

Café Jitters

A Collection of Poems

Richard P. Gabriel

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Wherever You Go

below me
now cars whisper rush
she is there
she whispers her words are a rush
of goodbyes and so
longs my job is to wait
for her for her
to walk away across the bridge
I stand on hoping it is symbol
above her
now I whisper pause
she is there
she shushes her words pause
my goodbyes and so
long as she walks away
my job is to wait
until it is over

Her Eyes and the Beauty of Them

she came up the street in a cart
to the spot where her beloved was loading
his brothers onto a wagon bound for the drugstore
after the shooting to be patched up

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

mountains to the east faced the possibilities
of echoing stoically & riders going up Turkey Creek
could not be blamed for pausing and looking back

she was without her bonnet and she
worried of her reputation
and the blood on his hands and coat
there was much here to love

her breathing slowed and her eyes
opened up with the sun passing out of sight
as she turned to the east away from him
and the dead in the dust

she touched the back of his hand
amid the quiet whispering up and down
the street and she felt the special thing happening
we call birth of a romance

Le RPG Will Be Est Mort

the way people spoke in 1880
was nicer and how they wrote too
the order of the words and the structure
of their sentences moved forward
lapping on the reader's mind like
a big dog's hot tongue

just imagine what that dog
's tongue has been onto

the germs from your sentences
are being licked onto my brain
right now

the filth comes from everywhere
and I don't mean porno
someone has to love for money

here (hear?) listen to this:

"On his person was found
five or six dollars in small change,
which was all his store.[which was all his store—got that?]
He had no personal effects of any value,
and but for the kindly remembrance [shhlurp]
of people of means who knew Norton
and had business relations with him
many years ago when he was a citizen
of substance and standing,
he would have had a pauper's funeral
at the city's expense."

-January 11, 1880, no byline

I need to get someone on something
like that now so that when I croak
it'll be ready

bring your dog

No One Can Be Left Behind

let's plan it together
although the warm swirling breezes
and the lightning swift touches
under the precious maple
hurt like hell the thoughts
of endings but the advice
was clear: plan the end at the start
so goals are in the open
not under a tree
not swirling and tenuous hanging
by threads nor with a blank hole
around our hearts and heads

important moments we
are alone because our souls
are built that way the soul
needs to be alone to ensure
the real world is the one
helping or hurting
at the crucial times
and not world of gods

On TV

what if the most
beautiful woman in the world...

she is what her skirt entangles

the fires that warm are left
by the purple in the carpet
and the shininess of the moon as seen
through new windows

it has been snowing

what if she
were the warm fire or the carpet

she is the earth and all that is tight

Float Free

we are in a mood to float
first up but then toward the floor
onto it
then through it and under
deep through the soil
then the clay and sand
hardpan then bedrock
past layers filled with water
to where it is still hot
we are in the floating mood
and instead of slowing
we accelerate

Cracking

it's all collapsing now
and my sloth is triggered
by fear

like little birds
re-marking accidentally
and songs taking on cries
of battle and allure
the 13° and settling snow
work through infiltration
and device

the crevices have formed
from fissures and less
collapse seems
what's required

Round We Go

on the turntable
3 of us turning the wheel
using a key with a 10' bar
round we went and so the bridge
to let the expensive cruise boat
pass through
there was no way to the banks
should the 100yearold mechanism fail
and this is the closest I came
to living my dream which was
always a nightmare

January 9, 2005

Lifework & My God

flurry of activity
light accumulation of results
blowing winds drift things up
into ridges
 with flowing points

January 10, 2005

Autonomous

when the wind blows
wings stand up
and the bird notices

Po Power

synchronize the winds
and turning pages
line things up
so the visual and aural mesh
let what you think match what you smell
by coincidence not by reason
no cognition in the setup
when everything is in sync
nothing will be noticed

Everything

nothing

Repose

once I heard a pretty song
behind the barn which smelled of dung
and nearby fields lent their mown-grass
smell and breezes would blow it all
away

now my self is like that
yes like that

Lonely Approach

he opens each door
in her apartment while she sleeps
quietly opening
looking
closing
going from room to room while outside
it rains in feminine torrents

behind one door
a small closet just outside her room
he was surprised by a mirror
and he came face to face
with himself
with the rain's pounding
diminishing

Nothing Better To Do

the room is cold
just off his mother's bedroom
it used to be her mother's apartment
and now it's the band room
or sometimes the pool room

with a cheap reel-to-reel tape recorder
(this is 1966)
with the love song he plays over and over
with a yearbook picture of her on his lap
for hours until his mother turns on
her light and it's time for him
to head to his room and read the book
he reads over and over

40 years later he sits in a cold room
writing over and over
while the same song plays in his ears
through noise canceling headphones
played from a file on his computer
the yearbook in the next room
getting yellow like he is

Frozen Dead

nights are self-pity
waking and staying awake
worried about how the end of our lives will play out
will it be like my father
who worked each day in his playful way
knowing that there was nothing he couldn't fix
or like my mother
who after he died
prayed nothing would break
because no one but him
could ever fix it

Boy in a Barbershop

trips to the barber
were to a world of men and men's habits
the drive was to the coast town
all brick and white clapboards and black trim
in an industrial/fishing part of town
where things and food were manufactured

there were two barbers
men waited reading magazines and talking idle chat
I recall sitting on a box and in later years not
the buzzing clipper and snippy scissors
the hot lather to make the lines on the backsides of my head
sharp and precise as the razor wiped sharp on leather
(a thing I never understood)

two things
the small cut hairs under my collar that itched for hours
the trip to the small magazine store to browse after
no three
the smells like women in an enclosed room
and how the rough men fancied it
yes that's the word
they fancied it

What Now

let me tell you my vision for the past

explain the future

excuse it

No One to See It

the fear of the super father
is not of him but by his acts
when I put my hand in my life's bag of futures
the choices permitted him are never
in my grasp

by being able to take them
he has denied them to me
in sacrificing
himself to the pleasures of his makings'
expression he forgot I needed them too

and now the fear is like the stranger inside
who has no hands to hold no eyelids
to forget with and a black cloth always
over my heart

What a Ride is Like

the field overhung
with fog rising with the setting sun
the grasses and brambles low and brown
wind winding its way through them to the road
where I cycle fastpaced home to get there
before darkness ascends
in the copse or perhaps beyond
a small group (a pack) of coyotes
yipbarks and whines and as I
move rapidly past the place
they seem to follow and I am reminded
of my sleep interrupted by a nagging
a haunting a trailing behind but catching up
of what I've done wrong to what
I plan to do

Little One

we followed them
they in their black Mustang with black
and yellow plates
colors we memorized while singing in falsetto
they were in our town
first at the ice cream shop
then the grocery store
going back and forth and us
just on bikes trying to follow

gorgeous
but dark haired
clarifying in their beauty
they had driven
driven
all the way in that car with the foundation of their sensuousness
in buckets
across desert
plains
warm wet hardwood forests
all the way
here

Boogsie
Kur'jan
this was too much for us
the local beauties would never be enough
yet another accident of birth
conspiring against the girls
not size
this time
not shape
not the lips or eyes
hair or scent
the coast
the wrong one and she's a frump
the right one
:
surfer girl

On The Shore

they left
it was still summer after
the sun set it seems heavily upstream
we watched the car drive off
top up
west
the girls who wanted us
though not meaning us
to love them
were in their homes nearby
glad for an absent reason
knowing things about the sun
and distance
therefore hopeful that with their growing sizes and devotion
they must be
one day
loved but did not count on
how long reverb could ring
or how long wait could be endured
or how urgent could be the site of a sun part above
part below
the distant line of a red/dark horizon

We Couldn't Ride

where is the right place
beneath a telephone line strung up decades ago
its poles pierced from linemans' pronged footwear
and grayed by the wind and rain
the sun with its vague desire
coming and going
the road just lies there
its inescapable details
the heat it gathers and releases
fueling two stripes of grass to the horizon
or the sick streetlight lit alley
with furtive meetings and cross purposes
electric lines crossing the sky like black roads
if there is some heat here it is
hanging back in the shadowed darkness
like a cloud of love passing by without rain
but in both the action is above
the heat below
and the slightest things are stretched
or laid in blackness
and someone has written a song
and sung about it

January 24, 2005

in the night

a cactus takes
a century to grow a ton

regret is a 5 o'clock shadow
remembered as lips approach

Chosen Mission

remote perspective links
me with the best characters
like men in the bleachers shouting
red-foreheaded complaints only
the pigeons appreciate
at men sweating in long pants

I sit at my machine and write

words come out noisy and pulverized
I look for quirks in sound mixtures

it's just me and this room
and the itch of thoughts
the keys' scratchings can't end

write faster than those who write better
write better than those who write faster

Open Road

the road at night heading toward fall
the clouds working in the dark covering
the slutty moon and over the radio I wish
were made from tubes the women sing
as if the sadness in the words really happened
and maybe they did to them to the people in the next farm
whose lights are early off and whose yard light is fluorescent blue
or wait maybe to me

Shall Not

if only the clamor
of the noisy guitar could foretell
the passage of hopelessness and sinning
but instead the sound is clarity over distortion
and the imposition of the note
between the sensible pitches
a rational man would choose

but things ring out
their sounds are just around the corner
always
things fade away
or are plucked quick and throw down

shall we walk alone

Sock Hop

the dances were like a string of solaces
once a month the action
the girls being women for a night
the hallways filling with pop
that the following Monday won't maintain
I went only to watch never to do
I wonder did they wonder
what I saw what I heard
who was I was a good question too

Tired/Weary

the story shows that the end of life
is full of monsters
some in wet arm jungles
others in cold blizzards piling up snow
the question that breaks across all lips
is is sadness
a property of space
or matter
or energy
it pervades so
the ringing of the spheres is a pure blues

The Anxiety of Bidimensionality

there is a foolish way
to hook onto the tailgate of life
be pulled on skates that mimic rational thought
whose wheels soon wear down or whose
bearings heat and seize onto a single thought
too fragmentally and our fingers
at once velcro and teflon catch and release
caught onto debris and trinkets
pulling us along our brains spinning
trying to keep our feet
our foundation
solid yet fluid
and there is
a smart way

Pliny

long ago people died
in superheated foam
flash incinerated
and those who reported it were believed
insane or kooks because
nothing like that could happen

the world moved on
it happens every 2000 years

Stigmergy 1

carved words
stretch english
souped up and tugging at the hems of skirts
our modern language bangs
like a bass drum
and the rhythm of writing
lumbers on

Lost

skin like tears
hair falling like birthday ribbons
legs and everything between shimmering
like mirages of the desert
but for me it's just
a dream
only a dream

Found

Il Ikey y su Pajaro

we are hoping for the beautiful painting
to fall from its hooks into our hands
we can take it home and hang it contentiously
first in the den then the toilet area
places of books and reflection surpassing
the woes of flesh and elimination
flat painted on flattened metal perhaps
a fender pounded out and paints from Kelly Moore
flat not satin

It Started as a Promenade

we find the way crooked
as streets are in old places
once straight but wrinkled with age?
arthritic from over experience and pummeling uses?
beside the way are places to stop
houses or taverns sometimes a small park
old with long-living grass and shortened trees
the way is in places
a road or a street
showing the particulars of design
or frustration with the natural or uneven
and people
sitting by their doorways
or stopping to talk on the streets
selling chickens from barred cages
and fish on ice and plates

this part goes through a sharp valley
nothing but ruin along the way
and down toward a pit it goes
the sun behind a ridge
and getting cold
I am tired but my legs
carry me faster
faster with each step

February 5, 2005

Doggerel

stories of me are fun to read
packed with facts packed with lies
the ultimate thing that I regret
packed away the end unread

Superbowl Sunday

he would have loved this year in sports
two of his Boston teams winning championships
he listened to them almost every night of the year
and complained in a soft voice
he listened in the dark
to the radio rarely tv
he went to bed disappointed
most nights each year with his teams
I miss him

Not Likely

he listened and swayed
two hopes neither workable
his eyesight never improved
his teams did but without him listening

he would laugh at me for this

I'm a-Leaving

what does a poem a day mean?
one per day or one per day
on average?

is it stupid to write just to write?
what if I get no better?

tomorrow I leave for Switzerland
a trip I have hated for months
as time goes on I like
staying in one place more and more

is this practice too?

on a Jet Plane

Any Time

Bern has its beauties too
walking around like stuffed sausages
like food looking to the predators on either side of the street
things have been here a long time
and why haven't more things turned to dust
the beauties do one at a time
but beauty not not here not any time

Soon

On Walking Back from Some Fancy Dinner

the pinnacle of garbage
bags and boxes a stage of recitation and relief
beauties in decor decided on to be green
and drums

we pause picking
our way through debris and just around the corner
excitation there must have been great joy here
on the way to celebrating the joy's of Christ's death
revealing the lacquered truths of life painted
as on the porcelain masks on sale in the shut shop

but for us there are papers to read filled with facts
important beyond the price of the paper and ink
that makes them up

her tears are painted on
a tar sticking her emotions to her skin
the buildings are tagged
leaning toward the heaviest meanings

one of us slips

Zurich Lining

so they wear black
you can see only their faces
their hair is black and their eyebrows
they are luscious and I am filled
by the plates of food they've brought
she shines her eyes on my hands
as she places the bill between my hands
my hands are on a leather wallet
that she finds irresistible
that said I pay

February 12, 2005

Tired & Blue

treated like a child
the differences belied and underneath
the place between loving and dying
lies in incoherence

February 13, 2005

Last Song She Moves To

she sings in the language of her beauty and youth
but what of this matters
only her movements and her colored eyes
she lights herself on me and says what

her mouth moves unrelated to my thinking
but her skin is almost like mine when we touch
and what is there after all
to say

You Little Siren

ah you've finally thought to ask
and the answer you expected
was revealed as filth
there is a reason the streets are steep
and the debris at their feet convalesce
now you have heard the stories
and pickled them in a rainy reality
so much so that the best store
is across from the least gathering spot
and absence flows both ways

Disjunction

with the wings the leftovers
endure the humiliation of sticky fluid
we are abandoned and aloof
surely goodness is around the corner
embracing with mercy and quick
we are lagging and the snow
hasn't gotten around to the ground
there is a warmth and underneath a tangle
it is time linger or pray

Elated Mask

sometimes the sun shines
after an ordinary night
sometimes the word is "elated"
or "mask"

any origami shape can be made
with folding and a single cut

I find the outline more sufficient
than is necessary

how many poems are needed to
solve an open problem?

Peasant Girl Eating Soup

perhaps she's from where I'm
narrow face & shapeless tag of hair
peasant green sweater & olive skin
& below a black/yellow flowered skirt
over lavender fuzzy leggings—

in this she sips soup and tears
bread her book propped on her purse
here in this crappo coffee shop
an hour past sunset in Kendall Square
in February after a west-to-east
flight from one degree of cold
to a lower

behind me the asian girls giggle
reading a book—Big Java—
reminding me who I am

February 18, 2005

Diet Right

an overdose
of backhand love
time to walk off
those marriage vows

Frost Heaves and Heaven

I wish I could show you these roads
these trees and dead grass—how
the paths all lead to the thin stones
standing on end—where Mrs. Betsy
lies—a relict—

the gravedigger doesn't work for money
but the sides of his holes are perfectly vertical
the corners are exactly 90° but
even if they weren't they would add up
to your final piece of this earth—

in the time it took me to write this
a piece of ice the size of one of his holes
has broken off the shelf by the river
and has floated on the uneven and uncertain
current around the bend—a place things go
when it's time to not be seen

Elated Visit/Winter Visit

so the temperature
it was near 0°
and snow crusted so
hard it held me as I walked in the circles
the place demands
dark things absorbing sunheat
have made bare earth shadows around those things
and the one that surprises is the Red Sox banner

I walk a distance
from one stone to another
and everywhere I look I see
“his wife” and only once
“his relict”—when I see
my footprints in the topcrust
the feet are turned out no matter
how straight I place them

after I crossed the river and the heater
in my car has toasted the air I remember
I can still walk away
and this is the difference
for now

Coastal Scene Without the Light You Expect

after I've walked to the crest
above the waded surf and sat
on the teak bench I imagine the scene
from behind me as the water is always restless
and my silhouette acts like a hole my shape
in that evermoving water

the meaning of this scene is scratched out
and replaced by the longing I imagine
some women must feel when they think
of the hole I've left in their lives which they share
with my permanent relics

in the scene grass is waving in a wistful wind
and it would all be better were it backlit
but it's the wrong coast you imagine me on
it's the one from which one dreams
not the one of which

Storm Dreams

and so things are neat
now that the tornados are vaporized
several homes are settling back down
though nothing can re-place them
their anchors split or pulled up

you ask questions of this
and my answers turn about the issues
pulling up the roots of your meaning
and greening the air with them

I like it when the runoff rinses
all the vegetation off
into the spillways constructed
in hope after fear

perhaps our cars will recall
the dry dust and sand flecks
and our ambitions to keep their bodies
perfect the way shiny metal
and persitents dreams must be

February 23, 2005

Not Like This

two poems are printed each day
a reminder that the hardest writing
in the world can be done twice
in a row

Long Way to Protection

let's break in—there's
a disaster coming
coming fast and with bad weather
certainly we should start fear
get it going early
warm it up—break in
to the reminiscences that are
like just-pickled cucumbers
that are little salty
and a little sour

this combination
cuts the pleasure
away from the bone

What Could Be Better?

surely the play will be over
before the acting stops
while the music is beginning to end
and the birds have their feet extended
nearby butterflies are popping their wings
in a 5/4 tempo—temporarily
setting their beautiful lullabies
to a distant backdrop of vintage
optigans and melotrons
that imply a nostalgic past

Past In Present

out in the field the hayrake rots
first the soft parts
rubber and wood
then the iron rusting away
weeds and grass filling up its apparent ribcage
over by the stonewall it's covered in ivy
and yellowed by pollen
its color now time's secret
we long for the past that includes this machine's prime
the path here is overgrown
and not a path at all
fill my eyes with the thing it once was
I am the anger of now

Let's Discuss It

prepare some reports in which
the pros are compared next to
the cons

in our discussion let's remark
on the days when no one was connected
past the bend in the road
when the heaviness of the greenery
acted like a surrounding

in the center they held close
held me like a baby
looked surprised by the color
by the wind that blew his sprig of hair awry

could it be that time was more real
could be it was just the coincidence of proprietary love
it all seemed so green in that picture
this is in my report
which are the pros which are the cons
my problem is to find something to which to compare
this scene so that our discussion can be
well informed

In The Front Yard Unexpectedly Caught On Film

he looks little
in all the pictures I have of him
and a little sad though he's smiling
or laughing in all of them
the place is always too much of some unexpected color
or he is shorter than it seems he should be by
those near him

he is surrounded
uneasy about the next one
he is faking his way through life
(I know it)
and both afraid and exhilarated/exhausted
by the prospects of its end

Lesson from a Rainy Night

foolish
simple as a reformed clown
filthy
they thought they
were not
but where they park marks
them and what they eat
passes through them
revealing just
how special they are

Summer Comes in Like a Comb

March & the snow's melting
& I'm just a kid with a boat made of a board
with a 2x4 sawed off and nailed on for its cabin
& a nail hammered in the front
I'm pulling it by a piece of bailing twine
along a stream in a ditch beside the road
& what I recall are these important things

the stream just 1' wide flowing just a little
is exactly like the river down the road
& the pockets of warm air telling me
summer is here now just
not uniformly distributed

Lovely Wish

it is sudden
suddenly warming up in
pockets defeated each night by the everdarkening heavens
meaning what's up and away
does it mean more to me now
than 40 years ago when the prospect
of a humid and lazy summer
fell from trees like a foreign bird
just tired to death of the quotidian

or now when every step ahead
is a step closer to the everdark

Unsavoury

when a wish is sudden
its fulfilment is a pleasure delayed

2am

driving past apartments at night
city streets crowded unexpectedly
one seems dark as we stop
but through a gap in the blinds a dim light
over a bed and a picture of lovers
the frame corner only
visible and sharp
there are possibilities here
opportunities

Blues

the sky is a clever color
reflecting contemplation and resignation
where we give up
where we bathe and frolic
the sky contemplates and reflects
it is what we are
what we were
where we long to be

March 7, 2005

Your Defects Guaranteed

always a caveat
always a critique
loneliness is built into
everything—factory installed

Hide Your Love Away

when the time comes
I'll recall the slow songs we played
with ringing guitars while women
held onto their partners and themselves
some of them sang along because they remembered
something important about the song
others not dancing not singing
just looked on from the dark corners
knowing something real was going on
something they couldn't participate in
but in the center the room the black lights
and red lights labeled the living
this is the use of light and dark
ladies and gentlemen

In A Darkened Room

the music
reminds me of the office
large tables in a large room covered with papers
the windows were covered and each detail
had become murky

though I was the center of discussion
no one talked to me
no one considered the bright sun outside
and the shades and curtains
the smell of old pages

the doctor was a maestro
he would fix my broken eyes
and make them last 50 years more

he died before I was old enough
to know seriously about
thank yous

Theme Song

funny what a sound will do
or a smell
a tape made almost 40 years ago
recording a room no longer
available

voices and fingers with no strength
we gathered there with faulty equipment
and similar hope
similar abilities

what was a mess
counts for nostalgia

no one then imagined that it
could be propelled into the infosphere
and persist there maybe forever

no
back then we thought you needed
a contract
not a will

Discursion

memory makes repetition
possible as a structuring device
or else why would hearing an old song you wrote
and played and recorded in 1967 tear you up
or why would you make your real band
play it 30 years later

and record it
and play it over and over
late when darkness is so drifted
down—all the crecents of pink
categorized and gone—the odors of morning
taking their shift as evening turns into
its own memory
suitable for repetition

When It Happens to You

the tree
what pain does it feel
in its limbs
they twist
they boil up each spring
their youth drops in the fall
and they become black in the cold

we see no lesson here
not until it's late

Surely an Empty Ending

surely there is a spot of hope
wandering in the midst of trees
I've found my place by parking
sporadically and by rivers
no one wanders with me
nor is my stopping as frequent
there is only one way to go
and it's not a good way
I've held a pistol
empty
but full of promise
for the quick
exploding red
ending

Admit It

even a common homely woman
has her beauty if things are not all wrong
she can stand just right
her weight balanced to the right curves
and perhaps her sudden balancing step
adds small waves to her advantage
the conversation moves around me
as my attention drops and my response
enlivens

she feels awkward speaking to the man in line
waiting to order something
sweet he faces her in perfect illumination
she gazes into the flare behind his thinning hair

my attention—
I will never regain it
the love I feel is immense
all this before a single word

Then / Again

waking up
there is no telling how many times
this has happened and will happen
when everything is suctioning fear
and injecting it in me

listening to music was once
a singular treasure
waiting for the radio to play a favorite tune
we were so secondary
albums were too expensive and finicky
tapes
tapes actually made sense
big reel-to-reel tapes

the sounds of the woods behind the fan pulling air
into my room and out next room over
the cool moving mass pulling in the sweet
tangle of cut grass smell in the air

maybe a flash of heat lightning over by the river

waking up
no telling how many times

March 16, 2005

Apology

we have become fools
ripe for ribbing
praise us
for we remain complex

Heard It

the celebration is winding down/
and songs are getting slower
and more ponderous
the musicians look melancholy
they sway to the slow beat and their eyes are teary
perhaps they are lip-syncing
because the beat is perfect
the instruments played in a perfect room
without stray effects and odd reverb

does the fake music give them time
to feed their moods
surely the acts of creation cost too much to let the emotions slip out
or does being fake
bring on the sadness
as its own reward

Countdown/up

time is infinite
because bug list is
too

we are here to fix them
no?

March 19, 2005

Quick Rant

I am at a loss
they say love hurts
for me it is lights through fog on a distant hill
what if being here
were the loneliness bonus for short life

What We See When Dawn Arrives

we are cold as dawn remarks
unfavorably on night
the cheerful sun hunkers
for a few last minutes

clouds bend above eastern hilltops
—revealing a poet's presence—
and the few awake pause
to remark unfavorably on the sudden
light erupting into their eyes

who can blame those who take note

A:B as C:?

the restaurant is filled with the fat
here high in the desert
sitting in big chairs and smiling
dumbly at their children
whom they teach to be fat
they order fried food and meat
with lots of side dishes cooked in oils and fat
they drink beer or sodas
lots of it to wash down the grease
they know lots of words
but not how to use them

Hierolessons

the desert doesn't
understand the process
of diminishment

the desert resists changes
even as changes carve shapes
visible only from the air

the desert listens
only because the sunlight
blinkers its eyes and promises shade

the desert is under
interrogation and lying
just a little each question

the desert lingers
by the edge of prosperity
for God us all to value

our own places over all else

Icy Chests

the desert is a rim
and the warmth of living
is the basin
when we drive out from the unfortunate town
into the distant exitways
our way is marked by rising
dust and rocks crackling up
into wheelwells

the rain comes
in a ragged sheet
and the unholy washes engulf
the former dust motes

the possibility of dying
has appeared where the sun will drop past
we worry only our drinks
the ice in our chests
the changed way back
the sudden storm of our has made

Palace of Finery

it's a place of dark
place of sirens
flashing / revolving
sound show /&/ sweet liquids
it's a place of women
in states of various allure
place of soul negotiation
where you find
your worth if true
is no more than the perfume
you smell in the dark
when dawn catches up
on your nap

Upgrade

the trains roll by all evening
heading from the rising moon
up the grade toward the great
cities to the west

the clouds are piling up
above the mountains
fractured glass opaque from the cross lighting
cold descends and the wind reduces

up the street men by trucks break open
cans of beer and they laugh at the men
who work the trains all night thinking
this cold beer on a cold night
in this little small town is a hot
alternative

I am here as always in the little park
sitting by the cholla shading me
into oblivion

no man
neither on the train nor by the trucks
can see me
they never can

Blue Chemicals in the Body

it happened
I found myself sitting in a trailer by the dry river
behind the 100-year cemetery
at the base of a dug out copper mine
as the temperature was dropping

even in a southern desert it gets cold at night
I thought before knowing the desert
is always cold even midday

cold because the desert feels no loneliness
loneliness is our sign of life
the trailer the final stop

this is how the desert always has it
for us

Bisbee-

roads are lonely
we drive them when everything else is more important
when we step out of the car by the road
the heat grabs on
dust is part of the road
the sun through a car window will sear your arms and legs
the road is our comfort
and horror story

Riding

long rides
the thinking
the near misses
heavy rain in the mountains changes the perspective
along a highway in Arizona
a chubby Mexican rides his bike to work
while the rest of us grow tense

March 29, 2005

Rivers

some rivers flow to the sea
others are secrets
next to one of them I am with you
this is where I need to be tonight

The Red Road

the audio head is worn
if the poor sounds quality really bugs you
these can be easily replaced but they are not cheap
since generic replacements are rarely available
alignment will then be needed

-->hello nice page
it downloads very fast
enjoyed it very much
take care
the internet is a great place to showcase art
increase awareness
in the variety of excellent work available

we dedicate both
the newsletter and this webservice
to keeping the brothers and sisters
who share our spirit
informed about current events
within the lives of those
who walk the red road

in newer vcrs
with real-time counters
the tape will contact the control head lightly
but wear should not be
worth worrying about

<--makes you appear to be a bit removed
from daily reality
you could be something of a loner
your head may be in the clouds
much of the time as you ponder
some of the deeper issues in life.

Shady Dell In Fact

the trailer park sits
between the two-lane
and a cemetery
at the base of a hill
of slag

the trailers are old
40 years or more
the guests linger
over coffee in the trucked-in diner
while the sun hits the cross
in the shade of the hill

I was lonely in the trailer
but my thoughts would
not admit it

Call Me Ishmael

-Quux

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.
It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a man . . . must be in want of a wife.
Pick a variable. Call it x . Bind it to a number. Double it double it double it.
Is Arthur a grammar yes Arthur is a grammar. Yes. Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose.
The stone the angel rolled away with tears
Has been upon thy mouth these two thousand years.

The party of the first part
And the party of the next
Were partly participled
In a parsley-covered text.

Were you partial to a party
That has parceled out its parts
To the party that was second
In your polly-tickle heart?

Then parley all your losings
On a horse that's running dark.
With lights out you may triple
On a homer in the park.

E to the x du dx , e to the x dx .
Secant, tangent, cosine, sine. Three point one four one five nine.
Square root, cube root, QED; slipstick, slide rule, MIT!

Her Failure

she will not have a perfect
time of it

who does

I have prayed that she will

Failure Returned

nothing smells like failure
everything disheartening
about it is like leaves fallen behind a bush
there is no way around
no way under
no practical way over
and too beautiful
to cut down

My Clear Impression

beneath spackled leaves
walking on splotched paths
by unfinished water with a boat
that's just a sweep of white sheets
the boathouse across the water
is just a yellow

the pairs of lovers are tonque lickings
others aren't there at all
nothing but shadows
the sky—O the sky / blue / green / puffs — who is really here
the fence shadows out to two crosses
it's the only thing Claude made clear

It Is Always

we can always find
a reason to cry
all it takes is a face not laughing
a phrase of melancholy music
in the background
someone walking away as tones vary
but no melody emerges
when each of us is gone
many sad things will happen
but we can feel them now
soon birds will fly overhead
on their ways home
this is how it will be
how crying becomes crying out

Today's Prayer

it's possible to see too much
to say too much
lines worth remembering are rarely
spoken this is the price of beauty
I'm wishing for a prayer to enter my mind
a line that can be spoken
when I hear the words I wonder
are they too much
what is their price

Mysteries Of Sexual Curiosity

in the field
by a small orchard of pears and stunted apples
the gnats
the small flies
the crawling bugs dwell and further themselves
it's the cycle that matters
when the sun heats the browned hay swirled
into the cool passing by wind

near where a boy lies
a coffee can filled with a woman's things
lies buried

The Play's The Thing

when we write novels
time is playing dead
college professors await the publication
so their tenure fights may resume
even though the arguments
are all circular
the novels begin with just a few words
perhaps a drunk woman finding her keys
or a bullet that rings out
soon the words hassle a loaf
and structures once sparse
rotate slow dwell sculpture-like
play dead

Lament After Going In (revised)

We've parked and take turns
holding her urn in the car.
We face the mountain
whose peak is classic— a rock cone
visible all the way
from this lakeside to heaven.
To the west a veil of powder-light clouds
leaks orange color as
through a gaping door that leads
to a world of glittering uncommonality.
The urn has turned gold in the light
and in our hope

that the way we've admitted
to sentimentalism will be taken
as a blessing when she needs
it most, maybe wants it least,
but at last it's just our way
to say goodnight to her
on the first of her last 2 or 3 nights
at home before we send her
closer to where she'll want to be
one day when she finds herself
not here.

Lament After Going In (revised once more)

Beneath the rock-coned-topped mountain
stubborn to the invasion of onrushing difficulties,
behind a veil of powder-light clouds
leaking the setting sun, an orange light otherworldly
like a gaping door from a world
of glittering uncommonality into ours,
we've parked and take turns
holding her urn in the light behind
and the sight beneath in hopes

that the way we've admitted
to sentimentalism will be taken
as a blessing when she needs
it most, maybe wants it least,
but at last it's just our way
to say goodnight to her
on the first of her last 2 or 3 nights
at home before we send her
closer to where she'll want to be
one day when she finds herself
not here.

Lament In A Car

we sat by the lake that afternoon
the sun was setting behind some clouds
and it looked like a door that the sun
had gone through with orange light
coming back in streaks painting waving arms
in the lake otherwise mostly calm

to the north a bit the mountain was lit
its rock cone white above blackening sides
down to the lakeshore
many times I had climbed up there
over those rocks
to the top but no more will I do
no not the way it happened before

we held her urn there and then
as way of showing
we knew what she loved best
the light that deepens to become
night and the peak above the lake
that some call perfection

we've admitted
to sentimentalism and hope
it will be taken
as a blessing when she needs
it most maybe wants it least
but at last it's just our way
to say goodnight to her
on the first of her last 2 or 3 nights
at home before we send her
closer to where she'll want to be
one day when she finds herself
not here

Vying Afterall

someplace two things vie
for your attention
and the choice isn't up to you
though it's your attention afterall
the place for treating things as choices
is in your dreams where what are ordinarily
arguments come out as songs

April 13, 2005

Sitting There

the lapping water
the strong light
the weight of the urn on our laps
—one by one—
when it all comes down to this
everything in the space of a small vase
everything
everything that made you

Do You Wish It Would Rain?

for days now the water's
drained from the hills
into gullies
along and across roads
down into ditches
down from gutters into drainpipes
eventually into culverts and then sewers
the Bay must rise
the ocean around it must rise
humankind must rise
because everything does
after life is bolstered
and then washed away
from a winter of heavy
heavy hearted
rain

It All Leads Back

the band starts up
outside the cold air hugs the windows
and inside the cold air falls down the insides
this is where I lean
against a sill the length of the cafeteria
across from the band which plays
through new Bandmasters some well-off dad
has bought and a new set of Ludwigs

they play with heavy reverb
reminding me of memory
how it repeats without meaning
repeats without meaning
until one day its fading away
becomes profound
becomes what
truth?

Lilacs as Precursor

we bother with the fuss
to split the time with lilacs

growing beside the old barn
the purpley smell is masked
and masks sort of like lemonade
in warm milk

I lay here with a girl once
on this small hill built to hold a house
foundation and I remember it
being warm

mowing lawns
we had a lot of them
and each one big
and interplanted with trees and bushes and circular areas of flowers
see my mother valued life

she's dead now
I remember when her car wouldn't start
she didn't call anyone
didn't talk to her neighbors
until I called her from across the country
and then I called the mechanic 20 miles away from her
who towed her car and fixed it
and she didn't eat the whole week it was gone
that much did she value life

Train Scene

with all the sad music in the world
the two turn and walk to different sides
of the tracks under low clouds
and heavy moisture poised to drop

a train is surely on the way
they stand on opposite sides and practice
looking down or off to a distant view

the sad music is winding down
to its crescendo and the tracks
have begun to quiver
the two—man and woman—fear
the hollowing words and the vibrational increase

they wish the tracks were not so steeled
and shiny
they wish the train were fleeting

On Wind

the wind is heavy tonight
from the west
high and distending the trees
I imagine birds and the small
animals hunkered down

there is a pleasantness to the high winds
inside looking out
the fire undisturbed paradoxically

around here we take our cover seriously
not hunkered in or beneath
trees

we build a huffing and a puffing
strong box and lock ourselves
like doubloons inside

Inappropriate

who has trouble
cities pack them in apartments
by warehouses gathered around burning drums
along the wharves where luck sometimes
happens

tourists don't understand
they are walkers
they look and talk about them casually

sometimes along with the wind
a sharp fear brims up

Rambler

nothing is certain
and certainly the roles are reviled
the way to perceive clearly
is to dance before the music starts
and linger after the water dries up

most of the way is narrow
but every three or four skips
the lines don't narrow
and the trees whose branches hang
down to our knees
waver in their communion

everything that is waking
is full of the summer of forgetting

Green Journal

lingering outside
across the street
there are trees there to hide under
behind

she is behind the curtains
reading or perhaps writing
something in a green journal

the light is funny
dim
flickering and it seems like any minute
she will interrupt it
on the curtain

it's dark
you have figured out
and you're wondering why I linger
across the street

as a poet
you think
it's my job to tell you
but you see
I'm not
and I won't

Our Leader

the luck is not with us
and so we are required to die in pain
it has been explained that this is normal
and the price of freedom

Fullness

numerous phrases
spoken in all seriousness:
there are signals flashing
while cars wait at traffic lights
and people walk by
getting cold

Echo

the ambition behind insects
is to get beyond it
to let new DNA take hold
and change things
growth is not the only option
since growth is also change
the butterfly
is it two different beasts
one after the other
first what you are today
second what you are tomorrow
are there enough changes for satisfaction

I am reminded of the minnows
under the undulating mirror
and what this says of vanity
we stop to look at the world
and it's only us looking back

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

churches line the road
mourners line one side
revelers the other
the churches tell the truth
but no two are alike
they are all based on the same book
it's a sad day when two people
hate each other over how to take
the word love

April 26, 2005

The Tiger of Ultimate Remorse

our memories
the void
our memories

April 27, 2005

Long Drive

and so
the road replies
it furthers the case
for intemperance
of impermanence

Only One Can Win

she has seen what it means to have
her worth in doubt
and how things will not go
her way in all things
and I can't make it better
I just can't

I would take it on
all the horror and such
but I can't
I just can't

Shuffling the Last Steps

it's like a run down downtown street
by the restless sea filled with drifters
looking up alleys and across to the other sidewalk
it's cold as disappointment
sort of like what it's like
to notice that your chances are remote
get it

Remember

the stairs are useless
because down is not significant
after some time has passed
we bring tight gifts of misunderstandings
and lettings go
why do we estrange ourselves in the hidden emotions?
how can we remember love?

Love Is

she is right there in front of me
speaking of the last flight she made
and the defined landscape of ancient lands

the lands have been defiled
destined to be right here
she made me speak in front of the last
landscape but what she can't remember
is love

That Night

she is so sweet
excitable and eager
a dabbler betting a hunch
she would be so sweet
but who has heard of the personal dream

she's curled up and
her foreign song is flat
accented

she was so sweet
and this is the proper thing
the was
is belongs elsewhere
is is not mine
never will be again

May 3, 2005

She Has

the music is playing low
and straining
she is walking away wondering
about infatuation
the disease of horny youth

Fortunate Stance

she is away
left and sitting quietly
by the stream she calls my world
she is seated curled
she wonders where love is hiding
her hands are small
but she calls them her world
I would want her
but she is the world

Note It

not into it
not into anything like it
never noticed it
was surprised I talked about it
made a big deal of it
from my point of view it
was the source of what it
means to be alone without the slow passage
from alone to alone

Finally Together Finally

brave and wonderful
a celebration
good news travels like wind
over the tops of trees
like the waving of a skirt hanging well
from the hips of the woman you wish
to love

speculation is that
the beech is keeping watch
that grass is growing well over the spot
too far from the marker

surely the darkness is no problem
but only the knowledge they don't have
of what I've done for them
finally

Whatever It Takes

all the prayers won't do it
they spread slowly from their source
their words oozing self-pity and the luster of the lost
my wildest dreams involve the important
and unlikely equally

above on the bridge we stop
below the family group is spotted
upon the driftwood raft
they hide right there
you hide right here

it never enters your mind
the water drifts downstream
the wind picks up and time is different
for you than for me

in the end the birds have it right
they sing pretty songs
and fall dead where they perch
never having said one prayer

This page is Link collection

These home page master take care of me.
There is the Link collection,
near Friend,
I studied relevantly music and et cetera.

If you hope that you want to be "reciprocal link."
please remit from undermentioned form.

Doesn't it reciprocal link? (^ ^)
"Yes, let's do so.!" is to use the following form.

Adult site (chat, bulletin board is contained),
HP that official order is disturbed,
Approve it though it is here when it is refused
in my judgment besides that, please

Let's Music
Let's study for music!

Gay Men Are Found to Have Different Scent of Attraction

lies and wow the time is listing
to the right and it's conclusive
that a woman is a woman because she chooses
to be

no dna at work
it is a choice
or a lack
of mistakes by parents

o wow
the right are right

Heavy Into Philosophy

heavy wind over the angel of caring
the baby crying her echoes trapped in the brick surround
the mother feeling her lust drain
these are the tactics of anxiety

Red Eyes / Lost Response

I've found the place
where she waits
where she sits while the sun
seems to move and move
what seems to become
is just movement
when it grows dark
the dark actually rises
there is no mystery in her reddened eyes
she is just waiting
did I mention the stream
and the sounds it makes
did I mention how those sounds
cover her fractured breathing

Fortunate to List

painted and lengthy
the last resort
deserve
the words are short
the meaning lengthy

lucky for us

the end of lines don't intersect
that the kiss is less than the frantic ticks
too many lights are off now
and the clocks
hear them
the clocks are trying their darndest
to synchronize

May 14, 2005

End of Justice

I guess it's disappointing
that justice has become hatred

The Evil of 1 and l

source code lessens
our dependence on others
who would ship us rocks
to force down our drives
picket fences with pickets missing
sometimes just off by one
and it's all a shambles

so easy to just delete
what's wrong and patch
in the new bits
the process is like waving a red flag
and watching the bull charge the data
nothing is as pretty as source code
in a nice font one in which 1 is not l
and the code lines up like marvellous
soldiers

she grins when I get it right
and the overlapping executions
end like ballet
her reflection is metaphysical
we think about 1
we think about l

Forensics & Apologies

inappropriate foreground
creeping into the line of sight
tops of buildings where the ground
should be lowering into a distance
one of height and perspective
it's all about light—bright light
light that never stops
light always straight above
looking down and filling every place
up

a woman walks through all this
her skirt tells every line
it makes you wonder what is the purpose
of language taken lightly

Leaves and Our Smoke

the smoke is rolling
up to the ceiling
outside leaves remember
how we used to burn leaves in the fall
the door lets the smoke out
lets the ideas leaves have in
perhaps it's just a leaf or two
dead but reckoning
that make the artificial
bow to the natural

Amazing In Its Consequences

the rain simmers
on the rock path down to the pond
by the trees we laid under
up a rise on a spit of land
we played there every few weeks
when it didn't rain
sometimes another couple would walk by
out hidey hole and we'd breathe slow
one of us clothed to distract
should it come
to that

the small bugs and all that
hot weather often humid and everything dripping
sounds of footsteps making us nervous

that someone would choose me

Lonely Evening for Walking

she walks across the small bridge
it's warm out after the sun's been down
she walks up the stairs to the train station
where we end up waiting and catching the train but missing our stop
she walks across the street and up the hill
it's where we'll eat and I try moving my hand toward hers as we walk
she walks
my hand brushes past hers but the night stays the same
she walks and walks

On Heaven's Ignoble Front Porch

the lines that lead to my door
are embattled and fragile
from people I've known
taking it hard
taking it easy
the dust that gathers there in the late afternoons
turn to thin mud in the evening dew
and blow away once dust again
and the wind comes up past noon
sitting here on my porch
are the women I've loved
with cold drinks and cold eyes
wondering which version of no
was on tap and how long before
it
happened again

in my dream the exalted stranger
sat on my lap and my instinct was to wrap
her waist and lay my head by her chest

later more happened
but it also did earlier

Collecting Memories

walls piled high
with snow a sort of powder
from the intense cold
that came before the storm

we stand by the woodstove
so its upward warmth hits our faces
the cold air flows in under the door
and slides down the windows not
doing their jobs

later we'll pile the opened old
rectangular sleeping bags on
top of us the ones my father
bought for our infrequent overnight
hikes made the way old pillows were

we'll do things
later we'll imagine them
even later they will be routine
or worn out

the snow piled walls
near up the eaves of the roof
this not that I'll
never forget

When the End Won't Stop

forget the lists
and apologies on them
recall instead the heartless
fractions telling of successes
and what's left over
failures

there are a few
spoonfulls to go
before the last of God's meal
has been eaten

the list empty
refuses to end

Manifestation of a Version

which version of you
is in me

how have I concocted the context
to convict your innocence

what happened to my teeth
why are they yours

you don't see it this way
is this another version

surreal or cryptic does this
make sense for a me-like person

Too Fast

the night catches up
and behind a darkened building
some music plays just loud
enough to cause an echo
she walks not too far away
and the music passes between us
in fact the sky is dark
except for the city lights
under the high fog
her sentences are fragmentary
a kind of controlled stutter
she is not too far away
and some fog seems to pass between us
it was behind us at first
and soon because of different speeds
the dark caught us
and now is leaving us
behind

Under Choice

the alley led back home
it was a shortcut

she pointed it out to me
then walked down the crowded street

May 26, 2005

Strange Day / Warm Day

and the wind blew from north to south
though it was warm
and in the crevasses up on the mountainside
the streams were rushing down here

sad day
warm but threatening

the loneliness of simple words

Bio 2

lazy and unkempt
the twined lovers are the same as the sheets
they're wrapped in
the idea of sleep and laughter hovers over them
there might be visitors behind the trunks
outside their carelessly unlocked front door

after some effort they've organized their lives
in strict hierarchies
which may last as long as
a day

she enjoys her pleasure
he does too
this is the mystery of
original sin
aka DNA

Finding Out

seeking / running away
coming together around the burial spot
with the music still playing under the canopy of misses
don't you wish they would speak of you
in voices loud enough to hear
but off a bit
behind the bushes
beyond the trees
just loud enough for me to hear
not so loud that it drowns out
the world

At the Bow

you are near and simple
there is humility looming
among the horrible scrabble and hardscape
I've made loneliness and darkness alone
my métier

my wish is for the woman to walk forward
from the crowd and with just her eyes
choose what never has been

Is It A Goodbye?

is it into the sunset or into the sunrise
birds
are they heading back to roost
or out to claim territory

warming up or cooling down
as I walk along the tracks heading out of town
the thoughts of when I'll sleep next
and where I'll eat shine like the rails crushed
bright anew with each passing train

I should hop one and head
where it does
out over the southwestern desert
and up onto a high dry plain
orange and brimming with dusty greens

maybe they'll throw me off but
I think they'll just sit back and wonder
at the towns ahead
the towns behind
and the towns no tracks reveal

Seed Lines

what we learn is guided by trees
so plant them with care
there is no way to fix the mistake
30 years on when a tree is off by an inch
when the rocks it displaces push into your path
and your path is now in the direction
of ecstasy and imagined fear
and the only recourse is the gun
to the soft upper of your mouth
and the memories beyond

trees
place seedlings well

Eating / Out

yes and the meals
are tasty and filling
our ears are filled
by discussion and comments
we love stories told in blunt
phrases

praise
if you must falsehoods
that salt the anger
sweeten the pretense
but save your praise
not for the end
but for the time after that

Sex Scenes 101

and so and so
all of a paragraph
long but conveying the shrill
importance but is it harder
to do or speak of

Ultimate Sex Scene

(darkness)
(silence)
(languor)

he cautiously enters
her bedroom
she incautiously lifts
the corner of the comforter with her leg

(lights)
(camera)
(action)

Complainitent

who has time for it
the snarking
the lying
god they're stupid

Pass Time

it is the fear of modernity's
passing that frightens those
hooked on logic
those who cannot see what to cut
or where to paste it
they cannot fathom that truth
is a quilt made from what's discarded
they suffer great depressions
and tremble for fear of downsizing
their egos and IQs
sometimes the truth is in Croatian
or in their language but in a halting accent
it is the fear of postmodernity's
passing that frightens those
hooked on hacking
because there is nothing
after it
after all

Fishy Fundamentals

take an abstract number and divide
by 7 fish
not 7
7 fish
assume the number you've taken
is a multiple of 7 fish
not 7
7 fish
once you've conjured the result
let's talk about math

Genesis

alleys and small ways adorn the mind
the city outside or within
I have entered one and am halfway down it
deep within as I can tell from the odors of unfettered living
behind a dumpster a man is emptying
contents onto the asphalt
from a bag or an opening I cannot see
the alley is deep between two high buildings
and the light is down—there is a almost a mist
and where what he removes fall the asphalt
explodes into green and a wild pantheon of flowers
nothing seems odd
this is the work of salty bodies
minds drunk on making
and our own local god

Lament by the Still Waters

along the tracks
deep into a woods
into a corridor itching to close over if only
it would rain enough one spring
the tracks skirt the hem of a mountain
small but with a barren cone
overlooking majestically a primal pair of lakes

when I was young my parents took me to this lake
and we would swim in the summer because the lake
was shallow and its bottom dark and the water was warm
when I was old I held my mother's urn and ashes
as the sunset light focused a diffusing pink on a bank of clouds
just to the south of the mountain's cone
and though the rail had been abandoned when my mother was rather young
I thought I heard a train whistle bristling everywhere
from the cone of the mountain where she and I and my father would climb
to the heavy overloaded woods and the warm water making its small sounds
or something—I heard something that sounded far off
and moving away

At the Awards Reception

the famous are old
and hardly recognize each other
when they do they remark how healthy you look
they will be dead soon
and what will their fame have bought them
an epitaph maybe that says
here lies a famous person
who grew old and no one recognized him
so we wrote this epitaph
to even things up
and this is what he's famous for

Is

the nature of reality
differs depending on whether
you're in your bed or
in a field of timothy

but what about the special
hotel with a courtesy basket
of fruit and cheese
and a vase of flowers to signal great welcome

but random events are not evenly spaced
and so the once a week coupling
is not random
while doing it every night at the special hotel
is

Lounging Later

ceremony over
the audience confused
by melodic prose &
people dispersing
because who wants to talk
after there is no more fame to rub off
the place settings are being taken away
elaborate flowers are heading
for the dumpsters out back
we lounge in our room
just 2 floors up
the songs we're listening to
going on and on
where people's passions lie
are on the trams outside
running past the dumpsters
everything is over

Default

listening to the words
nothing with sense
my rational brain's taking
the night off

Infinite Jest

the more words I tell you
the higher density of truth remains
because everything said is false
and what's not said therefore...

but falsehood and truth
are each infinite
so saying everything will not be enough
to leave nothing
but truth

that is
taking away any amount of falsehood
leaves just as much
and just as much truth

The Other Kid

I recall hiding
behind the stone in midfield
as my father called first
then my mother
from across the road from our front yard

he left and I never knew where he went
she came after he left and called out
then went in

sunny for a spring day
the browned grass still matted from the winter
warmed and warming
the breeze was cool
soon the sun would set below tall pines

they wanted to divorce
and I never knew why
then later never knew why not

from then on they seemed
not comfortable
it makes me wonder who that other kid was in the picture with the both of them and me
the kid who stood in front of them as if
he belonged

Beware Jesus' Smile

Jesus on Hazel
in front of a church
peddling ideas of revenge and retribution
Jesus eyeing everyone
who walks out smiling

maybe you read
"peddling ideas of revenge and retribution"
as what Jesus was
doing no
he was there
to eye and smile
smile at
the damned

Get It Up

others' poems
sound like ol' folks
like lessons you'd rather forget
like too-moist skin
like soup just a little too cool
or warm
like something you think you heard once before
once too many times
other peoples' poems
are just trying too hard

Story Told Again

too many pains
the house can feel them
and maybe it will absorb
the worst of it

when we visit we can feel
it still
other than that there are no signs
of what happened there

everything involved with the pains
and the floors that were right there

Poorly Attended Gig

sway rhythm pushing the darkness
back from the condensed windows
what's important are the dancers
do they know what the guitar means
and how hard it works to establish
the parameters of the night
we labor to get the rhythms right
and the off harmonies that play off against
the coolness hearts might feel
and instead the heat from the tubes' heaters
makes its way into the hips and loins of the dancers
and it's time for the song to lapse into its trance
and for the dancers' sweat to coat the windows

what he sees is the plain lowering into the distance
the echoes of the amplifiers against the curtain of distance
flowing up from the horizon
it was always the direction of his gaze
and now his fingers point this same way

Sealand

it really is a no place
I mean not a place at all
it's a sunken barge with two hollow posts
and a platform in 300' of water 6 miles off England
and it houses the most secure
servers on the planet
and
get this
the place is more or less its own country

you can see a picture of it
and the Prince burning old waste engine oil
in a barrel with the West Cardinal Buoy in the background

oh what a twin-posted thing it is
and the hope of freedom from chagrin

Last Waving

o the twinning
the twining
the missed understandings
high winds in narrow alleys
the loneliness of the knife under anesthetic

Food Item Description

this is just like "Garlic Butter"
but without the garlic butter

Under the Wing that Makes Us Us

out of the restaurant onto the sidewalk
we are cooled by the onslaught of
the single-minded nature of the sun
nothing if not elegant
in its going down and I swear
the clouds could be turquoise

our conversation amounts to nothing
but it is extensive and alarming
it takes place under the sky
that care nothing of it
but makes it into everything

Food For

nothing is more
than acrylic on canvas
representing the famous needs
of shade and light blue eyes

while we eat
after we eat
we talk too much
we retreat

but the sky reveals
an occasional breeze
unconcerned with goals and directions

she says there are ways
to uncover
but the night is for walking
I am holding her
to this

Tossing Riots

a place made only of rocks
makes for perfect riots
a boy will pick one up for comfort
the assurance of place
to wish to warm it
and then passion—it's thrown in
then thrown toward
soon everyone is throwing
and the infinite supply of stones
is the confluence of opinions

Desert Prayer

sophisticate the sounds
to go with the heat sunset can't cure
long for some breeze but that takes
a change somewhere
only the sun's changing
only 4 colors now: red rock
turquoise sky sage green
clay white
both on the ground
being the cliffs
onto the sky

listen to the voice God
puts in music
each sliding slurred sound
is what He declares
not the words
but the off-scale interleavings

know Him by 4 things
sound heat breeze change

Desert Lesson

frightening in its scope
alone among many
the stones piled throughout
the desert arrayed beside the highway
are symbols
each one is
of faith gone bad
I mean of faith undeserved
it makes us wonder
where the hardness of crystals
comes from
the facts we know don't explain it
but there is always faith
faith is hard
stones are hard
stones are everywhere but scattered

Endings

we labor through our days
there are only simple things to love
every now and then
there are many things to love
but few of us take the time
few of those things are available
soon the days seem to pass more quickly
and opportunities are more rare
or the time for them is

it's time to wonder where to sleep

Women / Love Diverges

sure there are
women I've been with
and some who've loved me some
but love's no sure thing
and many're not loved ever
though the math says it might work
the little nuggets of potential love
operate on rules not fairness
and even the biggest blunder of all
—friendship leads to love—
has few good effects

remember when the pines above
listed in the wind and the whispers
you thought you heard foretold
of the secrets of nights under blankets
: it was just pines
: just wind in the needles
: the cold under the pine matt is the fact
you need to accommodate

behind the barn
in the rocky fields
by the turgid stream
find what you need there

Visited on Me

I got it from my mother
among the frailties and ill behaviors
the temper idioms and unlovable eyes
—also the hunching over while reading
and dislike of common foods—
but the hair waves and settles pretty
just this one thing

Faded Essentials

buildings with names
painted on
letters faded making mysteries
easy to walk past
this is part of the charm
of abandoned main streets
and escapes to cities or the woods

I noticed two women stopped
looking at the perforated name on a building
standing while a cold wind bends
small branches nearby stripped of leaves
the wind passing through the trees
thoughts running through their minds
where some of their memories have faded

what they think is not significant
since they turn and walk arm in arm
upwind in the direction of forgetting

One is Like Voodoo, More is Like Booze

many trips are lined up
because the season of heat is on
we propose a solution to this dilemma
and it is sometimes a fog and sometimes
a haze that covers the hillside scenes
and makes secret rendezvous a blast

I am suspicious of nouns
whose plurals are spelled the same
but are pronounced differently
how much can we expect of lovers
away on a trip seeking a hazed-overt
hillside—can we expect the usual?

Last Song

I play
she dances
no other connection is possible

because sound is a flood
we don't need an interface
music is it

soft music and the urge
to sharpen the guitar's edge
helps her drop down and use her legs

she plays
I refuse
no connection to the other

No One Says We Should

earned life
there is no such thing
since life is eating its way through the hearts
eager to pop in or the other way around
and the chair where I would sit
has no one in it

along the river bank lovers
waltz their way into the mating bed
or to sleep

there is no such thing
as the happily lived life
we are given masks
and wear them

Listen Again

summer has a duty
to track for months
and spray heat like lacquer
on the pavement

wonder about the leaves and the push
to grow cut short
by the nights colder each day
and the snows readying to blanket

the moves to contrast
reckon to disturb the common course
and make the usual more usual
"he said ironically"

time goes
"someone said"
and I believed it

Lazy Writing

we love the words
like the obvious songs
repeating like a machine is in charge

but poetry doesn't figure
into the picture when the words
are flat and the talent lacking

sure I can use all the dictionaries
and googlish searching tools to find
the cleverest phrases and strangest

words but I want to talk to you
always have but growing up alone
has puddled fear in my brainpan

and our love of words
buries summer beneath an obvious
pile of words for green oh

and blue skies thunderclaps
and bolts

Art Imitates Nature (and Probably TV Too)

the river awaits doing
its boring back-and-forth thing
while people living near its banks

tune their tvs to the funniest shows
which means the cheapest to produce
which means one more small cut

in the death of small cuts for the arts
and another thing there are no good restaurants
nearby even with the river and ocean and all

why I want to be there is unknowable
like why the salmon (long dead)
used to run up the river after years at sea

at sea I am at sea and I know it because
I rock back and forth to the music I play
when I write each line back and forth

boring
really
boring

Tasty

Skip's changes
the clouds made it cooler than I expected
and the burgers were less crisp

this time the mosquitos were out
and I was the only one outside at the picnic benches

Though

A Lesson

how close to life does death get?
consider the groundhog
sir who channels through sandy dirt
to get to his/her/their living quarters
piling up a mound 1-2 ft high
against the old (1944) headstone

my my guess who's coming to dinner

I Suspect

Storyline #1

let's imagine a world
and our life within it
let's not just imagine it
let's build it
in fact let's make it pretty and not typical
let's make choices real
let's allow people to decide everything about themselves
let's enable people to create exactly the corner of the world they will inhabit
let's make them smarter than they otherwise would be
let's permit them to live on their own terms
without butting into others
let's make this imaginary world
real

At Cruise Night

do they know—
the thickets of people moving jerkily
from car to car in the cruise night field
gazing like lovers on the chrome pipes and headers
manifolds exposed and germinating under the midday
sun

nearby they buy and eat small burgers and spiral fries
drinking traditional drinks and putting on hats
before lurching into the sunlight to view the cars
lined up like schoolchildren for testy inspections
and in fact there is a contest for the best car
—as they walk from car to car without panty lines
that their smooth asses are driving men to love their cars
more as part of a DNA-etched ritual to make more
of me

while in their minds it's just the fashion of pantylinelessness
and good taste

not the ruination / temptation / vilification / glorification
of a species

Why Do It?

let's dream
perhaps lines of sight will clear up
but the chills that prevent me from getting up to pee
or the sweats that keep me partly delirious
argue against it

my dreams are just repeatables
the same scenes and arguments
simply restarted and running
to the same point

rivers can do this
tidal ones
am I the tide between rationality and the dream

I am lopsided with despair and anger
filled with a battle of bodies and beliefs
women can't bear my affronts

On The Day I Found Him

we went there and found the gap
but the coordinates testified
we were in the right place
the worker smiled in the way
workers do when the bereaved ask
them questions they know how to
but don't want to
answer

the gap was wide and full in the sun
with no shade around and it shows
a lack of love or an active force
begetting forgetting

there was nothing to see
and not much more to feel

we drove away through light but annoying traffic
everything was filled with heavy sunlight
the day passed by
as any other would

July 13, 2005

Another's Grave

buried in someone else's grave
along with a 1 year old buried there
15 years earlier
and now I can't do anything
—headstone or move—
without a difficult search or court order
will anything go right in this

At Rocks Village Bridge

the journey home
starts with memories layering on
green leaves overgrowing a riverbank
the point being to deepen
the river's channel

the river will silt up
given time enough and hills enough
many trips or permanence are required
to shore things up

no one notices the bridge is not symmetrical
or that it was designed by different people at different times
they just drive across without any hint
of the fear the bridge demands
its resentment stored up
awaiting a suitable victim

July, New England, 1937

pungent pines
the blistering ammoniac of combined
urine and manure
the blunt lilacs by the house
horsey sweat and from the cows too
salad of smells from the cut grass
some fresh some drying or dried in the fields
from the south and west the polluted assault
from an industrial river
from the east brine and brackish strands leftover
from the onshore around dawn
somewhere down the road woodsmoke and fat burning in a pan
all these smells in combination as if some god-sized spoon
paddled them together into today's living and human broth

the doors of the barn are open to let wind pass through
and too the hay-wagon pulled by two large but not draft
horses this is the setting
for change
extravagant change

Ahead

what was easy
is now a story in the past
all the ones who are capable
are away

the barn still stands
with all its outbuildings
and the chicken coops too
there are cows to milk and feed
chickens and pigs
a dog to pet
two horses
one a killer
and only two women
in mid-July
in a heat wave
with the most work just ahead
and everyone waiting
for the pickings

It Is Empty Always

dark around Boston
even the lightest days fell short
of clear and the winters
and low unlifted clouds
sometimes dropping icy drizzle
trees hang over roads and fields are squeezed
in close and you'd think
the narrow spaces would become cozy
but it's as if the coldness
had the most lasting lease on the place
close by dark cold
what happens when it warms up

Trip Interrupted

the bridge is low most of the way
but has a high overpass where boats pass under
it was 2 hours past sunset and I was heading west
clouds or fog really hung low and it obscured the moon
which was changing sides
to the north a city was glaring under the low fast moving fog
and it seemed like the end was closing in
at that point traffic bloomed and my fantasies
were blown aside and then my exit came along
I was nearly home
(I thought)

Considerable Questions of Heat and Pressure

all in all
the heat from pavement is not worth
the shoe leather it cooks
asphalt flows in all temperatures
animal hide cooks one way or another
the twain always meet

In A Country Near Nightfall

she is bathed in red
it reflects from sandied bluffs
and even the sky
(which is blue even at noon)
adds to the red by asserting
its contrasting assent
her skin doesn't work well
with it being even more
than the heat that makes the sky
a coverlet as the day wanes
and her desires are left unchecked
as the red turns pinker and then translucent

downvalley a train starts clanging
from start to finish as the time comes
for everyone on it to move on

More News From The Front

soon the sounds of birds will stop
and the light settle up like a dodge
I am certain the light is not failing
but just wheeling around to take another swipe
in another part of the world
someone is doing her laundry
when a missed problem should be being
solved by her intended mind
and instead
she paints pictures of herself
to make another her for the other world

someday she'll put on those clothes
and we'll meet in the old part of an old
city built for red light in the mornings
and we will drink hot drinks as the heat
intensifies up or until one of us
looks down

And Even the Heat

he mowed the timothy
and let it dry flat
by fixing the roof
while summer worked

he raked it into rows
to fluff the hay to dry even more dry
the raked it more to dry it more

one day the farmer with the bailer
came and made round bails
from a tall loud machine pulled by a tractor

and was it a favor or a job
was he a friend or a businessman
what of the sun?

July 23, 2005

Boy and Girl Near Death in Parked Machine

then they were called machines
until their status overtook them
and they became real themselves
not just an abstract sort of thing
we called them cars only once lovers
started killing themselves in them

Overlooking

by the Clyde as clouds
come up from the west near sunset
sun lines angled to the north
and rain lines vertical
birds pelting the sky for last cover

even though it's like a bad 19th century painting
out there sodium lights are coming on and the river
keeps up its work of pumping up
the Irish sea

all the boats are docked
as the metaphor says they should be

By the Clyde

no where more so than in the dark
I'm happy for the graffiti lunching on the wall
the walk home is my apprehension and her tension
we like the smells or urbanity
one or the other
someone clicks a hand mic and shhs go and come
we cross the train bridge with lights flashing everywhere
around and sporadic
I will not have her tonight
train's pulled out

At The Expense

she's a talker
her accent tight around her words
her skirt the same on her hips
speaking loudly
hesitating every few words
she probably has a broken heart tucked
down her blouse
I'm ready to heave my sorrows
down there too

Stupidity Turns Language into Words

cold tams held at bay
north sea salmon smashed yet cold
rage for Jo's not here

rage is smashed
cold repeated
tam o'shanter's held at bay
salmon in the bay
north rage Jo's not
is here
we love poems with typos

At the Silly Scientists' Conference

birds flying underground
under the railroad station in abandoned
track tubes
part of the entertainment
for the conference not used
to the physical
volunteers humiliated
but cheered
the birds
predators all
watched their audience
hungrily
angrily

July 29, 2005

Edinburgh Castle

rain all day
the castle bursting
with wedding guests
rings and rumbles
with the sounds of cannonfire
and pipes

Train to Edinburgh

boats running down
the firth making big noises
and spreading waves out
to the banks where sheep are preparing
and grain is preparing
lots of manual work is left to do
and the rain keeps coming down

Love & the Gunslinger

images and imagination
the spell of rain is dowed upon us
and the cold seeps inward
binding an ill health to our hearts
I thought of you but when I looked
you didn't look back

instead I designed some headstones
though no actual customers really cared
I liked to make them sound more
interesting dead than they ever were
alive

too bad you left

Not

they said you were there
but the twilight wouldn't reveal
perhaps your hair was the hair
I saw bouncing away toward the red smear
that night and the sounds of your feet along the gravelly
path by the river became the river sounds past
the rockwall that makes the channel

perhaps you're across the river
sitting watching for me
but the swingbridge is stuck open
for the night to let boats pass
and not me while the workers
celebrate a wedding

from the city behind me
(I stand with my arms on the railing
above the blood-dark water)
a song with tight minor chords
and a melody that follows them
choose one then another street
to come down phasing it to melancholy
the light fades
you are there across the river waiting
maybe

Bad Photography

in the rained on darkened city
I walked all twilight hoping
you would appear to me
behind a window drinking coffee
(such a city demands coffee)
or perhaps something stronger
in many people I thought I saw you
some parts they had that were yours
too—the redbrown hair the greyblue eyes
— but you were separated from me
by salt water so great was the space
you put between us

now the rain and dark are in control
my steps seem random but their purpose
is apparent from an angle people normally
can't see—I know you are drinking coffee
as I walk and the window I need to look through
is not a window at all

Uninvited Invitation

I know it's dark
now where you are
you are asleep wrapped
in young arms

language has made us stupid
broken our feelings into words
carved our words into cars on the autobahn
accompanied by synths and rhythms

someone has asked me to be near you
doing what I do
but this time there will be no heels
kickkickkicking the hem of you longcoat
on the path to a cold park

everything is in a wrong direction
it's dark here now

August 4, 2005

After Writing an Emergency Award Endorsement

among us
walking
choosing
who lives
who not

Himself

the outlier
the pomposity
further along than a manacle
the disruptor is at it again
walking like the condemned
armed with technical details
he was read nothing
because everything is unimportant
but one thing

guess

In Malden

one of the hot days
turns liquid or has been
and the gases released from trees and grass
ferment my nostalgia
I've stumbled across a gap
in a field of stones
the gap is very important to me
because the gap has been filled
but there are no marks
signifying anything
well I just stand
in the day and in the gap
wondering who put them
here for me to find

July 8, 1937

what could she have thought
the day her dad died
after his advice
and his instructions on what to tell the police
so the horses would not be taken and shot
did their burning house flicker on the window out the corner of her eye
as he left her and her mother alone
it would have made no sense because the house was not burning
though it would in 5 years
right before she met the man she believed would restore
the world

the roads outside the hospital window were dirt
the lot was dirt where she had parked the sedan
hot—it was hot and had been for weeks
Amelia was still missing—and the wealth of water
flowing down the river rising off the ocean
exuding from trees and grass
filled the air making the hay dry slow
and there was more to pack in the barn for winter
but now the funeral was next and the cows
and chickens would not wait

when did she cry for him
then
years later
as she lay dying herself in the lightning striking all around
all her fears in one night
what picture am I in
then or ever

Delayed Alignment

spotlight on the spot
rain like popsicles cool and calming
I'm by them again
we were like a pod of prey
facing out to the world
now my back is uncovered
my choice is to find a wall to back up to
but facing front my odds are poor
just a few more steps now

August 9, 2005

West and More West

the darkness encrusts the stairs
the worktable and the chair
the place where I write is white and blue
every color in fact
outside the faint clouds are sprayed onto the porcelain sky
a place I care about is fully dark
and cloudy
I am so far from there
and not sure what to do

guy steele is available here

guy steele is the definitive book on the language
guy steele is the originator of the phrase "lambda"
guy steele is one of its inventors
guy steele is available in both hardcopy

guy steele is a much better book imo
guy steele is a smart man and may have been able to significantly trim the search in ways I didn't realize
guy steele is now available electronically

richard gabriel is one of the latter
richard gabriel is one of my favorite richards
richard gabriel is so spare in his prose that I must cite quite a bit of him in order to convey what gabriel says
richard gabriel is among many who make a powerful argument for the impact of physical exhaustion
caused by extended periods of sympathy

guy steele is well aware of these issues

See?

quit anyway?
it asks
quit eventhough is the question
perhaps I've forgotten (it thinks)
it won't do what I wish straight away
but asks
quit anyway?
anyway
anyhow
it is not a haphazard thing
done whateverly
anyway
I'm through with this
and even if you're reading on hoping for something else I will
quit anyway

August 12, 2005

Marriage Flare

dinner on the porch
mosquito candles flaring then smoking
above the perseids have started
streaking red above the clouds
the discussion is esoteric
but the food is basic
and the occasion is a wedding
taking place the next day when an old woman
would marry an old man but tonight the parents
and I talk while the lovebirds chirp and twitter
over the details to come

Double Booking

the wedding went on
with a hitch
the park site double booked
the company picnic complete with kids in strollers
not swayed by the thought of matrimony
besides corporate america is worth every distraction
and who is interested in two retired people marrying
for the first time
living as paupers nesting by their garden
fully in love and ready for commitment
when the morale of the working
is needed for the sake of the shareholders
and ceo who hopes to retire himself [no sic]
soon on a pension of investment income
of \$1m a day
but
the wedding went on

Killed with Admiration

kitchen filled with ants
swarmed around a chicken carcass left in the trash
over a long weekend
we hate them and kill them and seal off their entrance hole
but admire how with

- a.) random search
- b.) a tendency to follow pheromone trails

only

they can home in on a carcass 10,000 times
the length of their bodies away from the nest

are we like that?

August 15, 2005

Life Does Not Go On

cops shows and csi
show the '60's was right
cops are pigs
they can't wait
rudeness is cool

solving crimes is the most important thing
read about it in the bible

Walking

rivers all around
named different names
pushing the humidity
up and into the sky
which pushes it down

he runners pause at corners
they say to avoid the cars
but the cars are insane
with the heat and need no
excuses to stay at home

Rejuvenating

we fell by the wayside
the car empty
the road empty
the sky open and a foreskin of cloud cover
pushing in from the horizon

I wonder
really
who have made the most of their days
and this day is done and already empty

Café Jitters

showing off her profile
cicadas making up their lives
we walk without passion
to the car—old and soulful—
we have parked around the corner
from a favorite cafe
we know that the rivers
have nothing to say tonight
nor the moon leaping upward
from behind the raven hill
when the first possibility for love
evacuates

well we drive off
and the girl with the profile
seems lucky
stays behind
perhaps lingers

Airport Romance

in the other security line—
my god to be the guard that pats her down—
she is thin but extravagant perfectly
she moves ahead and I take my time with my shoes
but at the train to the gates she strolls up
while my train pulls out

at the head to two tall escalators
I put my bags down to wait
and soon she comes up and walks past
like a spy I stand a minute looking past
where she came then turn grabbing my bags
to follow her to the Godiva shop where she waits
in line while I walk past to the bookstore
then she heads down concourse B
without chocolate

she can't get past me where I sit now
except for the times I glance at this page
I need to do it every few words
but these are the times she can sneak by
otherwise she will disappear into thin air
as will I soon enough

Before Leaving

the heat stresses
the shapes of women in skirts
I've noticed Pittsburgh is always well dressed

along the river a trace of ozone adds a ping
to the voice of the air
as we drive over the bridge toward the tunnel
a train sweeps through the trees and bushes
along the river

I notice the clouds seem sprayed onto the sky
and the clash of thunder seems not far away

after I've parked the street fills with the warmth
of women walking by some slowly some
as if to rid themselves of me immediately
this thought crosses my mind then
I shut the door slowly and quietly

JRST 4,

the story is funny
but it's based on lies
every word is a lie
because precision is a prayer
we believe in

false hopes and circularities
as if we could pick ourselves up by our belts
and fly

Skype

I talked to her over the computer
not typing like this
or email
but voip her voice darker than I recall
even with packet-based sideband distortion
she sounded like dusk over a still ocean
with just the smallest breeze enough to get the mind at attention
but the senses at peace

}

we yearn for the envelope
the ending bracing the beginning
with irrelevant time and events between
but these events aren't irrelevant because
they turn the naive left brace into the wise and melancholy
right just as we learned from Menard
Author of *The Quixote*

Wow?

just talk
word after word
only two at a time related

speaker—largely
toothless with a doubled up
tongue

wow—that's ...
wow...words escape me
...righteous?

Summer / Merrimac / Storm

disturbances on the radio
static in the songs
every one or two

wind in the oaks / in the hickories
acorns and nuts falling on the lawn
rain heavy as nuts pinging the pavement
which is just oil and sand compressed by cars

we count between the strikes and the sounds
every 5 a mile or so
we have closed the windows to the west
opened them to the east
the dog is under the table and we're in the middle of the room

when 5 just does it
we head to the garage / into the car
thinking we will be safe
at least the sound is less
hands on laps / we wait

every one or two
static in the songs
disturbances on the radio

Storms & Storms

here there are no storms
to match those east of here
we don't get to savor the fear of the strikes and rumbles
the way it rushes toward us no matter what we try
and takes our house and does what it wants

she would rock in her chair
to the wind and crushing rain
and widen her eyes when the lightning came
years and years she had practiced this
and the day would come / I think /
when it would kill her

Rebut All

we think thinking
is root / reveals design
because everything we do is controlled thought
yet what of letting go
unbinding ourselves to thought

just a thought

Reaction To Air

thunder is the same everywhere
wind / rain
a soul unhinged from its resting place
grass pushing against the cut
how waterproof is the vault
the urns / the plastic sealed bag I put my essay in
echoes are the basis of memory and creation
thunder is nothing / but echoes
about 100' away a spigot drips
made a hole in the ground
each life does that / echoes dribbling out
digging in

Filling / Filing

special places
we lumber to them unaware of their tendernesses
I am sure of truth / I am ignorances
we can't come back to them once
we leave
we don't know when we leave
places cannot be
known / our minds are a place
one / rendezvous
we use our legs and feet to get there
everything is underneath
imagine if on the way
we were to drop something

August 30, 2005

V.True

the place where smart people
learn / where they work
the river that is wide and is their lives
the trees along its banks are v.green
the flowers off to the sides of the trees are v.colorful
and smell like forever and wonderful lotions

ah but not every one is

Dominus Tecum

dip your fingers in the water
watch the waves bounce
from the center to the sides
to the center / bring them to your forehead
and make a sign

behind you there are stones
and bright colors
there is smoke corkscrewing
from candles

it is damp here
it is quiet here

many wish everything would happen here
but they don't see the stories on the walls
in the windows
this is important property

Field Study

ok, so a field
even though it's been plowed for centuries still
there are stones to pull out and pile up
ok, so the wall is not even
since someone's (like me) taken some out to
make rustic fireplaces and stoops
ok, a big one in the middle
plowed around / mowed around
for centuries / ok, but just barely maybe
I mean the time thing
this rock / big & buried
deep and maybe digging could put some space beneath it
ok, but why worry horses
you know my mother
saw it too when she was a girl
ok, I mean the time thing

Monkey's Uncle?

they cringed when they opened
the door on me / they fell to their knees
and prayed though it sounded like
they didn't know how
I was there to beg
food and old clothes
but they knew me as someone else
I asked to come in and they cried out
I asked for soup and they wailed and pulled their hair
I asked for an old pair of pants and they fell upon the floor

who could know that there is not
just one but the job rotates
some would say I left them for dead
but they / after the praying
the falling the wailing and crying out / they all
came with me

Desperate Word Slums

the city is filled with waiters
they are watchers
they listen
they smell / sense / apprehend
the facts just happen and the relevance is elsewhere

we never see them
because our thoughts are selfish
our thoughts are trained when we are alone
and they can only be turned to themselves
and maybe us if they have time

crying is our version of wind
a storm has come between us
we cannot speak / you and I / because you are consumed by yourself
your thoughts spin into themselves
my thoughts and yours can never meet
words are for times like this
but everything is told in the spaces
the rest just blocks out possibilities
with as many of them gone as language
allows / we make out guesses
like leaves on wind

wait / watch / listen / be the words

Indifference to Indifference

the field's been plowed a hundred times
and the rock never removed though the time
it took to go around it added up to enough
time to dig it out

stone importance
some places take their
distractions as gospel

Criticism 102

speaking of it
plainly like perfection
the word is out
that the time to pray is now
there is no clarity of thought
expression is a mess
the world shouts for a clear
explanation but it's all fractal and buried deep
in the thicket of contradictions
I am vexed and words turn prayer
to fighting words and worse

Vanishing Point

simple lines
on a page
brown on white
we can read them
we can locate them
if there is perspective the image will form
not many lines are needed
because our nature is to complete them
fill them in
add them
it helps if the image can be recognized
we are not made for abstraction
that which is abstract
vanishes as we turn away

On A Way

the light
smoky or yellowed
low through tall tangled trees and bushes
it's the wooded parts of Illinois
green spackled orange and yellow but low light
just before the sun has given up
I'm driving there
hopeful of the outcome
hopeful despite this spiteful light

Is It Love or a Poet?

rocking
jumping
clapping
rubbing
oscillating
smelling
squinting
licking
mouthing
biting & spitting
facial grimacing
tapping teeth
rapid eye blinking
touching head to table
tongue noises
looking out from the corners of the eyes
holding arms rigid either above the head or out in front
squeezing with fingers and hands
head weaving
flipping or snapping the fingers on the palm
flicking the fingers in front of the eyes
pating or twirling of the hands or spinning or waving
covering parts of the face with the hands
the pressing of objects
masturbation
whirling in circles
pelvic thrusting
shaking of the leg
body quivers
bouncing of the legs or feet maybe with legs crossed
pawing the ground with the feet
toe walking
arm & hand flapping
unusual body posturing
quick darting movement
palm staring
feeling the edges of objects / scraping & tasting them
undifferentiated verbalizations

Slope / Downslope

garden walled by hedges
conversation lined with hedges
the sky is yellowed maybe
from the age of the long days growing
autumn tired
the pond—the green pond's—water flows
on a slight downslope in one end out
the other
the words bounce back from you to me
the love shifted to the downslope side
on the edge of the spillway
will join the Sangamon
down bigger rivers and bigger rivers
until nothing is other than
water water penned by walls
it is all written

Ed's

she is not beautiful
she shows no discomfit
no lack of pleasure
she grinds her thonged ass into some-his crotch
closes her eyes
he holds her not narrow hipbones
every man wants her
she wants cash
she is in control

I Saw Her the Next Day in a Coffee Shop

they are older than they look
the black lights
makeup
the dark corners
workout routines and toning before coming out
she wants to bring him to the point
she rubs / grinds / rubs her bare ass on him
and lean back into him
she cups her breasts
from 30' away
(remember it's dark)
I think she enjoys this
she does it over and over
first a fat man
next a dark man
next an old man
later her man
(I suppose)
she has little beauty save sensuality
she is (ultimately) chubby
but judging by the line
of men before her
she is the local
(local to this dark place)
goddess

Afterwards

we walked away chatting
of what we saw
who we caressed
all they care about is money
Ed said
he might be right
since he's 80 and owns the place

some people believe money is the only meaning
like the 500 people in the world who "make"
more than 420 million others

when those 500 read words shaped like this
the jelly of their brains
turns sour

women are not like that

September 13, 2005

Revelation

it's the dead who forgive
God has other things to do

September 14, 2005

Club of Want

what you see
she pities you
you pay her
love notes
on the tip rail

Drive He Said / Consing Up A Soul

—Brian Foote

Tactile and olfactory...
intense, primal, Hannibal Lechter...
Naked, short on humor, largely
devoid of irony.
Smitten with the brash
juxtapositions of adjective / noun pairs.
Power Noun. Noun Shouts.

Is this soul an ostentation?
Are they all?
Poetry is plumage.
We are fledged for a reason.

I'm reminded of Miles Davis.
More Miles Davis than Charlie Parker.
There is little whimsy here.
This is world that is stark and
cold. So cold. A soul that lives
in the moons of Neptune.
The author's voice suggests Charles Bukowski
and James Dickey, gruff and earthy.
Often sullen. No narrow fellow
in the grass. He's Butch,
but not Spartan.

For a long time I couldn't listen
to Miles Davis. His was a dark, brooding,
gorgeous, foreboding journey to a place
I wasn't sure I wanted to go.

I don't read poetry.
I don't read fiction either.
I prefer to live my own instead.

This is not an indifferent soul.
Its not an uncaring soul.
He just knows this cold dominion
is his home, the only one he'll ever know. The only one
he has any use for? It's not that bad of a place,
and he's used to it by now.

I'm a lot of people on any given day.
These souls emerge in concert
with the others they touch day to say.
None is more true than any other.
I used to think that was not so.
No more. We are all one out of many.
E Pluribus Unum.

Laments? They're a polite strain of
kvetching for goyem, right?

He is the author
of thousands more poems
that no lips have ever spoken,
nor ears ever heard.

This is offered up for the author's
amusement. Do I really believe any of it?
Do I really believe anything?

A G-string snaps
he is forced to improvise.
So What?

Attached / Once

alone but awake
I don't know who you really are
or who you are really
you are new and strange
all I recall: the sun on the lip of the ocean
behind you as you slept
the cold wind from the ocean
making of you a persuasion
a sink for warming hands
your face familiar by type but not details
everything made the same as everyone
but particulars peculiar
what to you are movements of familiarity
are jerks and spasms to me
the way you sleep is loneliness
your intoxication / your perfumed body and hair
fading / my choice is to lurk and stare

when you finally awake
you will say what I have
my silhouette before the sun
grows small

Rag Filled Lines

simple as plums
too ripe and fallen to the pavement
we lay into our work
as if building a community
from the shade of an apple tree
our batteries have run down
and the forest is folding up

I have written a program to find
the most obscure set of lines
of all and you will love
them and me together
like in an *orgy*

Long Time / Long Day

my eyes watered all afternoon
from the sun or dust or stress of living
the light from the lowering sun
seemed to skim off every surface
when I opened the window at the toll booth
the water-chilled air made the oddly color buoys
look to me like seals

even now my eyes are not the same
they can't be after each day of seeing
the living and dying in their current poses
I grow small in your eyes my face to the sun
my back to my shadow and you
heading that way

Lost

it was time for the final computation
the one that tells me whether I won
but you know I didn't
everyone knows I didn't
because everyone knows I couldn't
won / won't
such ironies are petty poems made of

Melody Lies

soon enough
the sour song
will curdle into the top
folds of the animated mind
if I come back alive
I will be unable to think
the same way again
like spare change in a broken jar
the weight of it breaks
the heart

A Good Story

sometimes there is no good reason
for a story to start
some will hear its start
savor its progression
then bask in its meaning and effect
others will join the story late
piece it together like a half-forgotten puzzle
this leaves us to wonder about the worst
is it those who hear its start
and depart in the middle
or those who hear neither
its start middle or end
I know what I think

I will be all those people
won't you join me

Remember

and so the story is told
over and over
each word is part of stichery
and the order we learn
details weaves the nature of sound and sight
into a canopy of refurbished memories
remember this
remember this
remember this
only this order
and the impression we had then
are the ingredients of imagination

Story

we find the angles
sight along them
feel better when we think we've learned
but it's only a small perturbation
in our quest for fun
and a short but ending-quenching
story

September In Illinois

what sort of visit is it
staying inside and talking
or reading email
outside the air is making a soup
of the afternoon
wings are working
and what to us is nothing
is like a 3d road
duckweed on the surface
green growth
behind me the sky is an impossible blue

in town later in the week
the streets seemed to have narrowed
and become dust covered
instead we grab a coffee
at the Paradiso
and drink slowly
while we watch the girls make more

the smells are sophisticated

Fan Above

for a day the ideas go round and round
a ceiling fan overhead shows the way
moving ineffectually the stale air
I swanee the place is home more to bugs than me
the swamp's not far away / a bayou away
since it's all a circle the sounds I hear
must be repeats / must be echoes
like the wet in the stale air reprised
from a day long ago when the guitars echoed
the singing was in falsetto and the girls who
danced have sunk and drooped
O I loved them so much
I still ache

September 26, 2005

After Thinking

she is calm
the heat is not giving up
this time I'll take her a drink
and act like a good son should

Fire Under the Pine

cold day
a little windy
I had built a small ladder
which were slats nailed to the trunk
the lowest branches were 10' up
it was a pine tree surrounded by needles
6" deep / I built a fire in a hole
I dug & surrounded by stone wall rocks
when the wind picked up
I doused it from a pretend canteen
I climbed up / about 50'
the branches were like stairs
& I was above the other trees
I could see the house
the barn / the fields stretching
around this island of pines and frail maples

that's what I wanted to do
that day & others
only the fire
I never doused it but watched it closely
tended it past dark
I used my memory to work
my way home

Flame / Memory

after a time the little fire
shrinks below the size of a match flame
even the embers are weak in the cold air
snowflakes are starting to buzz around my head
uncovered until a moment ago
the woods look like a bad tv signal
that's how it looked and how I remember it

after a while / the fire revived after renewed fuel
and my back to the wind before it
my eyes started to water from smoke
and a memory that I still quiver over today
a memory that reminded me of the stone
in the little clearing and how it
anchored the scene whether
I was there or not

At The Casa Guadalajara

the family was young and loud
Mexican based on many things
they called over the mariachi
and asked them to play loud songs
and sad songs and songs of the triumph
of loudness over sadness
they paid in 5s and 10s
the mariachi was 2 violins
a bass a uke-like guitar or mandolin
and a trumpet
they all sang / really loud
I loved the family who spoke loudly
and happily in Spanish now / in English now
depending on
nothing I could discern
I sat right next to them
the trumpet aimed at my head while I ate
and watched the red smear
/outside the window at the far end of the restaurant/
of the sun's going and gone down
the highway was up on a bridge
and for the one pane
the cars would sprint by
and they looked like shuttlecocks from a game
and oneway badminton

the young wife never stopped smiling
even while her husband ordered a plate of
avocados and limes to line his tacos with
the slices of avocado doused in squeezed limejuice
and all they while he read the texts on his cell
switched from Spanish to English
sang with his not-fully-toothed mouth wide
and I watched the cars like insects
brush by and by

Climbing Out / In

sometimes the sky is different
like tonight as we took off
fog and odd clouds mixed with smoke
from big fires / we climbed out over the ocean
and the sunset and ocean
turned everything into shades of two colors
gunmetal grey and gunmetal pink
gunmetal meaning nothing natural
and filled with the potential to kill
there was a sheen on the water
and over the water
it was a metallic look everywhere
even though there were some puffy grey clouds
the clouds and fog and shiny parts
were all in layers / we flew up through them
and each time everything changed
below some of the clouds
dark strings hung
I was afraid while this all unfolded
even though the sun set and it became dark everywhere
I am still afraid

Love Hails

really the day is over
we have nothing to say
you read / I read
the pages make little finger sounds
just before we turn them
we are interested in the thoughts
of others not each other
is this better than surfing the web
or emailing strangers
just the same

Loss as Love

cold weather coming
wind down the river valley
the bridge readies itself for ice floes
green is becoming more rare
it's time to sit by the river
listen for the fish to jump
to taste the cold air to see when winter will arrive
I'm alone listening to music over and over
the same song again
repeats are all the rage
winter proves it
spring can't become summer
without it

Essence of Faith

follow where I lead
down the hallway
down the road
you are lonesome as always
but near the border someone is always
looking to kill
for fun / for money / for love
kill sometimes is metaphorical
as in the death of loneliness
we fear death but it is part of the welcome swath
that we pass over in continuous steps
remember the killing is near the border
so stay away until it's time to approach
I am here to lead
when you are ready at last

Hoarding is Fun

the rich do it all the time
(in fact
what else *do* they do?)
hoarding is the way
to get to hell the fastest
(the Bible
teaches me that)
the rich love to talk about the Bible
because it's a way to make the faithful
obligingly humble and poor
and where else can all that wealth go
if not to the rich
hoarding lies
is the way to do it

Rivers of Gleeful Singing

we sway down to the river
where the fish wait then
swim upstream
like people who wait
to learn of you
maybe learn to love you
then linger a beat too long
before angling away
we wind our ways through
the things called our lives
like singers on a stage
lit to blindness
we never know whether anyone watches
but if we stop singing
the booing will start

Cold Where You Are

it must be cold where you are
wet streets from steady rain
the wet caught on your shoes
now on your living room floor
the window becomes a character
in your flat / rain beads outside
and steam from your cooking inside

all these things speak of us
the way it's night here and day there
no need for curtains because
nature—our's—is enough

All and Everything at Sea

all it takes is one strong rain
starting in the western part
of town and migrating within
minutes to the other side
a sheet in other words
the direction the squall pushes
determines the order in which
what's left of the broken hearts
is swept into the storm drains
then into the concrete ditches
that take those things to the rivers
to the sea where the individual problems
mingle with the rest and it seems
worse and worse but it's really
better and better because
well
it's just water
ya know

Lessons / Night / Snow / Everything

outside by fogged over
windows a truck has driven
and its sharp tread impressions
are filling up with the light snow
that's falling / there is no idea
of strolling down to the park
or riding out to the docks
tonight

it's one of those nights
when newspapers from cities
far away make sense
or / and candles instead of hard lights
and / or whiskey in coffee or tequilla in tea
some razorlike in something hot
to go down the throat and stifle conversation

the snow outside
falling heavier as the cold air picks up
moisture from upriver
acts like a mute so even sharp sounds
loud ones engage us like love talk
head by head on our pillow

the truck tracks are filled
the little impressions that're left
are only a hint of the past
that things pass
loud or soft
they still pass

Swarm 1

a line of ants runs
from a nest in the brush
to the corner of the house
a little at a time the line
extends up the wall
they are like an algorithm
that always eventually works
but eventually is sooner than you expect
but it took great minds
some trained at MIT
to figure this out

Design Nothing Fancy

the place is awake
or post-doze / I don't know
or my mind is wandering
I am designing something new
the songs I play to create in front of
must be melancholy
must remind me of where I'm from
and how much I am never enough
best of all is a fake piano
electric based on hammers and plates
nothing fancy being played
slow fingers are enough
the design of the song / though /
is angled to make the most
from the least
did I mention that the place
is awake

?

Prayer On Noise

it makes me cry
the way they rise up
through thin air
the way in their wake
the whip seems to crack
and below windows won't rest
with the sun setting off to the left
in front of them and clouds forming
off their wingtips / it makes me cry
when the F15Es turn on the noise
on their way to rip some country
apart

Sweeping Advice

look up
when sweeping be aware
of where you are and what
the situation is at all times
sweeping without a slider on
can be more effective
since it allows both feet to "dig in"
to get the job done.
dust shots / also clean the line of delivery before every shot
stay with the rock
until it comes to a complete stop
be prepared for alternate shot
calls from the skip
watch rock placement stop
sweeping if the rock is curling too
much a long guard is better
than a close rock
that is not guarding
anything

October 13, 2005

Autumn etc

it's happening again
cold coming on but
today it's 85° / buffed sun
but the nights grow
deeply chilled and the ground
is hardening / things in the ground
are growing wary and reticent
it will happen to you too

October 14, 2005

Underneath

leaves cover the area
strong light and its heat
never stain the ground
just sparse grass
your idea of love

Futile

long walk home
who's there
long walk back

October 16, 2005

We Lounge

by the pool
water up on the concrete
slapping flippers on rude boys
a quiet conversation
never starts / in fact
cannot be contemplated

After A Discouraging Exercise

the line of squalls leads nowhere
though the stone cobbles are slick
people have fallen and hurt themselves badly
but others stare like acolytes at the rainbows
their faces wetted and melancholy
some of the people have learned they
are quite stupid but they
remain exhilarated by
their disdain and uncaring why
they are ecstatic and holy

October 18, 2005

South—

nights make
no sense
girls scared
of desire

Nil—

the story
told & told
gains truth

the truth
told & told
gains nil

The Truth at Twelve Stories

fearful night
no goodbye kisses
no smudges to wipe away
no overlooks to look over
or planes to watch descend with care over lovers at work
instead your going
is a rumor overheard at the party
then more and more until
it is like us / nothing

Air Lines

you have no passion
nor romance and never
a quiet word

you spout / not talk
you blurt / neither languor
you step in wide long steps / no caution

airplanes have done this
to us / there once was a time
a fortunate time

At The Stranger's Restaurant

she is demure
selecting wine
looking up furtively from the list
to see what he thinks
she never smiles but she is filled
with love and hope / she has captured and will again
she wears no makeup
and her glasses / frameless almost / makes
her more / including desirable

I would love her
but it's time to head home
to (be on) my own

On a Lost Sunday

plans made exfoliate
like leaves in fall
they blanket green ground with yellows etc
after a while the ground turns
the leaves dried or decaying
form a blanket or blow away
the blanket warms the ground or changes its chemistry
or the blown leaves gather at the bases of trees or cover
the pond then sink

notice how each or expands and the disorder and symmetry
of it becomes apparent
anyhow it's winter that's gaining on everything
even as balance operates elsewhere

and on the drizzled on street
the cute and rich shop
and prepare

Unlucky

uncanny likeness
to a New England fall day
here on the coast above Santa Barbara
dark bottoms and cold mist
waves hit the shore hard
we feel it in our feet as we walk
cold and alone
though we walk side by side
this day is ours

1 Act / 1 Man

actor / stage
fiction / fact
the lighting is disruptive
especially when levels change
the surface of the curved passage
is evocative of metaphor
without taking the plunge

Unexplained Things

swamps behind the house
wet all summer
in winter ice forms a layer over air
I've wondered where the water has gone
there can be no evaporation
the ground below is frozen
but the ice marks a high point
perhaps summer's peak
a memory / an awakening
I walked along the edge of the swamp
one day when the insects were quiet
and birds gathered at the far end of the woods
there was no sound except for a slight cracking
not like leaves or trees bending in a light wind
but like something you'd hear
in the deep end of winter

On Paper

first the thinking comes a little harder
certain kinds require heavy lifting
of a sort one can be unused to
like leaves fallen on the ground
unused to the heavy touch
of the earth / used to instead
the touch of air almost all around

next the reluctance to strap it on
to approach the knot
pulled tight and soaked

finally just watching
and putting it down

Too Easy to Find

the perfect woman is not hard
to find / she is right over there
and there / walking away
in a too-tight skirt
or something that makes it all clear

my desire is useless
because there is nothing for
my decisions to do
so I sit and read
looking up at them
as they walk by
or sit down nearby

I love them all
but they
but they
but they have their own thoughts
on this

Odd Looking Prayer

too many people come
then go without comment
I'm muffled and muffling
wrapped like cardboard box
packing material all packed
up in a cardboard box
hunched in / crunched in
there is a cold wind
trying to blow
out all the light in the world
we should mourn
and quicken our step
with every candle
that flutters

Again Once More

let's celebrate the snow
falling in puffy clumps
and it's time to wonder what it's like where you are
this weather that you are used to
I've nowhere near as usual
you've concluded I've abandoned you
but the barren beech beside you beckons
and the river is biding its time
waiting for my return

why do we return
how do we know the right time
it's no mystery how we know
the right place

On Passing Birthdays

so many years ago
two days I remember in particular
dreams pop in on those days
even when I don't think about those days
don't reflect on the events that triggered the dreams
nights up in an old bed / springs not up
to it anymore and I slept in it years later
my fave books / an old (even then)
tube radio / an old (even then)
tv / I was afraid there / could hear them
argue sometimes / sometimes about me
the night wind on my face each summer
night / it seemed things would never end
end they did / everything will
oh my why does it have to end this way

At The Beach / Nothing Special

nothing is like it
no one knows the half of it
the convertibles are trying to raise the roof
but their trunks won't let go
and the rain is about to hit

we've camped on the coast
awaiting the storm
that will never come
I asked
you responded
but nothing was special
about just about
every aspect of a love
that was destined for nothing

now I'm proven right
right again
to no good purpose

Holcomb Once More

the expanse from morning edge to night
horrifies the observer used
to the narrow / the tall over the very wide
imagine you're standing next to a field
of wheat that as it disappears
toward the west signifies the end of civility
or of safety / for toward the east
death has visited in the form of 4 shotgun
blasts / creating a story where
once lives lived

Last To See Them

visitors to the house
are by invitation only
cars come partway down the lane
before hesitating
and then backing slowly out

visitors to the graves
need to find them

yes read that again
because the dead never rest
alone

Great / Plain

the dream of being in the midst
of the Great Plains with someone
strange and new / to be anonymous
while the stormdrains of fame
are still emptying

we stand beneath the cottonwoods
by a dry stream hoping for a pensive
moment as the sun empties its heat
into the lost air

in this dream our hands are fused
the heat of us is turning from green
like the aspens' leaves we cannot see
only her back is clear to me
and the curves in her hands

in my dream many wish
the know / only
two don't

Oh, Frank

swarms of frogs eat flies furiously
the dog's ears are folded forward
in a show of the opposite of rage
pines kneel in the light breeze effected by afternoon
we have taken to napping immediately
on waking / nothing like ultra sleeping
when the world is crazy so is its opposite

Valley Days

weather getting worse
coming down the river
heading for the cold ocean
trees have started their bending
acknowledgement / encouragement
tomorrow it will clear and warm
turn to sticking my shirt
to my back / the routine
will start afresh
weather getting better

Wearing Our Meaning

there are thoughts
whisking from mind to mind
on the wings of whispers
on the wrists of words
which reach to each other
tweaking the hints
that writing makes

Hadley Road

in the fields
by the edge of woods
along a road
sometimes lined with coins
stone walls making their way
into the past
the rain making small puddles
in the road / the road curving down and away
or down and into the distance
this was my place
my place / they sold it away
and now it's carved up
I wish for it once more
again

Seeing Ends

the secret's out
I've lost
the map of the end of my life is plain
to live alone / just two of us / writing the one last book
in a place with not many expenses
and a lingering disease / a painful death
not long / not yet / but not long

An Area Granite

I am going to do a little of slapdash economy
combined with cheap psychology to explain tardanza
using two principles that of course are not mios

people always leave everything for morning
unless they have something
to win or to lose in the short term with it
this is because as says to Richard Gabriel
“the evolution is the tendency to preserve
what it works and to change the accessory”

if there is an opportunity of short term business
then everything goes rolling but otherwise
already you can in vain be left the heart trying
that the partners put nor an area granite

Is Anything Unknown?

mediocre
words can't capture it
too lazy / too stupid
good enough to make people notice
not good enough to make it

in pain / alone
this is how it will end
that's how it was with her

Combat Burial

we dig a hole
kick him in
pile on the dirt
stack stones
tie a cross with horsehide
spike in over his head
from where you stand we're backlit
we mean as much as him

Fragrance Meets Torture on a Windy Day

two things on the tube

...a top White House official refused to rule
out the use of torture...

...quickly fills the room with fragrance...

how can we listen
who can listen

picture a child in a green dress
carrying an ornament to a green tree
rooted in a stand
and frosted with silver and glass
the thought of good smells
too good
too important
too appropriate

we forget lives need joy
and joy is simple
not torturous

Will Never

the elm lane
the house tremendous
in the post-green-sky dusk
a warm mid-afternoon
chilling to near freezing
when the car drives up
and they begin to wait
to their left the lights come on
go off
come on
go off

when hours later
they leave
the highways will never be the same
the hotels will never feature
hospitality
writers will always
look over their shoulders
in case the muse is carrying

After the Murders

when it was discovered
many people gathered
to clean up
how could they leave the mess
it was their Christian duty
to clean it up
and to forgive

Square

suspense itself
suspended from a tree
whose roots are variable
in their depth and discursion
filled with suspense
a radical thought

What's In Your Wallet?

when you purchase
the wrong brand
you are taking an unacceptable
risk with your capital

some people never take these risks
they collapse poetry instead

that's the 0-sum of it
something has to go
the money or the beauty

Unlikely Attitude

possible outcomes
resting like leaves or gulls
on the tops of trees
by a bay by the bye
fluttering after the outcome
is cashed in
full income
soon birds flap away

in my case
I check into a motel
set on a slant
just before night each day
the gull gather and raise their gullwings
saluting the leaves that have left
and I fall into a doze
to celebrate a dozen
autumns at the beach
on a slant

ill / ill will / I will

Likening

of the numerous things
things like our names
that are given to us
not earned

our faces distort
into our own

Unrandom

projecting me on you
leads to conclusions
wide and vague
like onions being sliced in a warm kitchen
tears flow down the drain
no one is flush with care
I knew it would come to this one day

the rush outdoors is unbent
let's finagle our way into the projection
and become like the wind in the leaves
in the blend of air and light

Toggled and Told

she can't get it
it's my job to help
looking at the options results
in pained expressions
and outward looking
I'm not able to single
out the passions
the logic of gypsies
is helping the lunatics
escape reason
my nose is active
designing a new automobile
using scratch and green toads
I'm lonely about the tree
cut down when I was four

Wintering Nearby

in the woods
we wonder
when will it snow
under the pines
right by the trunks
there is a cylinder of warmth
where the body against
the needles on the ground
make a tent of comfort
above the flakes the clouds
shelter us crouching here
a small fire of twigs between us
a stout stone in position to shield any wind
is just inside the ring of snow
that makes this deep winter
we are as in a cave
we are in the woods
wondering about the snow
wondering how to reach one hand
into another

Floating Under

there is a culvert
under the road
it is made of stone
because it was made a long time ago
looking through it
I see the water
or is it the future
flowing from the field
and passing into the woods as swamp

Leader

so small minded
from a good school and proud of his bad ideas
he has it all and talks about it
is he worth the effort to think about

Lament Under Determination

filled with faith
his head shaved and recently entered
his speech slowed but filled
with longing and distress
from too much determination
he smiles and asks me to pray
for him and the chemistry
killing the fastest growing
things in him / not
things like hope or belief
filled with life
he waits for the chance
to meet someone
he relishes who will fill him
after the world has been emptied
of him / and further filled by faith

On Going Home

does it sound trite
the call to prayer and attention to small
details of language
are there interpretations
or is it just the way it sounds

I'll never understand
there is a plainness to his message
like a cemetery with flat stones
that never conceal a view or intrude
where to understand a life
you must bow completely
the place is like a garden
he is like a garden
to understand him
bow all the way

Roads / Directions

the road past our house
leads east toward the sea
and west toward the nearest large town
then on toward the west of my dreams
Fuddlike interpretations aside
this is where they have been
the sun lowering / chipping off
windwaves in the low lake
offset from the hills by little slopes
looking westward I see little
from eyeglare

I recall the bikerides every day
to reinforce my listless love
and now I clip in / head downwind
south toward home
where my legs will unwind

Unhappy? What Do You Think?

by a favorite river
under the weeping tree
gangly / branches dipping
into the calming waves
my friend is by me
in the corner of my head
recessed behind sentiment
he is smiling to himself
and the stones at the bottom of the coursing
stream nearest us
soon he'll pass away
replaced by a song he liked
and me too / just the two
of us and a gangly tree
weeping for us both

Public Acts

the bridge
a long span to serve two banks
a lot of work for common good
who for greed would do this
who but those for whom greed
is their belief system
they will be comfortable
while I starve and read

All Over Yellow

night yellow lights struggling
across the waving-water river
mills felled by the banks
knee-bound and shards from wired windows
calling to the current divided
into streams some close som far
from shore

we're in the car / you're telling
me a story of your life which is no
story but the frame beneath a day
of your days

we say so infrequently
that your stories are all the same ones
because who remembers beginnings
any more

your voice against the window
the lights in squiggles just the usual
for them but puzzles for us
the exit is coming up and soon
I'll be getting out
you'll be moving on
and we'll be all over

Perfect Colors

the lights in the room
are programmed to cast
candle yellow light
on the cream walls and copied art
built for two
all the rooms I stay in
it's me just
me every time
the knock at the door
is no one I know
just that old black dog
back again for our restless
night together

You and Me

Accosted / Assured

assembled / assumed
a different brain operates
in the night after we wake
and can't resleep
the worst become sharp
the best distant and enraptured

like the constructed / imagined / mashed together
sets for the making of King Kong
the dulled brilliance of the downing sun
the distant hills
the enclosing woods
forsaken field
the timid stone wall
and you
form planes my thoughts may rest on
washed out to washed up
from sentiment to sentimentality
dream or waking / what's the diff?

such times the sheets bear witness
through wetness
of the rolling / roiling thinking / tossing
then the narcotic dictation of hormonal migration
to ... almost said normal
but I meant sleep or maybe daylight

Cheeselist

talleggio / italy / cow / washed rind
onetik brebis / spain / basque / goat and sheep
burrata / italy / buffalo milk

Roads and Beyond

certain traits of the gravel
beside the road compell
care in bicycling
the bicycle designed with people
in mind and people required
like planes or other industrial
contrivances / think of it this way
brains needed for motor control
bikes waver and gravel is ready
to cave in stability / make scrap of it
render unto the seizer what is messed up

well / the end of the road is a lint trap
but near the river and cool with bugs and mist
there is mud but beneath are ancient forests
and maybe-still/growing grass
how many glances to the side are needed
to make it here with all those graveled
sides beckoning

Micro Work

library work
scanning the past
the signal a rock might
send / more complex
than a simple line
the randomness of nothing
that matters

December 6, 2005

At Guck's

sensible parties
dancing in red light downstairs
you can never tell who will play the piano
to gain attention
but it's the holding that counts

Dancing Queen

first the boat founders
and then the waves become outlandish
standing on the prow
I can watch it all
it reminds me of the sock hop
and trying to dance slowly with some girls
they didn't all know how to say no
so some did
the water crashed over them
they were ships stuck on shore
dancing with me
because they couldn't get away

Homegoing

under the bridge
ice floes gather stuck
against piers and cracking up

downriver the pieces
are small and fill what seems
like rivers apexed at the piers
piercing the sheet of ice
moving downriver

after I've stood here
looking down
for half of winter
I can't figure the best way
off this bridge and down the road
where someone tells me
there are people I love

White Sky

there is this
beneath a high sun features
are too white hot
eyes cannot fall on pages
pavement is liquid black
tackling tires and bootsoles
lifting air lifting hope
we want it
the rest is waiting

Left Behind

he passed me
up a slight hill
his bike better than mine
his body more lithe
but my legs are stronger than his
through heavy squats and crazy lifting
I catch him / hang back just behind him
he doesn't realize I have matched him
birds alight on branches in the breeze
as we work past
as long as I ignore my pain
I keep up / but like anyone
who thinks of living
I let my legs talk back
and I begin to drop back
birds are up again
I can almost see him
while I move ahead
it's like this in everything

Down River

behind a fence
holes large as doorways
a slope up to a perch
where people sleep
in bags / water bottles within reach
backpacks of clothes
things / maybe books or photos
they eat what's left
drink to feel less
some of us are surprised
to learn they're human almost
like us

Mountain View

edge of woods
mist hangs there
turns the white of birches
snow is drifted over the trail
so we've come up here
found this warm place
in late spring not quite
above tree level
behind you I've reached around
feel the flickers of life
smell the perfume your brushed
into your hair
as we look forward
the grey band of rain
is just upon us

Weary of Roads

can you count the roads
the streets in a city
there are too many paved roads
to ever travel them all
imagine all the tires it would take
all the road novels and tapes of music
all the coffee spilled on tight turns
the consumption of gas and oil and chemicals
in general / to travel them all
each made for important reasons
by people with no time to waste

Cold Beneath the Mountain

not late afternoon
but leaden with clouds
in places rubbed rouge
by the painted face of disrepair
lead is the color of coldness
of distance and heavy relapses
this darkened sight reminds me
of the evenings we spent beneath
cheap sleeping bags / rectangular
filled with cotton
skin near skin / fire in the woodstove
just feet away
rouge is the color of about to happen
boundaries or is it borders
about to / just
it seems like kissing
but around the edges I feel the cold
outside / the cold
the hot stove / the heavy bags
this is not late afternoon

Caught Half In / Half Out

the door opened
I've stooped to grab the paper
but the road is showing
a provocation of dark hair
and disbelieving mouth and eyes—
she has seen me
I'm sure
I'd duck back in but
what for

behind me the air doesn't move much
an old place
an important place

Unconnected Stream

below the rock in the clearing
a small pool
bitter with fall leaves
it has no source
but begins a small stream
that picks up from no further sources
in 15 years I followed it downstream
only 100 yards
I imagine where it comes out near the road
as a torrent / rushing current
where in a side pool I'd fish
never catching anything
not making the connection

Invented Beauty

the piquant scent of piñón wood
in the clear night air
red / green chilis
posole / tamales
blue corn tortillas / bizcochitos
an enveloping garland of warmth extends
from faux-brick hearths in doublewides
to sculptured kiva fireplaces
in the corners of art galleries
in the ghetto of art galleries
during the farolito walk
/on that evening/
in the biting cold
cars verboten
electric street lights turned off
the pulse of modern life grows faint
while locals descend on Acequia Madre
we have no way to know
how many dogs are slinking through
the square in the pueblo
invented beauty
in single-digit temperatures

Rock and Trees

trees / how many have we cut
up on the hill and dragged back
it's easy to count / but counting
puts a limit on things / hides
the beauty of the indefinite
we're taught knowing is superior
a wide field and every blade is known
every small thing / that reminds me of the stone
in the center of the field / the day I hid
behind it while each of them called
out / I didn't call back
these stories are linked through them
they liked blue lights on the tree
in the window / just a deep blue
a hint of void / how many are there
is there a way to miss them

From You

wash it's far
may Crusty a got a.
give a fly a work but her
or when it keep may too may put
it's round a just not ran try.
do be cut see once ! clean it white
some came may found on.
before try are a too in would may.
Waffle iron ! then it Grunion
but bring try red it read , as on go , know on here a its but.
gave and them the upon
and Corn ! we be could but slow or.
Monkey + (anything)
see again or did try of be.
keep and Broccoli may him
a open , warm ! are in wash and too ! pretty
but once a Crusty but.
would some yes , for some
much a wash a after may wish the.

Linwood

let's talk about green
color of life when it pushes up
from ground wet from downpours
or morning mist / morning dew/
any sort of cliché
color of death when it covers the vault
things inside
so imagine a blue splotched sky
padded with white
backdropping the green blips
of tree branches in early spring

it's a place I've visited before
stood in this place before
much shorter than I am now
let's talk about repetition

Just Blind

remember the year we got
6' of snow in February
it was the year I couldn't see
/ just had my operation /
the second and I was not allowed
to see bright lights / but when
they brought me home
with my dark dark sunglasses on
I could see the snow piled high
with pathways dug deep into it
driveway / path from there to the front door
from there to the path from the road
to the side door / a path to the back
from the cellardoor to the drying lines
where in the summer my mother would hang clothes
every day / all this as I rushed from the car
to the garage door / not all of it visible
so I must have imagined some of it
my eyes could not see in bright light
I remember the snow had blue edges
still do

Story

the cascades
water picking up the bitterness
of stones in its way
—or is it the right word—
there is no continuous thing
that is water
water is a swarm
a friendly one
we know it by its mass behavior
and statistics / stuff working with stuff
there is no story that leads from letters or sounds
to stories and beyond

1973, When We Believed

anniversary / 32 years
it would have been
but one of us
couldn't make it beyond 10
many I love were alive then
love meant something different
my father played the organ poorly
but he played
my mother watched
all believed
but me

Snowed In By Meaning

some times
the lights are off
I sit in front
of a window
watching snow drop past
the yellow lights
of streetlights
watching the snow make black
pavement white
some times
a truck goes past
while I sit
watching and the snow
is made packed
in the shape of tires

after a while these
sharp tracks are softened
the yellow lights are softened
the snow falls harder
this hardness speeds the softening
meaning is back in vogue

Flyover Observer

up here
high but low
enough to see the stitches
of streetlights leading toward
a city where the crisscrossing
streets and slow-moving headlights
are highlighted by the contrasting
dark ribbon of a river running variously
through it / far away on a road
not marked by lights a car
is moving away from the city
if we could see it up close
we'd see that the car was slowing
then speeding up / hesitating
as if the urge to run away
were running away

Movie Not Missed

funny worry
first time for me
last?—unlikely
to be able to see something
before I die
suppose I didn't?
I would miss seeing it
because there would something
to do the missing
we are thus
so sentimental about
ourselves

Real Poet

poetry contests are rigged
I know dozens of poets
some of whom judge contests
I never won a thing
am I real?

Question of Tactics / The Moral of the Story

well consider the rain
again the chalice of the streetlamp
holds the tingling cold rain drops
headed like bulbs bursting
to the pavement to pool in puddles
it's an old story
older than streetlamps and pavement
this rain / it asks just one question
once for every drop that falls
we have heard it for so long
we don't hear it again
each drop that falls to the ground asks
are we saved

Rain Leaves

recall the rain
weather that makes more of a difference
than mood / we fall when rain falls
roads become beautiful
the car ads tell us so
sound is never as close
as when it is rain on the roof
or blowing against the windows
in the night after we are wakened
it becomes a miracle
whenever it feels like it
its makes the earth we tread upon
(that in its bulk keeps us grounded and not spaced)
mud / a short ways to what we know best
recall the leaves

Partial Installation

my response in all cases
the correct response may be
a dialog appears
expert install you will be
pace and fast internet access
read this or visit Gerben

Of Noise

time to write
dialog of broken half-words
half-spoken in a kitchen
of whole power

at the kitchen table
I read the book containing
a poem like this one
while she fries onions
and smokes

no one is ready for her outbursts
herself included
because they are a switch flipping

on New Year's we watch the Rose Parade
in snowy b&w and order
through a magazine
an 8mm movie of the floats
and watch it 3 months later
with the same enthusiasm

time to write of the trips
through the woods
of grandparents sleeping somewhere
in the house I can't recall
the smell of clothes
stored most months
in closets filled with mothballs

those times feel important still
even as part only of my faded
memory like a TV set with no antenna
striving to make a picture clear
from a source made only
of noise