thin skin of ice
on our nearby pond
the sea nearby
was too vast for ice

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

Softness

I visited once / alone
a shrine near Nara
in Winter when every mouth
is hungry / just inside
a woman stood with her hands
over a charcoal fire used
usually for cooking but that day
it was reflecting the fire
onto her soft hands held over it

Wednesday, January 12, 2022

Too Beauties

the wall runs east to west
the peach tree grows flat
against the southern side
the sun shines on the tree
as it warms the bricks
behind the tree the warm bricks
themselves warm the peaches
on the tree / it has a slightly
dozy quality / the tree carefully tied
to grow flat against the wall
warming the bricks
the peaches growing in the sun
the wild grass growing
around the roots of the tree
in the angle where the earth and
roots and wall all meet

this marks a radical break
from traditional composition
and perspective / five naked
women made of flat splintered planes
faces inspired by Iberian sculpture
and African masks / the compressed space
they inhabit appears to project forward
in jagged shards while a slice of melon
in the still life at the bottom
teeters on an upturned tabletop

Thursday, January 13, 2022

Floor

her bedroom was upstairs
not allowed up there / you see
one night when she was out
I wound my way up her spiral stairs
cold up there / always cold I think
she had a rug on the wood floor
there to help keep her room warm
even with the rug / I was cold too

Friday, January 14, 2022

The Chief

on the Southwest Chief route
across withered wheat fields
in Kansas / the sun ready
to set / looking out the window
I put my hand beneath it
holding it up I thought
if the wheat fields could
they'd laugh

Saturday, January 15, 2022

All Nighter

we sat up all night
waiting for the aurora
clouds came instead
clouds left sometimes
we thought we saw some green
but perhaps we had simply dozed
we sat with my arms around her
the sunrise was dull full red

Sunday, January 16, 2022

Clappers

we were staying in a foreign city
our night stove was going out / coals orange
turning red / we heard wood clappers clapping
up the way / louder toward us
softer away / next day a passerby
told us men with clappers went through towns
warning people to tend their stoves
their fires so the town would not burn
we stared

Monday, January 17, 2022

Night Train

night / a railroad bridge
across a black river
a train crossing reflects
off the river / reflects
on the river / who rides
the train

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

Wind Drift

wind comes down from the north
over a mountain famous for grit
then by farms and houses like ours
down the river valley that ends in sea
that wind never returns / once ours
it's now yours

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Change of Place

when she lived in Arles
she was a French woman
lovely under a slightly
northern sun / dressed
in weak colored fashions
when she lived in Boston
she was an American woman
sweating in Summer / shivering
in Winter / wet in the rain
roasting under the sun
in a lesser latitude in undesigned
outfits / eating bad food

Thursday, January 20, 2022

Moon White

in that other place
drinking tea and eating slowly
the moon was happy to intrude
its light washed everything
satin white / our host
thought to close the paper doors
sliding them together so that
the moonside doored wall was solid white
but for a black stripe
drifting down its middle

Friday, January 21, 2022

Level Plane

when she was old
with her hands filled with trembles
for Christmas we'd always
have a rare soup and I'd worry
the soup she'd bring to our table
would spill shaken onto the floor
but she insisted on carrying bowls
as she always did / the level bowls
were her way of delivering Christmas spirit

Saturday, January 22, 2022

Chocorua

the top of the mountain
granite of a pile
lakes below and cars on roads
my feet might not make it down
my legs feel fine / how
many more times can I do this

Sunday, January 23, 2022

Carver

a carver's shop where
he sculpted beauty from hard
wood / it seemed the road
outside was snow covered
instead it was shavings
and curled

Monday, January 24, 2022

Milk Vetch

worried about milk-vetch
and what poets know about it
three-sided fields are lucky
to have it / not all plants
save such fields from bad luck

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Who

we met on a lonely trail
near the treeless hilltop
from Iceland she said
with her close accent
without saying much
we stayed together all
Spring / the story
of it has little detail
curiosity I suppose
catching hold long enough
to make for forgettable memories
her name had several accents

Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Crabs

I sensed the danger
Winter in the cold
with a companion similar
my thoughts were of quilts
and stews / writing and walking
hers not sure / near shore
I'd watch crabs coming to our town
when danger snuck up / into
a drainpipe the crabs would go
how simple

Thursday, January 27, 2022

Bus

alone in my row
I doze in and out
across New Mexico toward
Texas / all the x names
lined up / the night
is a desert night
and the Greyhound flows
from town to small town
looking for any sort
of everything

Friday, January 28, 2022

To: rpg

I wake and open my email
dozens or even more notes
some silly some selling / some
from friends and one special
you might call my software
organized mailbox clean
I find it cluttered
my mind is at ease

Saturday, January 29, 2022

Readers

on the island we sat
each reading what we could
nightfall / too dark
to read more / she said
too cold

Sunday, January 30, 2022

Sadnesses

the news was sad
news is / I worked
my way into the woods
where my father had cut
down trees and found a stump
around it / sawdust / good
place to meditate
and forget sadness altogether

Monday, January 31, 2022

No Contest

I stopped to watch
outside the library
running up the steps
two young women
wearing shorts on the right
type of day / the books
inside nudge closer together

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Clouds

after we woke and did all
our morning things / we stepped
outside / she shrugged
such an ocean of blue
once all those clouds
pass away

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Door

gone from the croft
morning / my woman friend
after a warm near night
gone like a cloud
near the door
my lonely shoes

Thursday, February 3, 2022

Worm

the book did not let go
it was its own dream
when I closed it finally
and rubbed my eyes looking
out the window / dawn

Friday, February 4, 2022

Waker

staying at her place
quick visit / no point
I was staying downstairs
on a mattress on the floor
she up spiral stairs
every morning not a rooster
not a clock / not traffic noise
but her loud moaning yawn

Saturday, February 5, 2022

Quest

on a boulder on a ridge
watching below the pines
move through a mist just up
from the valley and the two
lakes lurking down there
where is she

Sunday, February 6, 2022

Never Mind

the house next door
hunkered vacant for a year
while the warmth and cold
came and went like Eliot said
we were then comfortable
with its ignorant darkness
but one night a light
then several and smoke
from the chimney / new
neighbors we thought
no other theory came
to mind

Monday, February 7, 2022

Ear Training

slipping down two stairs
to Nana's rooms then down
two more to the piano room
cold but I light an oil furnace
the piano is a parlor grand
I play it quietly and over months
and years I got a little better
but the songs crept low
the room warmed a bit / I played
an hour / this was the year
I didn't speak

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

Sparkling Lights

October night on Bressay
lighting a peat fire
boiling water on the Rayburn
book of long poems by my chair
the lights of Lerwick
across the strait / a ferry
crossing

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Barking

the evening playing out
calm and mild / the last
cloud behind a tree that looks
like a barking dog
and then the neighbors
inventors of dimwittedness
start to argue

Thursday, February 10, 2022

Dim

it made no sense
at first / the sun
growing dimmer over
the afternoon while
I sat by the harbor
a last time with her
then foghorns jumped in
the fog jumped in
she did not jump

Friday, February 11, 2022

Fresh

nothing but sitting
early in the morning
by the harbor / reading
and smelling the wind over
the waves / near a small church
soon to become redundant
this didn't stop the priest
who rang the bell like a reunion
in hell / the day's calm dispersed
and the catch was fresh
in on the docks

Saturday, February 12, 2022

Bait

the moon rests in the bare
branches of autumn trees
they wave freely and the moon
is on the loose / across the street
a jail

Sunday, February 13, 2022

Super Chief

lying in bed next to her
the horizon around us vast
and distant / the night
the same / I heard a train
horn distant to the east
in a while the sound of it
hard and harsh / but what
I noticed most was our window
rattling

Monday, February 14, 2022

Train Of

clouds overhead / overheard
as they flash past / where
they go is a stop on everyone's
train ride / eternity

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Grainy

in Kansas grain elevators
are seen 20 miles away
gray silver silos nearby
the roads lead to them
trains pass by them
we fill them with grain
they fill us

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Windless

I didn't see it
a leaf dropping
from a rich maple
swirling because of itself
and the air / not carried
by wind / a windless night
my dream of change

Thursday, February 17, 2022

Mountain Spring

in Spring I sat by
fast water coming down
from melting snow
on my favorite mountain
it looked cold so I waited
to cup my hand under a small fall
then I drank / everything smelled
wet and new

Friday, February 18, 2022

Wet Night

sitting in my car
by the river
after a rainstorm
under a tree
at dusk / a puddle
to my right still
under the tree
the river sloughs by
just before too dark
a single drop drops
rattles the puddle

Saturday, February 19, 2022

Emily Departed

what would you leave
at Emily's grave
some leave small stones
others pencils
more extravagant / pens
books I think / I left
a laptop with a special
large key for her angled dashes
and the right font too

Sunday, February 20, 2022

Firestorm

red on the horizon
not the sun but a fire
smoke blowing away from me
house or forest
disaster

Monday, February 21, 2022

Missing

the radiator's hissing
staying in a stranger's
house in a snow storm
no where to go because
you can't get there anyway
far away a bride is waiting
for a car to take her here
through the snow / toward
the hissing

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Alone

alone / in old clothes
in an old house / by
a hot stove / on
a rainy night / near
a surging sea / without
a book to read / under
a false impression / with
a woman near by who hates me

Wednesday, February 23, 2022

Stone Street

across the narrow town street
I can hear a woman / a sob
and some words / my couch
is by the front window
one story up / from sitting
on it sideways while reading
it's become untidy or rumpled

Thursday, February 24, 2022

Driven

a simple road straight
through a string of fields
trees every 30 feet spaced
evenly on both sides planted
after the war and in Summer
the leaves make a gentle tunnel
it seems to lead everywhere
the sky makes its promise
and the trees do as well
but a road is a road
we drive

Friday, February 25, 2022

Standing There

I've made my plan
I like making plans
when the moon's lower
edge passes over
the power line's upper wire
I'll call her

this plan is like my others
the outcomes all the same

Saturday, February 26, 2022

Cold Thoughts

after years of waiting
I went into the woods
to mediate / I left
it was too cold

Sunday, February 27, 2022

Blur

the hills here are smooth
though steep / covered only
in peatish grass / the cliffs
are vertical and daggered
here I'm walking hand in hand
with the universal schoolteacher
through a valley the hills make
it is morning and the mist
blurs the world and me and her

Monday, February 28, 2022

White Trees

I stand before these birches
having come back from a lifelong
journey that took me everywhere
but only as tourist / others
spent their lives building lives
and people loved them everywhere
where they stopped was a sunshining
place / instead I stand before
these birches / the ones that waved
goodbye / they are my consolation
prize / you went / you didn't stay
you came back

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

Long Distance

I hitch hiked across America
to you / I should have written
first / my hands neck and hands
now leather from sun and rain
who picked me up you could ask
I'd tell stories / and lots
but you were not home
the day I knocked

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Mail

on a rainy night
the postman was late
the toilet window blazed
across the street a cat
was hiding / somewhere
someone was knocking
on a door / sometimes
she wore pajamas / not
tonight / the rain

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Bird

a blizzard was just
starting / the wind
from the West / snow
from above / she told
me to scatter some stale
bread before the snow
piled up for birds
needing to hunker
I did / there was
just one

Friday, March 4, 2022

Sea Horses

I thought farther north
would be too much
60° as some would say
the place / the temp
all of it too concise
for Spring

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Leaving

we strolled High Street
in a northern city
town more like it
Autumn of course / the air
a little frost / a little
sea foam / there were no
trees about but we saw
Autumn leaves all orange
and red / we saw them
in the display window
of a dress store / she
laughed

Sunday, March 6, 2022

Borealis

aurora from Unst
we didn't need to wait up long
the greens / the violets
the cloud embossing it all black
a ship out at sea
sounds of sheep / and a breeze
we lay there on bitter grass
undulations

Monday, March 7, 2022

Hail

where I live is in
the cloud business
supplying cover year round
& with it rain and snow
the place makes different sorts
in more colors than you'd believe
the ones that people remember
are black on the bottom
the ones that kill are green

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Pleasure Bay

in the bay by South Boston
when I was a kid
the pier that went out by
Castle Island / not an island
was just pieces left over
from time / we'd walk there
after Thanksgiving meal
there wasn't anything to see
everything was gone
everything is gone

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Costains'

the party downstairs
in red or orange light
teenagers dancing various ways
or kissing on couches
around the place / why
was I invited and my buddy
upstairs on the piano
we played heart and soul

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Bored

the aurora flairs
above the compound
above the inlet
to the North Sea
we waver as sheep lie
about and a power pole
crosses my vision

Friday, March 11, 2022

Damage

one day I stopped to watch
unseen a man sharpening his knife
he was bent and stooping
grinding and whetting with a wheel
then a stone / over and over
he ground / he wanted a sharp knife
his sleeves became tattered
with sandpaper of different grits
he was working scary sharp
he bent and steeled the knife
with a honing steel / the edge
coming straight / a sharp knife
his hair turned white / his face creased
the sound of his work / I listened
he stooped and stropped with a razor
strop and then a buffing wheel
the man was sharpening his knife
not more than bones and a heavy sigh
and I watched and I listened
and he kept at it
kept at it

Saturday, March 12, 2022

Dismay

her voice behind me / a far away place
she is persistent about things
she can no longer see
she can not speak words / only torn letters
in drenched paragraphs / what she can see
will one day be mine / she is still filled
with love / but her place will cure that
I turn to her and turn

Sunday, March 13, 2022

Facing It

without ending
the snow will fall
bringing with it
a broken down scarecrow
its face like straw
popping out of a sack
over this scene
a tumbled down sky

Monday, March 14, 2022

Kiss

I close my eyes and the world
goes away / all that's left
is the weight of her lips
and theory

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Weeds

so we walked through the field
the weeds grew in contentment
as time went by weeds' shadows
made their way away from us
as time went by weeds grew
our legs disappeared
the weeds grew in contentment
we walked through the field
again and again

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Found Blue

I stood there where the blue sky
like to taunt me about hours
and felt I had lost my important idea
next to a ditch so I went
to the nearest lost and found office
and found the day had been lost
and I filled brim with distress

Thursday, March 17, 2022

Faces

the harbor was getting bright
but a brightness wet as moonlight
when a song is reverberating
through the streets behind
those whose turn is waiting
the wind disturbing the sea
has brought faces here / faces
dead from their long journeys
pale as the light on the harbor
they come at me / they come by me
they pass and their sea smells linger
they pass on into the streets
I wait there for something

Friday, March 18, 2022

Bridge

the bridge crosses
an undecided river
the sky above at night
is an ocean of wounds
one side is not the future
one side not the past
the bridge crosses from this shore
to that / a man filled with age
and a woman just coming down the hill
meet with confidence and casually
hug / the night wind is cold

Saturday, March 19, 2022

Lights

the light bathes us
we sit on a boulder thrown
up by waves and the moon
lights us too and cars
on the far hill / we
are chilled and kissing
when the beat of darkness
comes / before the next wave
of lighthouse light

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Speak, Cow!

in our barn a cow
is eating all the time
moving its mouth and making
sounds / the roof is like
a sky and the lofts
hold more hay and enough hay
all day the cow eats
all day the roof is like a sky
the cow's mouth moves all day
the cow says nothing all day

Monday, March 21, 2022

Moon Walk

full moon and mid night
my hands and head in brightness
I am walking on and on nowhere
the grass is moving in this light
if she were with me we'd be walking
as if by accident / touching her hand
we have each told lies

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

Autumn Comes

autumn doesn't like insects
so it buffets them with wind
chills them to paralysis
autumn loves scarcity
so takes everything away
puts it all underground
autumn hopes for remorse
but will settle for regret
autumn will accept the excuse
of forgetting

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Sadness In The End

the first thing you write
when you are free to choose the thing
is the form your soul wants to achieve
you might take side trips
side trips one by one after another
on the day you die / at that moment
you will recall that lost manuscript
it's the you you never were and
all it will do now is make your last
moments moments of tears

Thursday, March 24, 2022

Riverside

a river bank / a willow row
in a boat going down that river
rain going down too
to keep dry I keep to the bank
instead of drops the willows
drop on my shoulders

Friday, March 25, 2022

Web

we walked out toward the sea
a day after a suffering rain
going up the small hill
a set of tracks / perhaps a fox
a dog / something like that
she said to me that now that
we can see the prints we can know
what that fox / that dog was thinking
what was left behind

Saturday, March 26, 2022

Passing Eyes

beneath oaks and eucalyptus
women are passing by and I watch
their eyes are dark from the place
they're from / those once looked
down but summer tells them
look ahead / look up

Sunday, March 27, 2022

Scholar

on a walk an older blonde woman
asked if I was a scholar
we had met by randomness on a hill
no one had ever asked me that
I looked at her while my brain crashed
she was older as in not a fabulous babe
but young next to me / from Bavaria
we kept walking for bit up the hill
then we went different ways

Monday, March 28, 2022

White Blur

the moonlight of birches stuns
the fenceposts though are in fog

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

True Death

who will mourn me
I suppose I don't care
I'll write the story of it instead
and think of that as the truth

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Rain

I am standing in the rain
she is standing with me in the rain
everyone I met today is standard there too
all my ancestors are standing in the rain
all the world is there too
everyone who ever live or will live
is standing in the rain
what is rain?

Thursday, March 31, 2022

Puzzle

I am distracted by hacking
thinking about problems
around me fans are humming
I am puzzled by the puzzles
there are no solutions
just corners to look in

Friday, April 1, 2022

Oiks

a woman I know became invisible
behind a ridge / behind a hill
a woman I know grew silent
the hill a damper / the ridge a hinderance
a woman I know stopped looking
the sky was like a sea / the clouds
were like an ocean / she told me once
the clouds sometimes were coulds

Saturday, April 2, 2022

Sceptic Tank

a lot of work for a page
but it makes it complete
who cares that it's critical
of an important man / I
am always the sceptic

Sunday, April 3, 2022

Woods

what is possible to be
where to live while doing it
my dreams shrink in scope
but blossom in realism
now there are people I know in them
the prospects are narrowing
I stay alert to regress
I loved the pine trees in our woods

Monday, April 4, 2022

Tone Arm

music coming at me
from a turntable more expensive
than a decent house in Illinois
playing through among other things
tubes older than I am / but the music
is just a drone while work on work
and my ears are not good any more
the music is like a light massage
after the wrong turn

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Nostalgia

I long for the drive around Merrimac
and Haverhill and Newburyport
the old-time food / the wet warm air
mowed grass / lilacs / ocean air
river air / but when / never?
not soon? / pushback

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Discarded Horse

the discarded horse roams
the hills behind here
watching it I feel loneliness
thinking about it I am agitated
who would discard a horse
horses have served us for centuries
at least / I have been discarded too
but I deserved it

Thursday, April 7, 2022

Discards

I wish to discard melancholy
perhaps after turning the corner
that leads to the florist
where the windows are colored
the color of the flowers behind it
if I were sad I'd wander this shop
find flowers to give to the source
of my down / instead of discarding
my melancholy perhaps I could turn
away from the shop so the linkage
breaks like dawn after rain

Friday, April 8, 2022

River Wrong

the river mouth is open to the sea
when the time is wrong storms
surge upriver as far as the first bridge
where we first met and at last
the water forces pushing in and pulsing
out balance the way we never did
as all do eventually you found
the paths in me too faint to follow
too unlikely to go anywhere

Saturday, April 9, 2022

Wet

I brought in the wet newspaper
the words and letters and characters
coming off on my hands / on my fingers
the paper was below my blooming cherry
and the pink or white petals coming off
on my hands / in my fingers
at the kitchen table she watched
before her a plate of eggs
the world was blending into an argument

Sunday, April 10, 2022

Experiencing

carrying a pack full of groceries
up the hill to home from the stoned town
the moon at my back drilling my shadow
to the ground so that I can experience
walking over myself

Monday, April 11, 2022

Alone All Night

I watch them upstairs
silhouettes nothing more
up late they watch tv
outside rain / sometimes snow
a small third floor flat
alone

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

Old Ways

I visited a strange grave today
in a cemetery high above the main road
way up in back a set of headstones
from a string of families now side
by side and down / one was new
a plastic flower plugging a vase
I got here by train and a walk
I wanted everything to be the old way
cedars and golden straw

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

Leaning

the fire is peat against a stone
I am sitting at my table either
writing or learning / the peat burns
and then burns down / I learn / I write
after enough time has passed she brings
in a new brick of peat and leans it on
the fire still holding on / the fire
warms me again as I write or as I learn

Thursday, April 14, 2022

Naked Woman

she stripped while I waited
for a minute she was naked
while I was nearby / you
would think we'd do more
but naked was all she would do
as she doffed her summer dress
and donned her autumn dress

Friday, April 15, 2022

Carla

I wrote to her and it was a silly note
I wondered if she ever knew I wrote it
we were in junior high / a year later
she moved away / it wasn't her looks I liked
not sure what though / she died near me
15 years ago / that would have been our story

Saturday, April 16, 2022

Bell Stop

the ringer has stopped with the bell
I know that from sound and counting
the rings no longer coming yet
the bell sounds don't stop
won't stop as long as there are no
leaves to keep the echoes away

Sunday, April 17, 2022

Big Horn

the places where they fell
now topped by stones as if
a national place of mourning
reluctantly far away from their mothers
I tell this story though I didn't die there
I didn't fight / neither side
some say none should tell it but them
it's a matter of craft

Monday, April 18, 2022

Cancel

there is a fleeting reluctance
to tell it / to turn away from it
some say I have no right to write
the lives of anyone but me
because to do so is to elevate class
and my class is not allowed

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

Wild West

they blame technology
but the urges are in person
blaming things always safe
some tell a pretty story
and they believe what they can
someone deep in the spirit
is drinking many lines

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

All I Want

will my energy leap one last time
will the few who love me be asleep
when it does / will the long black
of before be the long black of ahead
I did what I could but I was lazy
and simple things took too long
to perfect / I was not much

Thursday, April 21, 2022

Road Curve

the road heads to the past
curving through the present
both sides a deep forest
the past is a river or ocean
everything below and a reflection
blocks every view / you might
have thought I was talking about the future
the future is the pothole of imagination

Friday, April 22, 2022

Long Corridor at the Airport

the corridor seems to narrow
behind me doors close
I hope they will open again
what's ahead is dark because
the lights are set to sense
behind me echoes bound toward me
the floor seems tilted

Saturday, April 23, 2022

Frozen

cold / the pond is frozen
edges of the stream
the ground so hard it hurts to walk
this is all outside
in here there is cold
inside us is cold
as hard as a click

Sunday, April 24, 2022

Boundary

our back field was the border
between commonwealth and state
walking back there I'd cross
and not know / no marks
I thought the maker of the farm
could have put in a stone wall
to show the boundary but didn't
laziness / one day I'll die

Monday, April 25, 2022

Up and Out

the laughter next door ate through my walls
when I was trying to be sad enough
I went upstairs and made lunch
the coding went poorly
the laughing continued

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

Bad Hacking

what a kludge / what a hack
tomorrow or sometime I will fix it
or explain it in notes
sheesh

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

You Are Everything

rain on boats
tied up in the harbor
seems to move the boats
up the street is up the hill
the upper floor flat's lights
always on late in the rain
we watch the rain / we watch
the boats / we watch the hill
the lights / the cascades
down the harbor / there are things
we don't watch

Thursday, April 28, 2022

Roads Etc

the river road knows cars too well
the river knows about love in cars
the road knows the river hates it
the lovers know about river roads

Friday, April 29, 2022

Wedding Along

they danced their wedding dance
it was the kind of love that requires
stupidity and slight education
but he was in a fashionable tux
she in a bone dress and blonde
her hair was dancing and their teeth
were solid white / I needed to sleep

Saturday, April 30, 2022

Blur

things once sharp blur and blend
until what once was something
is now everything / he sadly said

Sunday, May 1, 2022

Helpless

someone pretending to fake a world
spent early hours taking spikes of slate
carving foolishly onto them then
hammering them into the side of a hill
covered hardly with oaks and spread thin
later a crying woman came by
and labeled it a cemetery / why not

Monday, May 2, 2022

Goodbye US

it's a rare treat to be alive
when a proud country turns sour
when an era is starting to end
today I heard again that this is up
now it's time to think
where to live

Tuesday, May 3, 2022

Movie Times

a movie of us climbing a mountain
the music of hard hiking
they were stronger than I was then
and they were stronger than I am now
granite and green lichen
lakes below and a road
but it's a movie

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

Translation

we sat down to translate
a poem from Dutch to English
I spoke no Dutch / she spoke
no poetry / it's hard to tell
whether the translation improved
the original / she made tea

Thursday, May 5, 2022

Juice, Red

my clothes've been washed a hundred times
all the tags are still in place
cuffs / neckline / elbows / hem
all fringed and falling to pieces
I've had it years / I'm looking
for a connection / a metaphorical
connection between my clothes and my life
instead I've started a hunger that only
tomato juice well salted can staunch

Friday, May 6, 2022

Poemless

new in town one year ago
I stopped writing and now
a year since a poem
the town's changed since then
me too / the empty poem notebook
though remains / town's made of stone
local and as a foreigner it's
time to write

Saturday, May 7, 2022

Grind

the puzzle loves complicating
the lives of solvers who cannot
try as I may the revealed facts
like to spin / the computer won't
help / it likes to puzzle too
far away someone is watching birds
though they don't like birds
there is something to distance

Sunday, May 8, 2022

A Story

a story of love on an island
the shuffling walks / the lipsynced meals
we wondered where the trees went
the smell of long wet dirt
the story involved love but not romance
one side to the other we sought wet
the sun didn't like to set so it mostly didn't
when we returned home I pulled the string
holding the words together and the story
in return dropped away

Monday, May 9, 2022

Midnight Diner

the smell of the alley
invades the soup shop
it opens at midnight
closes when no others
the food is soup and noodles
if someone asks the short
order cook will make do
many people start loving
here / and some wake up
I prefer the overpolished counter
and worn down spoons / the
thick cloth curtain that is
the door helps

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

Rubber Tip

I made everything
here into a word and forgot
or never knew the idea
of grammar / every thing
a person could think or do
and every story that can be told
is said in one word / a new one
every time / I bought many
erasers

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

-Soul

the sacrifice can be made
even after we're dead
the lumps of us left behind
matter

Thursday, May 12, 2022

Under That Tree

we stopped near the sea
under a willow waiting
for passion to stop and stay
beneath it / I raked my fingers
through her black hair hiding her cheeks
and above through branches and leaves
maybe a moon but all this so far
away what's the point of memory
and maybe it is just a story
who can tell / she can't because
her hair is no longer the black

Friday, May 13, 2022

Carpets

we found our ways
to a blanket by a hill
above a sea in a country
filled with emptiness and sheep
houses made of stone because
what else / I believed her
hair black but instead
it was what's left / we
skirted the blanket then
down onto it / the wind's air
the water's sea / the soil
of deepness / we wavered

Saturday, May 14, 2022

Secret

I amaze myself
by how little I noticed
when young / the town
where I lived was rich of stories
I saw none of them / my mother
hid everything / tremors / trembles
her secrets became my ignorance

Sunday, May 15, 2022

Evil As In Eve

Chekov's hint is a dread
you see it and push against it
you seek an undercut or postmodern reverse
instead of briar you clutch thorn
the cliché hurts when its engine appears
and the caboose is destined
you hope the pretty Irish redhaired girl prevails
and an ending can appear sometimes

Monday, May 16, 2022

Islands

such a lonely place
clouds / rain / wind always
the roads are small
dark all winter
summer is dim
the water's cold all around
hard to be hardy

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Her

standing in the rain in a garden in Florence
waiting for inspiration to overtake everyone
the buildings and streets are carved from stone
statues hold their hands in their hands
the women who are beautiful cover their hair
I'm leaning back against an abandoned door
I'm thinking there is someone to love here

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Zippo

we learn slowly to make one
hand wiggle with the other
work as one even though two minds
are involved and a small pipe
focus on the thumbs / so strong
but to work together they need
humility / need to back off
ask a piano player

Thursday, May 19, 2022

Doorway

the rain is puddling around me
the yellow lights down the street
streak up to me / in the distance
a highway whishes from tires
I had just heard a brilliant man
make a stupid statement thinking
all ideas are secondary to his
I was waiting for a girl like you
but instead it's you who pauses
under my doorway's lintel and you
who like yellow light approaches from afar

Friday, May 20, 2022

Call The Breeze

her clothes are flapping
in high wind / they will dry
soon / but to the west it's rain
the clotheslines might not hold
sheep could be watching but chew
instead

Saturday, May 21, 2022

The Drum Part

suppose the oldest thing
happened for the first time
just now / you pick
would the ripeness stand up
would there be a question
things would speed up
only two pieces of art
the solo would be too long

Sunday, May 22, 2022

Summertime Thing

over stage left the woman
in a blue country dress white belted
and dark haired danced in swerves
while we played and played / she
didn't mind the long leads
which we played to keep her there
so one of us could figure
out how to keep her

Monday, May 23, 2022

My Woman

I bought some feed
brought it back in my pickup
she was making flapjacks
I chugged some cider
it was Aunt Jemima but they
changed the name / the chickens
liked the feed / I liked
the hotcakes / buns

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

Elementary

my elementary school had slopes
in winter they'd freeze forming slides
we would slide down one
try to climb the other
through bushes and small trees
what for was a question
still is

Wednesday, May 25, 2022

Poor Ideas

I'll tell you what's wrong
everything is falling apart
all safety valves blown
I am scared and miserable
all the time / I want someone
to take over for me

Thursday, May 26, 2022

Want

when the sun is out
good thoughts seek shade
I've found my way to this age
and all my memories are putting
on a show / I wish I could
stop the silly work and get
to whom I am

Friday, May 27, 2022

Cellar On A Hill

when a great building
drops down the past has decided
to take a bow / we had a cellar
perched on a small rise / filled
with trash / a garbage can
I never knew and never asked
what it had once been instead
imagined a story / a wrong one
I have no picture of it

Saturday, May 28, 2022

Clear Air

nothing like the clear air
that roots out relief
I can watch shoots of grass
blow circles over earth
it's a sad song that goes on repeat
while listening to the air brush
by our window I read about color
how to dial it back from garish
and produce something livable

Sunday, May 29, 2022

When We Play Our Last Ones

when I arrive I'll picture a story like this
a guitar man loses his bass player in North Dakota
the gig trail links ahead across the northern tier
like last year tonight it's Wolf Point
a new bass will fly in from LA / he learns fast
the guitar man in his motel room restrings his Strat
new strings each night / snow flurries outside and he wonders
is the gig on / North of there a tiny but chubby dyed blonde
hurries through her laundry / she idols the man
from last year / she plans to wait 'round back
the stage area for him to stop but he won't
he'll play on for his lost bassman who's flying
out to LA to be sprinkled off Ventura
while the guitar player and chick singer drink beers
all day in a stinky room at the Tip Top Motel

Monday, May 30, 2022

Wolf Point Montana

in a stinky room at the Tip Top Motel
the guitar man is changing out his strings
Blue Steel 10s / he's put them through
the back of his Strat and is winding them up
with his tuning wrench / outside the light
rain has turned to heavy snow / he doesn't know
if the replacement will make it today
if the gig's still on tonight / he's been dozing
all day / next door the singer's wondering why
she's in her own room / on the North Line she shares
two days ago they lost him in Stanley ND
flew him back to LA on runway 27 / aortic dissection
the MD said / done tuning he plays the bass's favorite
licks / the singer dozes / up North just a bit the wife
who's waited a year is finishing her laundry / ready to fold
about to attack the cosmetics / she's a dreamer

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

Scobey Montana

about to attack her cosmetics / she's a dreamer
a little chubby since marriage she likes to horse
around outside her home / she saw them down in Wolf Point
last year a warm year with a warm light west wind
sliding through Scobey / then / through Wolf Point
she liked him standing still behind the band
but holding them together with springy rhythm strokes
and finger-pick-like textures / she's no critic
she liked his white streaked flowing hair
his odd wah tone on leads / she liked how obvious
the singer's passion / how unaware her husband
must be / she wants to see him play tonight
the heavy snow though starting up and the timid bar owner
maybe she'll miss them / just one night / next day Havre
just too far / she reaches inside her waistband
her husband is out at the Brendis barn cleaning stalls
that upward chord move still lingering a full year later

Wednesday, June 1, 2022

Pillows

that upward chord move still lingering a full year later
she has the tape she made and plays it over and over
most days / she never clutched the truth of the singer's passion
thought it part of the play the group made around the choice
of songs they played / the story they told to fit the songs
together aside from their flaws and mistakes / they were a party band
not a concert band / in the room next door the singer wondered
how hard the death would hit the band / hit the guitar player
she loved him sometimes / years ago on a tour / a decade later
on another / now the North Tier and here in the Missouri Breaks
she held a pillow between her legs she thought because of the cold
that came with the heavy snow and the wind from the West that wrestled
the light into dusk / she wished his arm over her side and cupping her
he did most nights and most mornings / instead if she listened hard
she could hear the plain song of the strings through the door between them
not fully closed / she knew it was closed / the guitar man had tears
the band was his and the bassman's / the new guy'd be better
he knew because that's how agents worked / he needed to know the songs
right now / the bass the only guy who never stopped playing
he waited for the phone and soon it rang / he let it / then the phone
next door / she would get it and fate would follow on / up North she took hope
over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive

Thursday, June 2, 2022

How True / So Tough

over disappointment / she would one day run away / tonight just a drive
to the Wolf Point venue / like a cliché in her pickup / empty rifle mount
on the rear window / he bends the strings hard so they settle into their tuners
the under-window heater pops and flits out dust smoke from an idle season
he thinks he's been in this room before / he connects to the weak wifi
finds Living on a Prayer from the 12.12.12 concert / looks for the bass player
whose role is a simple bottom / his ringing ears hear the grumbling interplay of a heavy
rhythm intro / the bass's constant low line / the drummer's dear downbeat shades like mistakes
the women in the front row love more / the guitar man remembers from Wolf Point the woman
who stood off stage right eyeing his fingers / a player he thought but it looked wrong
she didn't sway the way women do who lust for guitar men / she studied his fingers
what the left hand did quietly on the fretboard / what the right hand did for rhythm
the bassman would be to his left in front by a little / the bassman sang so stood forward
the singer would wander / her knees deeply forward and back cranking her hips / he listened
for the sounds of his vibrato / how deep / how wide / how like the same kind of smear
passion makes in the right bed / how he knew all these things well forgotten / how true
the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bed to bath / the red door locked to the outside

Friday, June 3, 2022

Preparations

the walls an old yellow / the carpet bare from bath to bed / the red door locked to the outside
from the next room it's on / we leave in two / the phone's answer / their rituals
begin / hair body fingers stretching planning the meal / no bassman / the replacement
will meet them at the gig / he knows it won't be the same / he props his suitcase
lid open / does what he does / up North the woman prepares her story / the snow worries
the details so she invents different ones / her husband is cleaning his boot treads on the boot brush
nailed to the porch / after hearing her story he loads four bags of cement in the truck bed
he works his boots with a hoof pick / they live on the res / the singer strips and washes
everything / none of her is faked / she wears close black stretch pants and a loose black
tunic / she begins her warmups slow and low / the darkness coming on / wakes her up
fully / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready

Saturday, June 4, 2022

Quiet & Still

full / he polishes his guitars and cases them / grabs extra string sets and picks / he's ready
for what matters / up North she breaks free of the ranch / heads into the flaking future
she doesn't let herself think it but she loves the guitar man / has read all the online
blogs & tweets / grocery store checkout-line rags / she's read reports of trysts and
but the singer is too extravagant for him / she can hear that in his playing / different vibrato
her singing / the guitar player and bassman together every band and she can hear
the bassman in the guitar's twisting licks / they are the couple / she's read it too
they rouse the drummer / he likes it late / their manager loads them up minus one / they head
to town / whiteness in their way / multiple nights in a town they mark the best places / tonight
it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her mightily / the cement bags hold

Sunday, June 5, 2022

Care Crystal

it's Wolfe Point Café / up North the wind gusts swerve her might-be / the cement bags hold
her mind to the ground / this time she'll talk / ask him to take her / wherever
he goes / she will wait till the last echo of his last note lingers off / she's packed
small things / later they can buy her more / she'll say she can sing / the guitar player sits
on a fixed seat too close to a fixed table / the burgers are dressed with mayo and options / the fries
cut in spirals / the bassman hated all such fixings / he called them fixtures / he pronounced
odd words wrong / read words didn't sound in his ears / when leads went on he counted
measures / mention a song and note names came to mind / differential note strides
aphantasia / the singer is sullen / she's been unnoticed since she found him in his
bath / I thought he was alive / I touched him cold / five gigs canceled / the snow outside
can't care / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down

Monday, June 6, 2022

Last Tumbleweed

can't care about anything / no point anthropomorphizing it / just white bits of crystal water coming down
on the road South to Wolfe Point / the woman grips the wheel like reins on a bull / he is not
a mistake she thinks over and over / says over and over / the cement bags thump / at the café it's
sundaes for all / the drummer arrives late / waffles his thing / they jot a set list / the guitar
player wonders what the new bass can do / the singer lingers her hand on his wrist / outside
the last tumbleweed bounds past / a snowplow scrapes by / the guitar player wonders whether tonight
they will too / the bassman's back in LA heading for... / dead to the world / nervous
for nothing / snow has made it to six inches / the chill to 24 degrees / won't snow much colder
up North or down here they are all anticipating and regretting / they are wondering about the next ceremony

Tuesday, June 7, 2022

Warm Air

up North or down here they are all wondering and regretting / they are anticipating the next ceremony
a sundae each on the cold night / they stand for leaving and the singer clutches the guitar player
outside they walk and slide to the manager's van and hope the cold's not torqued the guitars too much
he idles the van till the heater blasts warm / the van makes it slowly toward the venue
the snow's been crushed into wet ruts whose sides are splashed onto parked cars as they drive past
up North the roads are worse / no plows yet so the pickup is hub deep in snow / she's used to it
she pictures clutching him / the heater blasts warm / they could make it to the coast
in two days / set up a home / listen to tunes all day / wrap all night / it's better
than it's ever been for her / at least her dream is hers / the world near her is good
at changing the rules / good at burying her upward glances / in the distance she notes the flickering
home lights / meals being cooked / fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

Tens

home lights / meals cooked / over fires in wood stoves / she could smell it if she opened up
her windblown window / if she recalled the stories she read in plains books / if she paid
attention to movies made up in men's minds / the bassman didn't talk much / played
too much like himself / no one else can see / he saw feelings in others and rejected
them / overlays and ambiguity suited him / he knew words he couldn't pronounce
so involved in his own mind / he dropped suddenly and it seemed he could get
up if he wanted / he didn't want / he never played with his back to the band / with his back
to the dancers / shut up and dance he told them once / the woman up North knew
he was tied to only the guitar player / not the black-leggings singer / she dodged
a curve in the road her dream covered over / she missed what she never had / she would grab
that all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel 10s

Thursday, June 9, 2022

Overlays and Ambiguities

all by the neck tonight / a neck of worn tendons / a neck of clean new Blue Steel tense
the song's new end / bass and guitar always together / they learned together
their musical strangeness power the band / the singer just a warm thing
on lost nights / tell me of the towns he once said / the worn out towns
the flash flood of gone money / the great photos of plains America display rusted
tractors / caved in roofs / peeled off paint / tilted silos / old men / old women
hey baby it's the fourth of July he sang / last slow song of the set / she cries in the dark
lies and greed he always said / the band's feelings / how that messed them up
the new bassman arrives motel-side / unloads luggage / tells his ride take me to the venue
he will use his own bass but the old bassman's rig / he's a pro / he rides slouched
snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold in parts / hot in others / sad

Friday, June 10, 2022

Wrong Then Right

snow in waves flashes off her windshield / she is cold / she is hot / she is sad
she pulls over upstreet of the dance hall / snow's risen on the parked cars / she
the other one/ wonders if the last time he pulled her down onto the bed was the last time ever
the singer always waited patiently undressed under the covers while the guitar
player hunched out the motel door to tell his kids goodnight / sometimes tell a story
he memorized or makes up about the flat expanses of old railroad land stretching
toward the foothills / the long miles of dirt road disappearing into twilight fog
the mist / he tells his wife he loves her / and he does / he also likes densely written books
the singer's a light read / they are destined only for sweat and expulsion / she feels
his leads are for her / the words to the songs he picks or writes are for her / she
this one / is a romantic / the new bassman arrives / the van he's in slides stopped
he's dressed in boots jeans T-shirt and a leather barn coat/ he owns two cowboy hats
but didn't wear one for this trip / the woman frozen in her own North world steps
to the side of the venue / peeks to the parking lot / sees the wrong bassman / news
doesn't travel sometimes / it's not them her head drops / she sees his bass case
it's not a Fender / later a half mile away slipping slow the singer and her temporary man
will become a tangled pair / the North woman has slipped back to her truck / she will make it
to the coast in a day or two / she will find the sea as blue as hopeful films imagine / hope

Saturday, June 11, 2022

A Thin Cup

someday the coast / the sea will be a quiet blue but not quite silent / like hope
his brothers / who knew? / will get in their kayaks by Ventura Pier near sundown
the moon a thin cup above / the pier marching piles / if you were on shore watching
the sky would start black above / turn yellow green under the pier / fade through red to black
one will carry a box by his feet / the other a bag of bagels / pelicans will linger by just
above the slight curls / once far enough they will stop and say something people brought up
by religion would say but mean it something else / then ashes will slip to the sea
and a bagel last meal / the brothers will not cry because they have forgotten everything
the guitar man will turn away from the singer in the Hi-Line Motel after Box Clubs at Boxcars
the North woman / her bags of cement her only grip on Earth / will be parked on a beach
in La Push / another res / a different song / a puzzled man behind her / ahead / the same ocean

Sunday, June 12, 2022

Alone

I am sunk deeper than ever
I cannot see how it will improve
I am humiliated beyond repair
what will it take

Monday, June 13, 2022

Harbor

sitting by the harbor
her legs dangling in the water
trembling / we watch the ferry
approach from across the harbor

Tuesday, June 14, 2022

No Birthday

I wish I could write with joy
instead the black dog's still
on me / I spend my days
trying distraction

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

The Unrelenting Hands of a Clock

I am fully not ready
for casual discussion
I am like a fog nagging
the coast / I am shriveling
is it a premonition of death
the shrouds that cover mysteries
are not always made out of a tarpaulin

Thursday, June 16, 2022

Angst

alone / afraid
a long road trip
fear of living
revert to the child
someone to watch

Friday, June 17, 2022

Leslie

writing is about ideas
a computer scientist tells YouTube
words are important / a little / he says
another says structure trumps appearance
for poets trees and lakes
are symbols for words

Saturday, June 18, 2022

Sheesh

a million iterations and the endorsement
is finished / written for an audience
I don't get / one I've failed with over
and over / I will post it tomorrow
see what happens / finish another paper
then worry

Sunday, June 19, 2022

Row of Lights

in the distance a row of lights
just atop a flat of water
I stayed up all night
watching the lights sometimes
sometimes reading a sad book
I wanted to sleep but my restless
legs wouldn't stand / for it was only dawn
that shook me unconscious / I still sleep
in the distance of a row of lights

Monday, June 20, 2022

Bridge

there is a bridge to cross
finally / but either I'm on it
or it's out of sight

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

Off

the power was off
we live with unreliable power
hot night / sweating all night
then in the morning things
not working so well
work

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

Fruit Gone

we bought great fruit
put it in special bowls
on the counter / I waited
for her to go first / she me
in the end I was the one
who tossed it all out

Thursday, June 23, 2022

To Catch

slowly I started a fire
in my father's wood stove
its metal chimney going up
a stone chimney where the porch
used to be / I built a teepee of thin
oak over a few crumpled newspapers
and up it went slowly / small splinters
catching first / when it was going
we'd sneak under the covers
she was surprised my urges were slow

Friday, June 24, 2022

LaTeX

what if I took a paper designed
for one Latex template and then
applied a different one
oh what fun that would be against
the stodginess of the academy

Saturday, June 25, 2022

Natural

the hills above us are not gentle
they slope too much and rain hurdles
down against the back of our house
it's stone of course but the rain
gets under / I mean to say it gets damp
and the wind burst upon the hill
we grow anxious and often afraid

Sunday, June 26, 2022

Worn Eraser

I have trouble with words
I think of writing them but nap instead
or I start with some letters
then scratch scratch them all out
worst / for every word I write
I erase two

Monday, June 27, 2022

Bags

when she makes tea for us
she searches for matching cups
and maybe saucers / spoons just right too
but it's always bags and the fabric
of them remind me of antifreeze
and the way she tightens the string noose
around hers and the spoon reminds me
of commitment / at least the water is hot

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Budapest

we've walked by bays and along canals
on or by bike paths through regrown forests
held hands without passion in the DDR parts
of Berlin / snacked on pastries throughout Europe
but not marzipan / once or a few times
we tried kissing but her energy was too much
the important part is that her flat in her European
city's got a dull yellow door with faded stains
and rubs of wear / that's how I remember her

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

NE

the way to ice cream
is through any town
big portions / strange flavors
I get frappes and sometimes
a small if I'm famished
the fish / the books
the muggy weather

Thursday, June 30, 2022

Oceans

I found my way once out of place
from oceanside to plains and grew
to love it / from plains to bayside
and grew close to loving it
the landscape I love is a character
in someone's play and I want to grasp
it before waste washes over

Friday, July 1, 2022

Waters Logged

the past has a face like rivers
rushing past / boats gone by
just memories but it's strange
that in flat waters you can read
past wakes of ships like tracks
in sand being blown over
water is more like us than we can think

Saturday, July 2, 2022

The Grump

I wanted to read my way
to the end / or perhaps
into a small café with someone
bright maybe pretty / I
don't deserve more than that
having grown grumpy these years

Sunday, July 3, 2022

Costain's Basement

she found him his shoulders stuck
to a wall his legs out like a triangle
in the basement where children under orange
light danced or kissed / I call them children
but they knew kissing / she wondered whether he leaned
there to attract conversation or repel admirers
so she watched while the rest danced or kissed
he stood braced against a wall / where
were all the other walls I wonder

Monday, July 4, 2022

Giving

when there was time to give up
give in / give out / the old man
decided to fall over then fall
asleep / his response was deliberate
no response / by studying him we knew
of the river and its bridge so we thought
up stories to fill out gaps or maybe make
them / I didn't know what I was doing
when I suggested the weak line break

Tuesday, July 5, 2022

Sad

I am sadly not the writer
I dreamed of / youngest first
best second / now just ok
I am sadly not anything
I feel it

Wednesday, July 6, 2022

Twelve Hour Ferry

after twelve hours
the ferry arrives just in time
to show tired travelers
a full day to wait and waste
until they will be permitted
to sleep

Thursday, July 7, 2022

Now What

a wedding reception 51 weeks late
because a virus took control of lives
a friend who was at my daughter's birth
attended with her long-time husband
with physical troubles / they left
at 8:15 / the husband tired / his wife
my friend put him in his rolling chair
but a bump threw him back-of-head first
onto the sidewalk / four days later
he died while I watched and listened
to her cries / she had to decide to let
him go / his body shutting down / his brain
wrapped in a coma / now what / now what

Friday, July 8, 2022

Peaceable Man

it's all so fragile
a bump / a cut / even just
a bruise can fell
a mistake of decimal point
the world collapses
our blunders save us
because all that kills
might / for now / cancel out

Saturday, July 9, 2022

Outcomes

finding my way home
a challenge of luck
I would wander as always
but by the time it's time
wandering might be out
the princess pines in autumn
await and the heavy oaks
wading among pines and maples

Sunday, July 10, 2022

Trying Times

the wandering lines
trying to get tone right
I vowed to try hard
tried to make a little
bit of sadness among the waves
of facts / I tried

Monday, July 11, 2022

City of Fog

there's a fog over the bay
turning white the contrast of details
on a hard pier a taxi loops to wait
for lovers or quarrelers / it's always something
his lights on lowbeams and wiper on go
he switches radio to a sad station
or at least a song to bring in closer
the cloying fog and its reminder
of happy and unhappy endings / it
was sunny before

Tuesday, July 12, 2022

Fire

why is there a fire nearby
midweek as loners grill outback
of their homes on porches
meant for lively living
why a fire when the rain's as robust
as winter in midwinter when
dust is driven under snow
I smell meat rising in air
smoke lilting like leaves in spring
something is so wrong

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

Place to Go

under the road roots
bumped up the asphalt
mounds and lines of them
I'd slow down there
on my way her place but
what matter when she'd
never come down and
I'd never ask for her
in the living room I'd talk
with anyone around / later
going home I'd slow for the roots

Thursday, July 14, 2022

Gloomy

you called it gloomy
I said melancholy
a sadness / you said
get rid of it / I said
it's home / all left
we suavely parted thoughts
you seemed melancholy
guess me

Friday, July 15, 2022

Done

I have had it
I will from now on
answer only / never
initiate a conversation
writing only

Saturday, July 16, 2022

Cohesion and Coupling

all writing is a set of cohesive
units coupled with different types
and strengths of links as couplings
like floor plans of rooms or open floor
plans / in doing this we ready ourselves
for our final projects

Sunday, July 17, 2022

Lousy

why can't things go right
I mean just once and for
a little while / too fatigued
to write anything coherent

Monday, July 18, 2022

Gloomy

it's hard to think gloomy
when the air's sweet and blue
when the grass pops it odors
past pines and tar roads
such days set your baseline
and all above are flord
all below are melancholy
not gloomy

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

Death Departure

we passed through a small bunch
of mourners reading stories on posters
and taking in pictures of their loved one
at the funeral home where we went
to pick up Chris's ashes and after getting
them we asked to depart the side door
because mourners have enough to contend with
and passing by the door to the final room
we saw the flowers and an electric guitar
on its stand and I thought how fascinating
his little box was heavier than I expected

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

Wander With Me

the return to the islands is off
in a future of a different timeline
I am certain of the loss and even
if I go how can I see what it leaves
behind / I am a lonely wandered
none wander with me

Thursday, July 21, 2022

Bother

why do we find our ways
with bother and strife
the lake we return over
the long road of repetitions
I want it to be clear that losing art
is a way of life / an end of life

Friday, July 22, 2022

Details

I find my grumpiness increases
finding ways to hack Tex drives me bats
lots of ways to do things
all nuts / thanks Don Knuth
when I wonder whether I'm losing it while programming
I remember the days at the AI Lab
when I had the same problems
details

Saturday, July 23, 2022

Gualala Unfolded

the long road to Gualala
bringing his ashes
but the machine setup struck
and I struggled to fix it
but only enough for now
I left sad

Sunday, July 24, 2022

Lives and Deaths

we can wonder of the pain
of lives long ago lived
and who could deny suffering
we surprise ourselves by
imagining that people lived
years ago while we weren't here
and also lives will be lived
years ahead while we're not here

Monday, July 25, 2022

Kamloops

they hung childrens' clothes
on crosses spiked into the dirt
by the side of the road in the north
in the midst of weeds and dried brambles
coming upon them at sunset the reds
and yellows of the clothes hung
over the yellows and browns of the brambles
and sharp light drew us to melancholy
the clouds behind were dark because rain
had passed / someone mentioned a noticed
rainbow but we turned our backs

Tuesday, July 26, 2022

Tex

rain is in the wind
my worries are wrapped in both
people remember what they want
not what was / setting things straight
worries duende and upsets just so stories

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

Helpless

sometimes at night
at the end of our living room
when wind is helping itself to us
she'll take our her guitar
play it with deliberate hesitation
start to sing under her lithe red hair
quietly under the twangs and thumps
she doesn't ask / she never backs down
it is she who is pushed by the tune
I do my job / listen to her
to the wind / sometimes the rain

Thursday, July 28, 2022

Glue

in the small diner
off the small alley
near a side street
only six people can sit
gathered around the chef
who chops and boils and fries
before them as if a priest
a small town in Japan
rice always ready / in winter
the air from the diner is wet hot
and the stories we can ascribe
stick like rice to cooling bowls

Friday, July 29, 2022

Sure

every store hotel home
in Alaska has a stuffed
grizzly standing upright
just as every store hotel
home in Mississippi has
a Confederate battle flag

Saturday, July 30, 2022

Pursuit

when something tells
you no the other answers
pop up like weeds unwanted
some are pretty / I tend
to tend to them as I would
a new lover strange and warm

Sunday, July 31, 2022

Blue Morning

the light says everything is blue
the streets are stone slabs
for women to walk pristinely on
were I to walk out that way
the harbor would greet me flat
sea birds waiting for time
to tell them to dive for fish
a woman I love is supposed
to be heading to meet me there
she is warm I suppose in her wool
her hair tied back has fallen loose
in places / what food awaits us

Monday, August 1, 2022

Rain At Light

rain is for sadness
washing it away from
one to the nearby / when
we notice the words jumping
to the page it's like a marine map
of the world / interactive
and always looking

Tuesday, August 2, 2022

By The Bay

sitting by the bay
sun hot on our faces
cargo ships arriving
and passing under the bridge
an old man and a young woman
who found things together
sitting and talking
but never sitting too close

Wednesday, August 3, 2022

Champbana

just think / 1973 we lived
in a brick house in Champaign
a luxury house of sorts
1974 in a shack in Urbana
an ever narrowing range of life
and circumstance / things
were getting worse

Thursday, August 4, 2022

Coupled

when all's in front we flow freely and sing
when all's behind we weep and weep

Friday, August 5, 2022

Aha!

sometimes the crystal hard edges of myriad details
precisely delineated on the clearest of days
throws off its cacophony when fog and mist
wash in and the clear wholeness and life of it
blurs sharply in a flash into focus

Saturday, August 6, 2022

A Book

we sat under old trees on a blanket
your head against my neck
part of our legs touching
you dozed while I read / book like a narcotic
later when we were old you didn't recall
that same later I did / in between
you got in a car while I stood on the porch
waving goodbye

Sunday, August 7, 2022

After

how the sadness creeps up
onto the marriage bed after
a dozen / two or more years is
the mystery of why love lasts when
all that's at stake is death

Monday, August 8, 2022

Glue

the important topic of wood glue came up
which had the best wood to wood grip
the context was Baroque pipe organs
restoring them so they would sound good
in 400 years / there was the question
of making it easy on restorers 100 years
on / for them a simple glue to wash off
for lasting tightness Titebond / an answer
sounded in unison

Tuesday, August 9, 2022

CHM

asked and the answer's no
but how to say it when the asker
asks in front of you
I released my unofficial thoughts
as a chart drawn pre-Tufte
the asker balked and I decided
I didn't matter to her etc
in all there were three winners
three losers / and some I don't cares

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

Where

we've moved past crazy to insane
the right is steaming / soon
we will have a different country
and where will I go

Thursday, August 11, 2022

Slow Whirl Day

from one side of our little farm
to the other we cannot see for the fog
it will rain soon and the air's cooling
inside I've stopped reading and have turned
on the Hammond and soon the Leslie will sharpen
things up / one could say I'm lonely but
it's just one day / another one of those days

Friday, August 12, 2022

Escaped

what if no one could find me
if I could live out by writing
I am worried for everything
but some good news appears
I am lonely now with no one
people will worry because
they cannot find me

Saturday, August 13, 2022

Nagasaki Standing Boy

a boy about ten carrying a baby on his back
had come to this place for a serious reason
wearing no shoes / his face hard / behind him
the little head tipped back as if in sleep / the boy
stood for ten minutes / men in white masks walked over
quietly began to untie the rope holding the baby / I saw
the baby was dead / they held the body by hands and feet
placed it on the fire / the boy stood there straight unmoving
watching the flames / biting his lip shining with blood / the flame
burned low like the sun going down / the boy turned around
the boy walked away silently

Sunday, August 14, 2022

Skips

a favorite place since the 90s
opening two years before me
closing in two weeks forever
not the best / but a comfort
a snack bar / hamburger specials
Hellmans mayo / Suzie Q fries
heavy lobster rolls / large lemonade
no ice / picnic tables under shade trees
big field trending north / a reliable
bathroom / the exquisite Bonnie

the accents untamed and worries mixed
never again

Monday, August 15, 2022

Ashes Whose Ashes

in the box we carried
first out to the car
then while driving that car
in our trunk
then into her house
the ashes of her love
who could say whether
man or woman or how
the person spoke / what
script he would have used
she would have used / but
we knew it was her husband
except once after my mother died
and we had her ashes the cremation man
called and said oops

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

Blue Done

the camera says it's strangely blue
with a sailboat heading out early
6am at 60° north but
sail's not up and the clouds are blue
harbor razor flat like sharpened clips
sometimes I hope the beautiful woman
would not have walked away

Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Project One

she liked to read all day
in the library where I wrote
I loved her but never approached
I decided to write a book of essays
about a man loving a woman in a library
but never meeting her / I would publish
it but get the publisher to print only
two copies / one for a reviewer who
would throw it away / one for this library
once catalogued and about to be shelved
I'd take it to the burn pit
the faint drifting smell of that book
would be how she knows me

Thursday, August 18, 2022

Fish

a fishing boat comes in / docks
usually / from its cold hold it bursts
fish of some types and smells of fish
I ask to buy some and am sold some
it will be fresh tonight and if
I come tomorrow it will be fresh
tomorrow night / nothing is surprising
it's hard to play along with this any more

Friday, August 19, 2022

The Undressing

I suppose while getting ready
she had to undress / wash and powder
some makeup not much
I wondered whether she thought
of contingencies / what might
and how it would look / feel
was it old / was it new
was it ready

Saturday, August 20, 2022

The Waiting

I spend all day waiting
for the light to fade
in winter this happens quickly
I don't wait long
the sky's always low and even
the rain drops are lonely
once near dark I start to read
then sleep in my armchair
my dreams are of rain drops
fading sky / the night
and waiting

Sunday, August 21, 2022

Market Cross

from my spot the tv's too low
across the way at 4:16am
all I see is light and dark moving
across the top rows / a person's head
wavering for reasons not visible
I wonder who lives there / third floor
I'm lower / lights in windows light
the square smooth in stone
the blue light of dawn behind it all

Monday, August 22, 2022

Just When

you think they are all gone
two of them pop up again
there is a chance to learn
more of my family / if only
Judy can hang on / and if only
they didn't change their names

Tuesday, August 23, 2022

Zahoruiko

my family was cut off
from the rest / my mother's
mother's side was very social
they shunned us / only unstated
theories approach

Wednesday, August 24, 2022

Drive

a drive / a trip
perhaps some meals and sleep
to look and experience
I write plainly but all deteriorates
what about repetition and echoes
is beauty just bringing the mind
to rest and reflect

Thursday, August 25, 2022

Suggestions

if you want to travel together
travel together / don't suggest it
then question whether it's ok
after a proposed trip / we've
done it before and survived

Friday, August 26, 2022

Alexandra

when I look at her photo now
how young and nervous
short on a chair / her feet
just toes touching the floor
and slight / she is not the woman
I knew just way too many years later
and if I were the man who was her husband
I would have lamented but left
Kalyna behind

Saturday, August 27, 2022

Sharing

what about two people
in the same room overnight
in a motel off a back road
in a high desert with no
full moon / does it always
mean love or cannot be prudence

Sunday, August 28, 2022

A Trip to Skip's

there is no more Skip's
the food and bathrooms
of my wanderings / but
nothing can last even
something older than me
there is only lament
and the search for replacement

Monday, August 29, 2022

Oatman

on a back road with tumbleweeds
skirting across we pull into a cafe
no é for a bite of breakfast
we look old and are / we look together and are
not / predictable / but there is a familiar scent
we give off while we struggle
with decisions / trucker's usual or crêpes

Tuesday, August 30, 2022

On 66

opened in 1980 Roy's
was the only stop to find gas
a hot dish and a bed in the area
I stopped there at 11 with my hot dish
and we hoped to soon hop in bed
I'm talking bungalows

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

Coupa Woman

today I saw beauty and age
working together / the hair

in particular

so soft / so gently blended
from corn to white / the face
of wrinkles disappearing on sight
animation / life / I watched
her more than anyone

Thursday, September 1, 2022

Good Motel

what would a good motel
look like if you're not
on the interstate
a sign for TV
a sign for internet
an attached café
big rigs parked out front
a neon sign with an arrow
pointing at the motel
perhaps / the sound of crickets

Friday, September 2, 2022

HIDECS

nothing good / perhaps
my long project going nowhere
it's too long / too hard to read
will anyone like it

Saturday, September 3, 2022

Way Home

the way home will be obscured
as what was is bulldozed away
road widened and repaved
the river cleaned up and expensive
homes built / can we rely
on the cemeteries in which
the people there are slow
to change / quick to lie still

Sunday, September 4, 2022

Green Lights

cold night
rainy
wind coming hard into the harbor
yellow lights on in windows
buildings of stone
I was ready to explore
when the aurora started up
the promise of warm skin
and touch
took second place
or third

Monday, September 5, 2022

Statues

in Amsterdam they have big ones
I of course am not invited
they walk by in particular manners
as it were
when they speak to me / never / it's
like bulldogs and pork bones
I cannot get them to say sexy things
despite all I want is to hear the sounds
not believe them
it seems we're surrounded by water

Tuesday, September 6, 2022

CA Celebration

she isn't invited
so I must step back
if Jo isn't either
I will stay home
an intense discussion
I hear

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

Rabbit

there is suddenly a truth
after a well-hidden set of quiet
that an intellectual love
perhaps expanded / at least
on one side / how will I know
what kind of question can yield
answers / am I on the end
of the very same thing

Thursday, September 8, 2022

Were You Good

she has kept her secret
I guess I suspected by only
her answer no / when I could
have been taken as rude instead
they knew she could keep a secret
now to keep keeping it

Friday, September 9, 2022

Asleep They Said

onto the ground I went
tired beyond description
a soft spear of pine above
wind in the needles a good sound
darkness was rising all around
soon the darkness would be upon me
then there would be no last line

Saturday, September 10, 2022

Back Roads

a backroad is a forgotten place
a place that was once
a road from one no town to another
a path for people of the past
made of shredded asphalt
with worn out sand shoulders
the shrubs and low trees beside it
wait for their thirst to subside

Sunday, September 11, 2022

Smearing

life's a smear when it gets old
what can't be remembered must be
reinvented / when I think of love
it's a song I half remembered
and half made up / and either its
melody or structure is gone
soon going back will never work

Monday, September 12, 2022

Request

if I asked a question would things
be better / would it make
it different if I asked it at the start
or at the end / regardless there
will be tension

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

Rain And Walking

up the street and I mean up
she in her tight skirt
walked away from me after
seeing me look long at her
in the rain now we are both gone

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

Not Dead Yet

I once was a great musician
the other players who came to see us
watched me / I was great because I
was different / played like only me
they said / he carries the band

Thursday, September 15, 2022

Off They Go

the best place to eat / gone
the nest best place / gone
my difficult school / gone
wife number 1 / gone
wife number 2 / gone
mother and father / gone
I need to make some stories
to make up for evaporation

Friday, September 16, 2022

Still Small

somewhere between the barn and house
an old apple tree bumped up against
the stone wall / too young to know
I later saw / many years later / the wall
was two walls of large rocks with small
ones packed between / a little stream
went by that started under the barn
where cow piss drained down / I remember
jumping over it / the smell / the small
mcintosh apples / the stone wall like a bridge
my small life on a larger but still small farm

Saturday, September 17, 2022

The “Poet”

time to face it
you suck

Sunday, September 18, 2022

Lousy

it will take a while
before I can write again
with enough verve
to make poems that aren't
just feeling sorry for myself

Monday, September 19, 2022

Those Trees Are Gone

the three trees in our frontyard
two oak and a shagbark
across the road two shagbarks
it was our road / our farm
either side / when the sun
was going down in winter
the barren trees across the big field
were backlit and it was the west
out that way / the big trees
nearby were big blocks and I'd
sit on the brick fireplace hearth
looking toward the sadness
that one day would be me

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Mystery

sitting down to read
a tartan wool on her lap
a sumo orange just peeled
on her plate / she picks
up a murder mystery
as women always do
and wonders at the cleverness
she warmly and sweetly
aspires to

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Carly

imagine / after a ferry
to the Island and in what
counted as a bistro an ash
blond with a rasp voice
reading a soft paged book
saw me not looking at her
a quick meal and a walk
then a night until midnight
out the door and on her steps
she said to me you have no
idea who I am / do you

Thursday, September 22, 2022

Bisbee

up the canyon road
a bookstore / a general store
evidence of a copper mine
everything is colored old
or covered in dust / the town
proclaims nostalgia / if it
weren't for uncanny nothing
would ever come here let alone
live here

Friday, September 23, 2022

Lily

are you the one
who figured out
the program / Lily asked
then it seemed as if
she meant my essay on Notes
she said people need to know
how her father's ideas evolved
but just for a few seconds
I believed she loved me

Saturday, September 24, 2022

Age

the bathroom walls are glass
the shower stall within it
is glass / two beds to watch
from / the hotel made for sex
is not made for us

Sunday, September 25, 2022

Rejection

the road reads less pretty
plans make the open closed
will this end the idea of going
I'm feeling down
the walls feel up
need to decide quick

Monday, September 26, 2022

Dessicated

every place beautiful
has something old just
off its center / a leftover
from earlier / worn down
past rusted and into disintegration
but easy to overlook
happy to be unnoticed
without this all is a pun

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

Man In Love

he died to love another woman
because she didn't love him
enough or he believed
her body unlike his was tattooed
everywhere / she looked
like every woman he loved
he made his life
about finding himself
or the truth
whichever came first

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

Gravity

in the end gravity wins
the stonewalls standing well
when I was kid on our farm
are now near flat without any help
from people / gravity is working
on me now

Thursday, September 29, 2022

Port City

the city is old on a river
in Europe that empties
to the cold sea
every building on that river
is stone or hard and the streets
are narrow of stone and hard
looking up I see small balconies
with metal railings and prickly
spikes holding clotheslines
and on one clothesline
a woman's underclothes
underpants and lacy tops
yellow in the gloomy sunlight
or from age and use and a pair
fresh I guessed from a night
she will remember until the river
is forced to make her forget

Friday, September 30, 2022

Watcher

I watched her one morning
on our long trip
washing her clothes
in the bathroom sink
using plain soap and wringing
when she got to her underwear
I spent a minute deciding
and because we never did
I didn't

Saturday, October 1, 2022

Is Waiting

soon I'll be 73
but the thing about soon
is that time needs to pass
and somewhere not far
the embodiment of the end
is waiting

Sunday, October 2, 2022

Looping Back

the road is a loop
starting where someone
else chooses / ending
when something else
chooses / we can choose
where we rest but not why
or anything

Monday, October 3, 2022

Lasting

boosted / roughly ready
nervous for the trip
will I be able to stand well
will she be too fast for me
could this be a last thing

Tuesday, October 4, 2022

Distance

where I would live
is getting cooler and
the nights sooner
the mornings later
a little rain every day
but I don't live there
there's no way to experience
the place and who would join
me / no one proper

Wednesday, October 5, 2022

Terrible Woman

we are as ready as we can be
but I will be doing most
of the driving / she hasn't
driven for years / it shows
tomorrow is the worst day
years since I've left home
yes / I'm scared

Thursday, October 6, 2022

First Day

driving / the central valley
is dying / the feed lot is gone
Mojave the town is ghostly
the food where we are staying
just across the CA/NV border
is awe inspiring for insipidness
and now I am dead on my feet

Friday, October 7, 2022

Hers

the fantasy of peat fire
in a croft on a cliff
looking over the ocean
with wind any time of year
any time of day with a vague
man who is me

Saturday, October 8, 2022

Inside Scoop

she is wary and I
need to calm her
she tries to organize
but is not effective
once there I will
be alone

Sunday, October 9, 2022

Crap

a close call
not recovered

Monday, October 10, 2022

Hopi

Hopi not what it was
cover shutting it down
many deaths / masks still required
no sit-down food
all the galleries gone

Tuesday, October 11, 2022

Morning in Hopi

morning at the Hopi Ground Cafe
Storm and her father / she
made the coffee / he the chorizo
burrito / Tom there too / the men
me and the old woman under the juniper
a deep canyon narrow and dripping
from a spring below / he lectured
we ate

Wednesday, October 12, 2022

Chama

she of course jumped
when I touched sides
to move her / she saw
me move to her back
and still she jumped
now sleep

Thursday, October 13, 2022

Self

a woman who does
not pay attention
takes my fork because
it's closer than hers
who leaves the car
door open / unlocked
when she takes her
things into the hotel
perhaps because I
had opened it before
she arrived there
what do you call her

Friday, October 14, 2022

Monk Life

the monks have their way
of making food
they chant with meaning
but in bored tones
all but one or two are old
they paused between lines
in each stanza but move to the next
like enjambment
they underline syllables to emphasize
they mark the line break of a too-long line
with a downarrow
... means say the rest of the prayer silently

after all
they're buried under simple crosses
under the down-blazing sun

Saturday, October 15, 2022

Unfortunate

we drive
she repeats her questions
then complains
when I answer
I've lost my voice
from the dry air
I am here in Santa Fe
to talk

Sunday, October 16, 2022

Rain Road

a storied career
there are lots of stories
one of them goes down
a road from highway
to divided to two lane
to gravel to clay to dirt
to two ruts / then it rained

Monday, October 17, 2022

Tired

I am tiring
the trip is wearing
I'm not a friend
things are piling up

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

Casita

watching her it's clear
she's home and friends
live here / I am nothing
to her / the warmth
flowing to and from her
the colors of her house
she is home and I'm not
welcome

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

Waste

I am falling apart
physically and otherwise
what I want can never happen
I gave a talk today and boy
it sucked / I need to do
something when I get home

Thursday, October 20, 2022

Don Diego

Santa Fe light through two windows
facing west / outside turned trees
and surrounding walls / we sit side
by side on a small sofa / she is jittery
but the light's alive and warm over
a cool breeze / all we did was sit
for an hour building a memory together

when happiness happens it happens
behind me

Friday, October 21, 2022

Walk

we walk / you and I
past the river that has sworn
to kill me / we don't hold
hands / we are like two separated
but the wind too cold / can't decide
which way to go so it follows
the water

Saturday, October 22, 2022

Repulse

I find again
that I am repulsive
and so again
I will hide

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Go

she thinks / she thinks
I feel and the feeling
is run

Monday, October 24, 2022

Racks in Ely

in Ely we eat early
the woman with fashionably
torn jeans serves beer
racks of antlers every wall
a waitress brings warm marinara
I dip Jenny's spinach pizza
to help out / out

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Down

she rips me and I stop
under I go / and a long
tiring ride right
into the setting sun

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

Peer Amid

the words are kind
of fun when they echo
a subtler sort of rhyme
said a poet who lived before
me / today is a day for mothers
my mother for instance who is dead

Thursday, October 27, 2022

Understand

if a process can create
a thing that doesn't mean
that process did create
that thing / if a writer
describes a character's
past overlaid on present
the character might not
in the story perceive it
hard to understand
easy to understand

Friday, October 28, 2022

Path To

there's a path / narrow and faint really
from the bridge to the sea / you know
where I mean by now / it moves along
by the river never far from its sight
with dirt and rocks and roots abounding
one day not long from now / soon enough
I'll start my wander from one end
to other / watching the river deciding
which way / when the end appears before me
the water will welcome me / whatever
time of day it happens to be / it's
that kind of water

Saturday, October 29, 2022

Wiper Book

so after the trip I lament
the result of long drives
too much talk / not enough
liking / odd meals
she delighted in spouting hate
like little love bites
I snapped / back and to pieces
I recall the monastery where
a nice monk gave permission
to visit the cemetery and a poet
gave me the smallest book of poems
under my wipers

Sunday, October 30, 2022

So Long

I said I was once
exciting and unpleasant
now boring and unpleasant
she agreed and stopped talking
everything about us is opposite
being friends was fun but
things end

Monday, October 31, 2022

Birthdays

dark colors / light gone early
the sadness of late October
what kind of love exudes this
when I drive or pretend at night
the sun cooperates by shying away
the water draws cooler / the women
who come and go whisper as they leave

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

Holcomb

after finding the place
the writer paced in circles looking
his companion knocked on doors
introducing topic and writer
but he just looked in circles
at the landscape / the houses
the people / these were characters
events he would write about were not
they were just the coat hangers on which
coats of rare colors hung

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

Jerky & Jumpy

she's in her bubble
just her / the rest circle
she is a pure event horizon
she likes to walk away
her own pace / the rest
on their own / she asks
questions and demands answers
explaining your loserness
is easy for her / no wonder
everyone is nervous

Thursday, November 3, 2022

Turn

what we saw didn't make a difference
the sage / the dry but green brush
juniper trees / behind all that the canyon
red and limestone cliffs / beneath
it all her joy and my melancholy
riding side by side / our earlier travels
only mockery of what came later
we walked by a river / we could have talked
could have drawn near but she kept on ahead
of me / turning away

Friday, November 4, 2022

Christ in Desert

after sitting outside my monk's cell
I stood when she came out of hers
inside the walled garden our cells
abutted / a doe and fawns grazed
while the sun negotiated past cliffs
more red now than when I first sat
we walked slowly not looking at them
so they could graze without their fears
she opened the gate and walked fast ahead
I closed the gate and followed behind
slowly / the path passed by the stations
of the cross but we neither stopped
nor noted their meanings / where time
goes to grow old

nearing the simply crossed cemetery
here men dedicated to the silence
from words lie under a hard soil pan
we turned to the yellow streak of cottonwoods
marking the Chama / all the rest bathed
in dark green in bowls of red cliffs and limestone
behind us / then the church pushed against rock
and colored the same / inside the monks broke
silence to chant hoarsely / I drew inside to browse
my sadness and memories / she went into the dining room's
antechamber to worry her joy

Saturday, November 5, 2022

Near Ghost Ranch

she craved that one place
a bridge over Chama and the fields
beyond where / she said / you
could walk for days / the meadow
though was all she could hope
for / I saw / the sun / the brush
the sky trying hard to blue
the river as green as young girls
hoping to never age

Sunday, November 6, 2022

Quick

what's amazing is how little
she seemed to notice that I
was squirming under her gaze
then when it was time to commit
she flew home

Monday, November 7, 2022

Southwest

the past of love is unlike
the hot days of dusty driving
along the back parts of reservations
and places where only decay survives
we stop to snap the homes that look
only like houses / old cars out front
skinny dogs rushing around / she spouts
I hunker and tremble / we are nothing
like a pair

Tuesday, November 8, 2022

Southwestish

places of mostly stone
are places where time
goes to grow old / what lives
there fears encounters with red
rocks and sudden rain / me
I fear the dirt road to the monastery
in case of rain or in case of spiritual
discontinuity / but shh / the quiet
is a silence filled with faith

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

It Is Finished

how to say it / the work of silence
is wind carving stone / silence
as predator stalks in plain sight
the long walk is merely prelude
but if you choose it silence
will brush back the hair that once lay
over your eyes / the autumn cottonwoods
now yellow will brown under the gaze
of silence / one must be alone under the sky
a man once said for beauty to do its work
to bring about completion

Thursday, November 10, 2022

Should Be Silent Prayers

sitting in the pews
the prayers shouted out
for help for the lesser
teared my eyes while the prayer
makers moved on from one
to the next without feeling

Friday, November 11, 2022

Remarks

in my foolish head I believed
something could happen
that could not / when I wondered
what she meant by resisting I heard
her say just listen and keep
on listening / understanding
will come by itself

Saturday, November 12, 2022

Stations

the beautiful path begins
nowhere but ends where everything
ends / up in the sky a passel of bird-
like being flutter like angels
but there are merely revering
the path which begins near their eggy
starts and ends at the ends of their wings
who can beat that

Sunday, November 13, 2022

Algiers

in Algiers the women
were once beautiful and spread
themselves at Camus' favorite
café in summer under a Mediteranean
sun / dark hair / dark eyes avoiding
every man in and out of sight
I watched them drinking heavy coffee
and chewing slowly their mbesses
I wondered of the writing outside
made of letters made of water

Monday, November 14, 2022

A Fantasy

funny how when the mood is silent
the hate smuggles under the flap
and no one notices any undertow
years go by / but the stress
of a long trip can rip it like sweet pants
a flood / a whisper / a tangle
the roads below the seaside cliffs
are tonight and every night red

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

Van Get Out Of My Way

we lived in the same city
it turned out I learned
for a dozen years and we
were perfect for each other
if only I knew of you
or you knew of me
but during that dozen years
of time you came to hate
who I came to be / when we met
finally at a museum of conceptual
painting we tossed our looks other ways

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Other Than Parents

I park across the street
in a dirtied spot under some trees
around 8 in the dark in November
I cross the street and knock
Mr Martin comes to the door
after but first I spend 10 minutes
with Mrs Martin in the dining room
then an hour with Mr Martin
in the living room / I tell
him my progress and he teaches
me stories / he's gone now
she's gone now / one son
is gone now / their daughter
is strange and far away / the other
son with less of his leg
and now I sit in the dark
and type in things like this

Thursday, November 17, 2022

Riding

I rode my bike there almost
every day in high school
across that bridge to friends
I still have / I try to remember
or even just fathom the loneliness
those rides represented / now
at twilight I walk the hills
round here but alone and with varying
breath / I sit in my chair and read
but sometimes I fall asleep
how little things change / the ride
was 5 miles each way / 10 per day

Friday, November 18, 2022

Beautiness

the beauty of sadness
is that it's in the eye
of the sufferer / not like
the sadness of beauty
which is sitting there like
sharpened hardened steel

Saturday, November 19, 2022

Crofty

I decided to depart the croft
not saying my bye byes
I had no reservations
neither ferry nor plane
I took my chance and knew
I might need to duck
I was hungry but could wait
I needed a drink / don't we all
now she's still asleep

Sunday, November 20, 2022

Her View

I wish I could one day
sit by the river the way
we once did / but instead
of her being along I'd be alone
instead of her not remembering
anything I would remember everything

Monday, November 21, 2022

Santa Fe Sun Low

we sat on her couch
watched the sun low in the sky
a warm day in Santa Fe
it could have been special
but it was ordinary
the most ordinary any two
people can have it
not a trace of more

Tuesday, November 22, 2022

Hopi

the hotel was down and out
the kitchen open but only
for takeout / the adobe walls
all cracked / up on this mesa
the wind was our enemy / the village
just as jumbled as before / all
the jewelers were gone / she
regretted the choice to stay here
our road trip not going well
what once was friendly was now forbidden

Wednesday, November 23, 2022

Social Suicide

whitewashed / once a five and dime
just on this side of the border
where paint once relaxed now flakes
drop but with the sun in our eyes
the low building seemed a gate
to past's hell / where we parked
the salted ground had been punished
to fine dust that longed to paste
onto our boots & into our car
close to sunset this was no place
to linger / we had secrets to repair

Thursday, November 24, 2022

N Street

in Boston Nana's flat
there was room for nothing
I was not with it enough
to bring a book so I watched TV
or looked outside to the street or rested
on her bed or went to the bathroom
just outside the door or examined
the closet with its stuffed hawk
or looked outside to the backyards
two stories down / Thanksgiving
with turkey and sauerkraut or a cabbagey
version the family made and Brazil nuts
my Father and I would walk to Castle Island
which back then was unmaintained and unsafe
once we drove to a closed model train shop
no one suspected me of ever growing up

Friday, November 25, 2022

National Old Trails Highway

the best parts are the abandoned roads
built once as surprises of invention
through vertical sided canyons
down dried riverbeds / with hand dug
cuts through kicked rug ridges
with icon food like cheeseburgers
and spiral fries with coke
toll houses and motels to stay in
train tracks following wagon trails
but all burned down or flooded out
or nature reclaimed with spot roads
ditching off from the new roads
that scream of tires

Saturday, November 26, 2022

Or Less

I didn't know my role
was driver / she had her plans
and I was infrastructure
any time she could have taken me
into account she didn't
didn't apologize for it either
in Santa Fe I was on my own
to think I spent years believing
in more

Sunday, November 27, 2022

Desert Away

the quiet is disturbing
even with wind and far off
bird noise / the river sloughing
by and all of it echoing
between unflat cliffs
I admit to waiting for her
to come with me or speak
but she was off far away
walking because her leg
muscles liked it / I liked
the idea of close discussion
she kept her arms up

Monday, November 28, 2022

(Me)

I watched a movie
it once horrified me
now it seems sweet
it's the story of a man
who sets people adrift
on their worst day
he is a parenthesis
an escape / he is above
it all and all his wishes
are emptied

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

Beech

why can't there be a way
to glide past cemeteries
itching for company / don't
stop a seer once told me
they feed on you / by the copper
beech I wait my turn for
the stories are hard to hear
let alone tell / my sight
my hearing / my sense
all long for passing by

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

I, I, I

I looked out the window one morning
the snow was up to the bottom of that window
I wondered how I would shovel out
the woman who slept by me had a story
I needed the full day to listen to that story

Thursday, December 1, 2022

Like A Song

I walked behind her
oh what a fiasco
first she started to outpace me
then she farted / but ladylike
she folded her arms behind her
my passion drooped
into the West the sun was setting
I couldn't see her
I still can't

Friday, December 2, 2022

A Bird's Fear

home alone as a child
in a trailer in the woods
inside a fence on Cape Cod
with a dog / doesn't matter
the fear was what a bird must feel
perched back to the world
on a hanging bird feeder
scared who's behind and why
doors locked / all the lights on
all night

Saturday, December 3, 2022

Give Wonder

my view back then of romance at Christmas
was Chanel N° 5 / anonymous gift
yes that little / I had no models
I had no references / history stories
but nothing for my age / my place
I never executed anything like that so
I didn't hinder the lives of women
only made myself heartsick

Sunday, December 4, 2022

(Me)

after covid eveything for me
closed down to nothing
places closed in the town
where I grew up / there is
no reason to go there now
I stay home or nearby
I am as a statement
written (in parentheses)

Monday, December 5, 2022

Words

less full now but still full
of words I note people in my generation
taking their final fives and my plate
of projects is growing / the revisions
of all including me are painful lessons
in exclusion and addition / my writing partners
are on the fence

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

Words in My Arms

how do you snuggle with words
make them cuddle you back
a warm bed / good technique
or the wet of sweat as you work the pen
most of them are sharp and their touch
hurts so love is bloody
same as any

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

Her Hips Too

while she sits in her louche
living room reading highbrow tomes
I am sipping tea with the fake
blond who tips her head in seduction
of the disco-like version of a sad
but love-ish song / everywhere

Thursday, December 8, 2022

Curiosa / Inconstant

when things pop up they attract
my mental connections / like
an aura that surrounds them
and me / like sunlight
on my body but not on my face
like walking through a labyrinthine
city with streets like mysteries
like Venice when all you see in the canal
before you is the very prow of a boat
next to a humped bridge / these all
pop up

Friday, December 9, 2022

Earliest Sunsets

every late afternoon / December
the light disappeared and our habits
of silence and isolation opened up
in service of unknowns from unknown
pasts / sunset behind barren trees
across the big field was the beacon
I'd follow / I never figured out who
I was / I repeat all of it / and the cold

Saturday, December 10, 2022

Her Dream

rain rips hard against the cliffs
seeming to bleed red in the night gale
above we sit in the quiet of a croft
a fire rising orange from peat
while we sit reading at far ends
the only talk is do you want some tea

Sunday, December 11, 2022

Even Sleep

the snow like onset of sleep
cushions the mind and ears
everything grows muffled
warmth grows warmer
even with this calming
she makes me nervous
we draw away

Monday, December 12, 2022

Feeling = Nil

for favors she still
asks / once complying
forever a second fiddle
this requires no friend
feeling / just do this
help me / I who she insulted
in my home which she hated
I complied

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Amen

who is the narrator of my story
it isn't me because my vision
never wide grows less
my hope is to put it in the hands
of words and let them steer
like a poorly made knife
I can't cut it

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Over

she is asleep / a fairy tale
with chilies / I never expected
her to be aspergers or something
like it / no filter on her remarks
but she is asleep / fairy tale out

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Roads

the only way to look
is back / ahead is short
she has more room ahead
so she borrows from me
without affection
without grace

Friday, December 16, 2022

Everywhere

her cue was leave now
she booked flights and flew
off / just then some sadness
but that gradiented to dislike
or worse / why use the words
in books I read / big thoughts
written down by someone who also likely
faced dislike / or worse / but kept
on / kept on / in a diminished voice
she'll fly away some more gathering
distance and then she'll be like
gone for good / I must write this

Saturday, December 17, 2022

Aghast

lights and still snow
a car far away
the warmth of heavy quilts
smell of meals cooking
or coffee arriving
a fragment of song recorded
years ago / the voice of a lover
who has forgotten / rings
on fingers to signify
watching water called a river
crossed by a road called a bridge
my mind wandering light and still

Sunday, December 18, 2022

(me)

I passed a headstone / stopped
read its short message summing
things up / a biography with start
and finish and the most important
fact / yet I wonder is any of it true
and if it isn't who is the joke for
the mystery of a life / of me for
example / so many turn away
I am (parenthetical)

Monday, December 19, 2022

Franconia

she started the trail strong
with expectation / young and experienced
hiker but the snow and cold trapped her
they found her without shoes
age 20.9 / a mystery

Tuesday, December 20, 2022

December 20

I made my way to the pond
now frozen over / taking my skates
I pu them on sitting on a rock
and then glided across to near
where the stream came in and
the ice was thin / I could hear
loud cracks and below me was black
like many things I was a lousy skater
could not stop / go backward
start quick / but the sound
of a steel blade cutting ice...

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

Rez

she asks the same questions over again
waiting for the same answers or not
she gestures out the window
what's there is scattered desert
at the base of a long line of cliffs
rumble houses and hogans / hoopdys
telltales she might say / above I notice
the sky is darkening blue as if haze
were out of style / not a bird
not a snake / no lizard
it seems like a long way to sleep
or find good / she asks / not a snag

Thursday, December 22, 2022

Burrafirth

sitting here / above the aurora flashes
behind it stars / the dipper
to the right the North Sea
to the left the Atlantic
not a warm night but a long one
under piles of quilts and blankets
I'll stay warm and she will too
before bed I'll pack more peat
which will burn long and with a smell
outside we might hear sheep startled
not far the waves caress the shore
as the lonely songwriters have said
it is everything

Friday, December 23, 2022

Coasts

they say marriage starts it all
I've known people married before
and still are / 49 years ago
I gave it a try / my ambition
killed it I guess even though some
said it was perfect / that I was lucky
we spent times together others
would have spoken of as perfect
instead she's far away
I am too

Saturday, December 24, 2022

Wrong Roads

all for her / I was vehicle
revolting is the word she was thinking
she uses / now to escape
the land though was lovely
the sky with it / the road
different and difficult
the agenda though not so clear

Sunday, December 25, 2022

This Way

out the bedroom window
lamps swaying rising falling
growing larger headed toward me
how many are coming / why
news or accusation
friends with gifts
old lovers out for revenge
I could use some rain
wind and a storm

Monday, December 26, 2022

Burra Firth

near the entrance to our voe
a ship seeks shelter
according to MarineTraffic.com
its track a scribble
likewise we sought shelter
at the other end
sadly a hatred is upon us
the peat fire's warm though
and we still sleep entangled
and piled / the ship though
shudders

Tuesday, December 27, 2022

Faked Love

I never asked her
but I suppose she knew
silly love at that age
her results were bad
she should have relented
I never even talked to her
for a long stretch
what a coward I was
I still have that habit

Wednesday, December 28, 2022

In Prague

instead of ordering a meal
we decided to write some sonnets
but instead of some good rhymes
we chose 7 syllable words to end
each line / the waiter waited
when we were done we each
had 14 glasses of robust beer

Thursday, December 29, 2022

Santa Fe

she walks away arms folded
behind her / time was not
her friend / her secrets
stabbed back and how could I
compete / resist / resort
to the flyaway and this time
next week she will be farther
away and easier to forget

Friday, December 30, 2022

War

embers fly up into a leaden pillowed sky
the dogs that celebrate death have stopped
barking / under a dim light firs
are lit by snow / the calm face
of one recently dead will not smile
a picture of a woman standing by her daughter
in his breast pocket and in his hand
the lace remains of the one he last loved

Saturday, December 31, 2022

Lerwick

tonight I watched a couple
and a small group photographed
by a man with a big camera
at Market Cross / he took down
their names it looked like
and when they all were gone
he picked up his folding chair
propped against the Grinch
and walked toward the Esplanade

though not much this was more
than the two years past
when no one at all was there
however / I watched