

ON THE BACK OF GARGANTUA



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August 2010 through August 2012

ON THE BACK OF GARGANTUA

August 7, 2010 - August 11, 2012

on the back of gargantua

after the afterbirth of the planets stars and all the moons
after the first planetary bombardment and first life
then photosynthesis paleozoic and proterozoic noons
after mesozoic and cenozoic time's rifled tunes

on the infinite sled of that galactic beast
our laughter and tears ride on the back of gargantua
that implacable turtle on turtle on turtle unstoppable
un-moved relentless mover on which the universe rests

mosaic-shelled mystery that plods so slowly along
long-impervious reptilian juggernaut moving on
growing like a comic cosmic baker's song
horny scales infused with always-exploding yeast

we mites can only do our best to hang on tight
to the rhyme and track of our puny lives
scurry on hoping mini-we excel on our test drives
or at least win the evolution of a passing grade

come day come night come heaven come hell
come summer fall winter spring
what choice but to continue to sing
riding on the back of gargantua

life list of imaginary birds

the illusive orange crumpet toaster
the inevitable sludge
the contrary twit ken
the pointed twig puller
the rose breasted clunk
the long-billed bull twadler
the three-toed pine nymph
the solitary grommet
the red-winged rumpus
the tin-winged boat wallop
the noisy slurp
the rural clover dodger
the suburban clover dodger
the greater hawk-striped thelonious
the lesser hawk-striped thelonious
the atonal burp
the melodic mouse masher

the hemlock hernia chaser
the white-tailed twat
the hook-beaked can warbler
the marshmallow hawk
the rufous dear-ear biter
the lumbering crone haunter
the pileated pook pounce
the variegated least toot
the common least toot
the ravenous toot gobbler
the jarhead heron
the teal-footed marina wren
the pilates pigeon
the insurmountable gray grouch
the blueberry buzzard
the dumpster crane
the peach-addled pout
the gravy gull
the short-tailed solipsism
the honeydew melon borer
the silver sissy shrike
the black-backed toad swallower
the king quant
the insignificant puke bowl
the red-eyed festoon
the duck-billed grease skimmer
the glimmering fart-dodger
the ruffed fart croak
the sedentary blister canary
the caged ought
the coffee-winged grind
the ring-necked carrion pipit
the ostentatious herring fluster
the glad bladder garble
the snoot swift
the pot-bellied bee eater
the great emerald worm slurper
clarabell's arctic jar
the awful-eyed cross-billed auk
the golden coitus interruptus
the soft-billed doubt
the mute chat
the enraged rant rook
the penguin gorger
the great gray goop guzzler
the tinsel titmouse

the evangelical irk
the penis pilot bird
the avid oyster hoarder
the phosphorescent stink catch
the salacious stump licker
the linguini owl
the vapollacella vulture
the bovine ball barker
the golden gnocchi gizzard
the dumb-wattled trump
the tyrannical tree swift
the burp kestrel
the twill-pleated trouser snatch
the cashmere canary cuckoo
the refrigerator pigeon
the impervious ogle
the crenellated raven roaster
the preeminent grunt
the ladder climbing auk
the pugnacious grunt
the las vegas lottery loon
charles chaplin's penguin
the carnelian-crested tit
the ebony beetle choker
the least liver-throated lurch
the greater pulpit pipit
the chocolate dabber swan
the intransigent bar budgie
the flatulent african ant stomper
the enervated elephant egret
the splay-toed tuba hatch
the bug-eyed frown booby
the solitary knock-kneed binge
the incandescent blurb
the fudge-footed turtle racer
the filmy-feathered ascetic urge
the succulent stooge phoebe
the featherless poodle swallow
the razor-beaked frog dodger
the carbuncle canary
the corkscrew-necked vineyard goose
the hawaiian halitosis hawk
the hulking honey hawk
the mustard-shinned pastrami petrel
the smoke-bellied mongolian yurt
the morbidly-obese pumpkin pelican

the petite prostate parrot
the great white canadian knuckle bustard
the erroneous squiggle
the mump-cheeked moose merganser
the raisin-rump ricochet
the antediluvian ass pinch
the congratulatory snipe
the kool aid kestel
the rum-chested dumbbell dove
the vice-beaked lobster mauler
the madras-plaid curry auk
the beakless bobo
the towering sirloin tip biter
the tawny owl buster
the skunk lark
the smug bog eater
the parenthesis puffin
the moon-eyed cemetery tern
the dark-plumed anxiety albatross
the quixotic loss
the us-we-be us-we-be-we lark
the interplanetary rosy-eyed jest

some exotic birds

the gold-and-ebony-plated ant rattler
the scarlet-crested walloon
the antlered swamp shriek
the fluffy web-footed desert nautilus
the pink pond shearwater
the snub-winged elephantine murmur
the razor-beaked ought
the club-footed zap gloss
the timorous mouse linnet
the cave dwelling slug swallow
the apple-breasted lolly lark
the whistling whinny
the tin-tailed french fry warbler
the adipose cuckoo
the checkered sturgeon pecker
the ruby-throated cow flopper
the lesser dust tosser
the greater dust tosser
the sludge auk
the downy glass-breaking grosbeak
the watermelon seed shoveller
the silver-throated boat-tailed balloon chaser

the single-eyed flounder pipit
the tweedy bee snatcher
the metropolitan cross-billed snipe
the ovarian mouse hurler
the rose-bottomed aluminum thrush
the bog-dwelling sardine hawk
the massive carolina hog chickadee
the egg-scrambling looney
the blue-footed carnivorous booby
the diving dowager
the rocky crescent moon swallower
the star eating rook
the surly grouch buzzard
the nettle-crushing snark petrel
the short-winged monastic howler
the bat-faced lard warbler
the lesser marshmallow plover
the swarthy lyre-feathered gnarl
the short-legged armadillo chaser
the long-legged armadillo chaser
the saffron gourd hollower
the saw-billed buzz croaker
the ring-necked glitch
the scurrilous ring-necked bog hopper
the tufted calliope
the parisian pallet wren
the spiky log drummer
the hump-backed chicken startler
the tangerine tortoise vulture
the tasmanian jumbo jay
lord phalarope's two-toed phoebe
the gherkin albatross
the featherless oops
the tuba borer
the synthetic chump changer
the nude belgian endive canary
the ivory-beaked tuxedo crow
the slow black-backed bratwurst poker
the flat-billed urge
the amazonian millipede throttler
the whistling nicotine curlew
the tittering devil-horned galloper
the dun-and-rose-bellied over
the great blue-winged finale

mid october

this season is a drying god's toy
still as a feather afloat
porcelain on a calm pond
long curved necks tucked under
cream white wings
bed of water a looking glass
of obsidian and harlequin blue
eight swans save one sleep
the awake one an alert centurion

not a breeze disturbs the cattails
as the geese their brethren the geese
marshal forces marsh side
hundreds on hundreds in fields
gorge on kernels from newly cut corn
everything poised ready to be blown
south south to the ecstasy of south
to the magnet of their winter home
their honking not a noise but an anthem

a route a course a map an ancient dream
far below them far far below
the air on fire waters on fire leaves on fire earth on fire
direction in their each and every gene fully known
wing beat on wing beat their metronome
in the dangerous labor of their flight
in the setting or rising sun incandescent
lives light recalcitrant - their stubborn yes
the brightest cry of joy

clouds above west palm

below blue waters
above blue skies
proportionate to earth
proportionate the sky
some clouds small as a dime
some medium as a shoe
come large as a flock
of eccentric hairdos
some extra large as yachts
some gargantuan as the horizon
some teased up in billows
back lit by tiger sun
auto-cumulus nimbus cirrus
cumulus stratus cumulonimbus

mare's tails mackerel scales
electric blend of whites off-whites grays
their sailing intelligent
with the will of some bigger party
larger than the cinemas of imagination
moving slower and opposite
contrary whites to the sliver
of plane's silver destined to arrive
cutting through time and galleons
villains heroes and clowns
infant knights indians rabbits birds
reincarnated as air ice and water shadows
projection of some mind above minds
sky shifting waters monopoly board of earth
by what force by what law and order
the fickle vaudeville of weather
tap dancing to an old-fashioned tune
under a daytime vaudeville moon
damsels in distress vegetables minerals
flowers mermaids and treasure chests
ask of mammals cops lawyers judges criminals
fly by while we continue our usual mess
this our ruckus here of fire and ice
sometimes called history

postscript: what the cloud said

i was a cloud once
and what i loved most
other than with my fellows flying free
was looking down on birds and mice
men women and children looking up at me
and this glory look
of wonder in their eyes
and when my old dream came to an end
blown into an icy transparency
i joined the bluest blue of blue

Bird on a String

The stoplights in Manhattan are braced by hollow steel tubes that serve surprisingly as residences to enterprising English sparrows who furnish the tubular hollows with collections of grass and cloth and twine.

In a taxi driving down Central Park West on a crystalline spring morning I saw one small brown bird, grass in beak, flit into one of these openings to fortify its nest. The changing traffic lights from amber to red to green, from green to amber didn't seem to distract or deter this enterprising city dweller from its appointed rounds.

The chance sighting made me recall a raw day several winters gone by now and at a crosswalk looking up to see a struggling sparrow whose claw had somehow become enmeshed in twine meant for its nest but turned deadly trap. The bird weary but still alive managed at painful intervals to summon last energies to weakly flap its wings in futile spasms to rise up and try again and again to fly free. Upside down, wings open, the bird too tried to fold them back to its body just swung there on the pendulum of a raw wind.

The length of twine was sufficient to allow the bird a foreshortened flight, a false escape like some living kite. When the creature reached end of twine's length it was jerked back by force of its own effort to hang exhausted above pedestrians crossing the intersection and the traffic roaring down Central Park West.

There was nothing to be done. I imagined the fire department arriving, sending a ladder up, clipping the twine and freeing the sparrow but recognized this to be a romantic daydream. Unsettled by finding myself witness to the cruelty of the bird's circumstance but pressed by an important appointment, I kept walking. Imagine the response to a 911 call reporting a distressed sparrow dangling from a stoplight particularly in the aftermath of 9/11. Likely the caller would be judged as a flake.

Now I often look up at stoplights and have come to realize that most stoplight cross bars, the hollow ones, are inhabited. Shelter from the elements is a precious commodity for everyone in a hardscrabble town like New York. Location, location, location throughout the city colonies of industrious sparrows escape the elements and find shelter for their young. Near impossible for fledglings to fall out of this industrial habitat. Water-proof, sleet-proof, snow-proof, predator proof, out of harm's way. Snug. But never exempt from the pitiless play of accident: some might say, destiny or fate. Real estate.

Two weeks later in a taxi on my way downtown I found myself stopped for a light at the very same crosswalk. It was dusk and the season's first blizzard was plastering the city with snow, sleet and ice. Through the flying snow I saw the same bird dangling lifeless now, wings closed, frozen shut, covered in snow like some discarded ornament left over from some long-forgotten holiday.

As the light changed each snowflake became a feather. Each feather belonged to a gargantuan ghost sparrow of blizzard proportions composed of this and every fallen sparrow overshadowing the entire city in ghost-sparrow white. The flakes flying by like frozen tears. The spotlight changing colors mechanically from amber to red to green from green to amber.

blackbirds on ice floes on hudson

hundreds on hundreds
everything else gray today
but them and their dark delicacy
a consistency of winged black
peppering white ice what a show
at their rise from naked trees
and puzzle pieces of river ice
they find their ease on floe

after floe as the hudson tides rise
and february determined toward spring
flows determined by

christmas

crows' harsh calls
fingers of rhododendron red
in first rays of sun
flat-gray sun on the run
more snow to come
all the leaves now dead

two candles

one tall and straight
casts a perfect vertical glow

the other's tip
a shudder wave

they cast an asymmetrical
light wild soft and low
like their fire on the mantle
our lives unbridled flicker by

saying goodbye to penis

goodbye old friend
as we get closer to the end
we're more inclined to bend

the constellations

oh my oh my my lands
my grandmother once said to me
how the constellations
(as i think pegasus orion
the big and little bears)
like us are so tiny
against tonight's sky
oh my oh my my lands

drop of rain

one last agile drop
of rain hung suspended
from only one of many
leaves of stubborn rhododendron
thin sun shining through
made a sapphire of it

so bright so many-faceted
that i fell into a dream
that in this solitary lone jewel
was held all lives lived
all things not begun not seen
and all things meant to be
not one of which will end
not one of which will be forgotten
as this fragile contradiction shone
against winter's warning days

woodpecker tree r.i.p.

woodpecker tree r.i.p.
to a cruel november wind
you had no strength but to yield

remember how your woodpeckers flew
to you for sustenance
over field and marsh and pond

you were a store of life
to them and yes to me
woodpecker tree r.i.p.

sun and moon celebrate your end
we'll miss your stubborn righteous dance
'too soon' came too finally

purr

her hands are flowers
the way she pets
our black and white cat
head to arch of back to curl of tail
the static sparkling of his fur
in the dark room
the way he looks up
his eyes bright

as if to say
yes that exactly that
as a well chosen word
the soft rumble
the murmur
of his purrs
how he loves her

for wanda

old shoe

old show old shoe
we two
laces come undone
holes in our soles
our sun on the run
me and you
old shoe

can you see it as a burning

can you see it as a burning
the hard wood of our days and hours
our maple oak works or words
all cut ignite a glorious burning
but gray ash in the morning

october

the last dragonflies
fly slower
the leaves fast
going golder
each and every fall
by fall getting older

cup of tea

she got home at three
'till then no time to eat
made a meatloaf sandwich
on toasted six-grain bread
with mayo sweet pickles

and season's last cherry tomatoes
right off the vine sliced thin
they still held their peak-season taste
and she made herself a cup of tea
with cream and sugar - royal blend

she had dinner with friends
when later she returned
she made me a cup of tea
with cream and sugar - royal blend
day gone perfect end

for William Carlos Williams

*in the manner of his 'to a poor old woman' and
'this is just to say'*

cardinal in january

snow falling slowly
white on white on white
white on branch bough and bush
white on chimney roof and lintel
the arc of the cardinal's flight
in his red rush
to cross the icy road
something holy

november dusk

last light glows
in tops of trees
don't you know it
brings me to my knees

winternight and the country of dreams

this night there is no sound
the no sound of cold and dark
that old battery-powered clock
of planets, stars, galaxies, and moon
no cloud but the clouds of the clouds
of dreams that hold us sleepers
ever deeply in their secure grasp
like gypsies in many-colored robes
who lie down and try to find some rest
side by side with that great pride of lions
the tawny kings of all their dreams
sharpening their claws on the acacia
lolling about stretching yawning
upon their beds of ochre grass
on the vast savanna of memory
on the endless pampas of sleep
in the videos of all our dreams

all infinity

age after age upon age
who can count it
sands beaches seas you and me
here now by wild chance

the dance of water fire earth and air
we press against our bars like zoo animals
looking out from our cage of time

once in florida

one mackerel-sky afternoon
in west palm
high in the hotel
from my room

i looked down
on the beach

on a father with his son
cute smurf of maybe two
naked-brown in the sun
playing chicken with high tide
dancing in the surf

on photography

time's no joke no toy
to take a photograph
is to carry a yoke
as the quick lens clicks shut
to take a photograph
is simply to freeze
a drop of time composed
to trap a complexity

to stop a compound instant
but sometimes the obsession
the alchemy of bagging the scene
keeps the eye from seeing dew drop

obstructed by the crutch of the tool
what really should be seen is not
the captured eye's confession
"i was there" a cinema

that blinds the photographer
to what is most dear most clear
so trapped in the defiance of time
the too-busy bee forgets to live
fails to see the tomb's boulder rolled back
and light's resplendent joy

grocery list

walking from my knot
of dreams still
in bed i recall
something i forgot

as the cardinal sings
his sweet sad song
snow falling in the pines
the red sun rises

above my window sill
on a small pad i scrawl
cucumber sour cream and dill

experience

dreams and years
years and dreams
that sewing machine - experience
has stitched stories in my skin
i run my fingers on the seams
my eyes and mouth and face
and try in vain
to decipher meanings
in the hard drawn lines
where they lie
not so hidden there

lark ascending

his only 'ism'
is the catechism
of sky and sun
and snow of clouds
an exultation he rises up
taller than the tallest
cathedrals' tapers
the candle of his arc
upward as hope
up with no bounds
an untrammelled fierce
self-determined run
his flight against the dark

love

when young
all we want to do
is give freely
no such thing as years

when old
knowing not long to live
neither hour nor the day
we hold back shackled by our fears

when my cat rolls over

when my cat rolls over
and stretches his tiger paws out
chocolate and black
on his ample persian back
belly-up belly the color of ashes
as the Italians so precisely say

mi souvien l'eterno

in this for him a simple act
i suspect he knows how
when i say OH
his italianate simplicity
gives me a moment of eternity
in him in his eyes

mi souvien l'eterno

sunday march 20

the ice out in a rush
the spring peepers wake
and sing in the marsh

possums too slow
are car crushed
supine

the new spring moon
illuminates the pines
gentle as a kiss

ever her night this
ever her metronome this
tells the truest time

against the dark

when the wind pulls the clouds across the moon
when the moon pulls the clouds across our room
it's possible to dream love is never spent

von humboldt's fly

june 1802
mount chimborazo peru
a single butterfly fluttering
at 16,000 feet was seen
then 6,000 feet higher a solitary fly
von Humboldt did not ask

why good and evil
but why at this primeval height
on this mute mountain
how this simple fly survived

soap bubble

standing by the kitchen sink
cleaning up restoring order
so i like to think
i rolled back the boulder of a bottle cap
squeezing a near empty bottle of joy
the color of alchemists' gold
into a bottle near-full
when a single glossy bubble
diameter of a dime came flying by to visit me
with the swirling rainbow of every bubble
its amoeba-like continent's tectonic sheen
shining purple red blue yellow green
each invading the others' boundaries
on its glossy upwardly-mobile round
was born softly gently brightly aloft
rising above my head then slowly down
as if like us it had its own intentions
was determined to make me think
in parables and resurrections
two points of silent light on its face
i saw as eyes and stopped to watch its fate
how soaring it enjoyed a fine parabola
and near its end settled on the kitchen rug
i thought it would burst but instead
it rested as if to take a breath
then shrank to half a bubble
then to a quarter then to nearly none
finally just a wet spot on the mat
its 'eyes' looking up at me in surprise
spoke to me in 'kitchen sink'
"stop projecting, wretched bug!
what did you expect of me?
and more importantly closer
to the end than your bright beginnings
what now do YOU expect of THEE?"
and then in the caverns of my head
i heard an urgent gospel music -
once was lost once was blind
for once at last we all may see
Easter 2011

tanager

a friend said look
find the tanager
and you will have a special day

i looked for him but didn't see
out to brunch early lunch at play?
i'll have to tweet his manager

the uneventful

o tempora o mores
bestow on us
the emptiness of the uneventful

its canyons plains and mesas of open time
unfettered time for burning time
for studying the ruckus of the sun and moon

for staying the planets' frantic rush
for turning off all forms of commotion
for slowing down the notion of slow

good boy

good boy good boy
old black dog
in spring-new field
the metronome of his tail
the truest punctuation of his joy

baltimore oriole

baltimore oriole
top of apple tree in bloom
orange and black pink and white
blue sky his ceiling
new sun his lamp
just-cut grass his carpet
just-ploughed earth his floor
not one closed door
in this his living room

the bee

how and why the bumble
in the bumble bee
where there's no bumble in he
summer cellmate of open cell of blue
soaring in his black-and-yellow prison duds

gypsy dizzying in his pollen-laden arc
under clouds as white as suds
his GPS was flawless as his energy
centuries before ours in cars
he drives all wild blossoms wild
in manicured gardens and parks
hot house flowers temple when he dives
assiduous furious meticulous
he's a mellifluous thelonious
jazz soloist of pastures orchards glades
he's the busiest of royal breeders
who in every deft swoop
joins the a-list of country-club takers givers
giving all stamens and pistils the shivers
without him there'd be no flowers fields or trees
always at play king of spring and summer days
lord of pollination implantation symbiosis synergy
baron of levity defying gravity
purportedly a drone a prisoner of the hive
in truth the freest roaming prisoner alive
there is no bumble in the bumble bee
the flowers say he's all stud service and utility

the perfection

my father's military quest for perfection
and his death at sixty-two
taught me to trust the merely good
to seize the small beautiful possible
to abandon perfection's forest
for one piece of its finest wood

spring violets

under day-lit shiver of a swallow moon
spring violets are our audience
applauding our humble portfolios
too few too human deeds
today i see their faces looking up
free of all malevolence
of any indications of pain
of all intimations of mortality
merely guilty of drinking too deeply
of the drink-all-you-can-drink cup
of renegade rain and a contraband sun

vultures on hudson

startled by our train rushing by
a caucus of vultures darkly rises
from river's edge save two gorging
on the soft bloat of a floating carcass
who so engrossed defy train's thunder
flat out refuse to fly away

butcher shop

we and our bloody cars
are the butchers
the butcher shop our roads
our clients always dress in black
the vultures and the crows
our business always more than fair
we guarantee fresh-killed and free
they guarantee they'll always be back

baby squirrels

the baby squirrels are here again
in the jumbo-gym of their locust tree
scuttling scrambling this year only three
a skyscraper's fall below them
undaunted they commune oblivious

in the scrum of one another's company
nipping the tips of sugar maple buds
secure in their small all-togetherness
soft rumble in their churning balls of gray
early morning and dusks every day

a cinema verite of joy a dance
good thing the young don't know
their mindless play is practice
a building-up of skilled defiance
against harder seasons' crueller days

one day

one day after a decade of darkness
after years and months of coldness
dumb intransigence distance and pain
she merely appeared again

the way she touched me
washed away my angry bitterness
as dust from roadside thistles
is washed away by summer rain

earth worm

i was a dark hard-clay red
a dried-and-he-thought-dead knot
trailing a smear of whatever it is
we worms exude when wounded
bitten by a fat cat earlier today
no longer that fresh pink
spring rain brings out in me and my kin

when he went to scrape me up
with the last towel on the roll
to his surprise i moved
alive or one nerve's last trace of life?
cat bite failed to take its toll?
even he could not help but think
more than slightly horrified
what a pity at the end to be

a worm trapped inside a porch
my last stage my last proscenium
outside my rich earth's home
just a small crawl away
(but he's not really worried
because he "knows"
at the end of the day
we worms don't think)

for robert browning

when the red wings begin to sing

when the red wings return
to the icy marsh across the road
under a blue march moon
the cat-tails all tinder and fluff
the ice still thick and gray on the pond
peepers still dreaming of peeping
swamp grass blown brown and dry
when the red wings begin to sing

some winter thing begins to melt
the entire world takes note

of the new pulse of spring
as if on cue for me and you

dogwood

across the field
across a lake of ultramarine
beneath tin-lantern skies
against a wall of forest green
a single dogwood's simple white
calls out arise arise

what kafka's dog said

a few scraps of meat and a bone
a word of praise a pat on my head
my favorite spot near their blazing hearth
my embroidered comforter near their bed
a master and a home of my own
these made the axe that hacked

the cold wolf's heart out of me
in the end turned my snarl and me
from wild beast to man's best friend
very first in their queue
truest love in the retinue
of their coldest hearts

for franz kafka and his dog - "Literature is the axe which we break the frozen sea within us."

shopping list

the soft haze of summer days
ephemerota how they drift by
flashing like jewels at a gala
lazing on our screened-in porch
black cat sleeping on my lap
writing up our shopping list
saying out loud to him and me
better add hellman's mayonnaise
to things to buy for our fourth-of-july
yukon-gold potato salad

mayfly (ephemerota)

outside the local feed-store my mission to buy
hairball-control diet food for our indoor cats
a plump mayfly flew by so brightly in the morning light
his day-glo green the green of children's toys or plasticine
and as i was thinking he's one healthy specimen

a hungry sparrow on the fly plucked him out of his flight
in one small snap he who was a tiny glory in the june sun
was snatched from his arc suddenly surgically done

the scissors of the sparrow's beak clipped his inedible wings
and they translucent as weightless cathedral glass
drifted aimlessly spinning slowly lightly down
nature you can be a cruel and fickle clown
you and your holocaust smile
you and your monopoly on death spiraling down

you really do know how to turn a morning around
the mayfly's clipped wings falling so delicately down
mayfly goodbye hard as we try in our small flights
not one of us knows when or where or why
mayfly goodbye at the end like you
may we all disappear as brightly
with a new friend admirer at our sides

catalpa

leaves larger than a dinner plate
white blossoms in big grape-clusters
always blooms late june mid july
catalpa's snowy summer bluster

the idea of song

eons on eons of time on the run
years upon years of dusks and dawns
of no sun and then the birds began to sing
they brought the light and idea of song
before musical-peon man was born

weedy

our cat weedy
what an imp what an elf
he peed with impunity
on the best of the western canon
with special emphasis
on shakespeare dante the bible
hamlet lear and agamemnon
no terror no pity for those greats
on whom weedy chose to dribble
his deconstructive liquid wastes
a kind of urinary new criticism
a feline marking of his literary taste
somehow he managed to miss

the baltimore catechism mediating
on the pew of the lowest shelf
holy alone aloof by itself

the flute

the flute of our imaginations
the song-lines of our minds
old as the white bone of the moon
tonight grow bright then brighter
as round by round our world flies by
and to its haunting incantations
to its hallucinatory tune
one by one we all sail some lightly
some sadly some merrily home

two kinds of silence

at home together
each in our separate rooms
pursuing our separate lives
cats sleeping on screened-in porch
two kinds of kind of silence

summer

one brief sudden happy summer day
summer walks through my open door
and she's tan and naked
and voluptuous and bright-sky blue
and wet and sunny as a peach

and smelling of honey suckle
and new-cut green and barbecue
and endless clouds and salty days
on satyr rivers oceans lakes and streams
soaring kites dogs fetching sticks on beaches
suntan lotions and sands so warm

and wearing a necklace of fireflies
she kisses me with an easy smile
under the constellation gemini
to an oratorio of crickets and katydids
and i know then that she is proof
beautiful dreamer of all my dreams

of the almost-always-here sanctuary
in the heart's shaded grove

beyond any ordinary play of plays
of summer living deep in me
one brief sudden happy summer day

some stupid 21st century clichés
maxims for survival and happiness

don't worry about death
drink a lot of water
give up control
be yourself
zero tolerance for idiots
every penny counts
swing for the bleachers
follow your dream
be true to yourself and those you love
be ordinary and important
reflect on everything
regret nothing
eat dessert
ignore your cell
count your blessings
keep your ears to the ground
keep your eyes wide open
remember no one can take a bath for you
better to ask forgiveness than beg for permission
for the answer look to your cat or dog
it is ok to divert your self with yourself
make peace with your imperfections
be indifferent to wealth and glory
renounce the illusion of self
try hard to relax
concentrate on your breathing
be only as wise as you need to be
light one candle a day
one for st. michael
and one for your dragon
think like an artist live like a bourgeoisie
try to avoid anything remotely gory
an orderly race will fly you higher
find your greatness in your mediocrity
keep your judgemental side in check
reconcile to the fact of no reconciliation
be kind to the animal in you
try really hard to better love those you love
don't step in shit
listen to the stories your dreams tell
keep it simple stupid
don't step on ants one day you might be one
dust bunnies are not a crime
weeds' flowers are flowers

avoid pastrami with mayo on white
if you can't sleep read
go easy on the vodka
tip generously if you plan on coming back
slow down
take a deep breath before sounding off
don't waste electricity
take it all with a large grain of salt
cry when you need to
don't be too polite
quick is good right is better
relationship is everything
put yourself in someone else's shoes
moderation in all things
say it's shit if it is
eat less red meat
stop smoking
try not to get lost in ambiguities
stay in the present
pay your taxes on time
eat your vegetables
do something creative today
save up for a rainy day
stay close to friends closer to enemies
trust but verify
don't stop asking 'why?'
keep reading
sometimes sobriety is not what it's cracked up to be
listen to the wind in the trees
watch the full moon rise
look up look around like you just got here
feel the wind in your face
buck up enjoy shout 'ole!'
have a good day
curse the darkness
coraggio
trust your gut
don't lose the good in quest of the perfect
if it's obvious it's obvious
remember at the checkout
we all have to pay

chorus I

this night
this moon
this silver light

we we we
us us us
a wave a sea
a chorus of
of insects crickets
and thrumming bugs
singing pulsing
we we we
us us us
the end of august
this end of summer
this night
this moon
this silver light
we we we
us us us

the living

we could be flies in milk
with our wings stuck together
but butterflies not dragonflies
not exotically-colored tropical birds
neither beautiful nor heroic
plain old drab house flies
with our wings stuck together
or weevils in a captain's biscuit
mites stuck in wet veneer
uncaring but for our own
aging faces silly skins or carapaces
when at the end of our souls' runs
like a culture of planaria
swirling dancing skimming fluttering
ruffled struggling befuddled troubled
in a puddle of milk-white
vacillating between fear brief joy and rage
until some cold scientist chooses
to open the door to our vial cage
and intrepid us the better part of us
away finally flies away
for virginia woolf

saint priapus

dear saint priapus
patron of severed foreskins
premature ejaculations
and the dreaded hernia truss

have mercy on us
and make merry
each and every
blunderbuss

genius

whenever i adventure into harold bloom
and his labyrinthine brain room
in his presence and his canon of greats
i try not to feel like a dunce
but like my cat gazing at the moon

i wonder if he great admirer of greats
after volume on erudite volume
defending his theory of influence and his trade
if he too as critic at least once
ever felt like an ant in their shade

algonquin 2011

the size of thumbnails
two mottled tree toads greet us
all tan hop no fuss

the stars reluctant
reassured by waning moon
they lose their shyness

cricket of twilight
just beginning your night shift
waning moon your boss

sundown and crickets
cloud of mosquitoes peach sky
first star leads the way

dwarf beech in granite
parent tree at water's edge
drinking more deeply

cricket's urgency
under stars' calliope
brighter than star light

the rocks accepting
everything that passes by
waves their troubadour

to console the wind
is this why the cricket sings?
no! he sings for himself

four solitary
saw teeth of old-growth white pines
on dusk's horizon

born entertainer
cricket performs in the dark
the stars applauding

the waves and the stars
another kind of fire
another burning

then morning comes
our wake-up call loon music
sun not yet over pines

clouds banished for now
the sky a surprise of blue
hummingbird stops by

trail mix uneaten
last year's chipmunks fat sparrow
not interested

civilization?
wilderness laughs at our books
too vast to be read

soft morning's quiet
sun on rise tends to his rounds
shy sparrow dares speak

bushes on the point
wind dancing with such bright glee
they sing "be like me!"

last night's cricket still sings
now he's working overtime
gets paid in sunshine

first you hear his cry
sea gull over vast of blue
white as a surplice

they seem to tremble

the grasses stem to seed top
caressed by warm breeze

chiaroscuro
white pines' branches needles black
against morning sky

on the island's edge
the great white pines lead forward
old folks braving winds

the light on wave tops
casts a spell bright as the gems
harry winston sells

let the bush madness
shake out civilization
banish noise breed peace

braid of lake and sky
braid of rock and bird and pine
woven long ago

the smallmouth's black eye
his prehistoric hunger
pure rage treble-hooked

birches on far shore
three pale maidens pirouette
on stage of dark green

ax and saw are still
they await their master's call
like eager canines

the old outhouse says
"proud of my centrality
i'm a born taker"

cricket never sleeps
his violin counting time
his neighbors chime in

not a soul in sight
the clouds' great menagerie
their own best enterprise

waves giggle chortle
laugh twitter chuckle and grin

while wind is away

its own vacation
the land's dream a wish come true
needs nothing no one

just waves wind and sky
occasional fly buzzes by
just to say hello

the moss on granite
asks for nothing but some rain
playing field for ants

one silver canoe
lost in the grand all of it
soft voices far off

cloud over the sun
the islands all glow darker
hiding their smiles

flash light a search light
washing dishes in dark lake
single minnow glows

at dusk the loons laugh
they talk to one another
oh to know their code

woods waits for the fire
stacked for the coming of night
canoes come and go

once in a fair while
hummingbird will hover by
rare way to say 'hi!'

baby porcupine
browsing lazily near shore
his quills a light blue

nonplussed by canoe
baby porcupine ambles away
on eternal time

mosquito squadron
hovering just off shore's ledge
heading right for us

in tent bladder calls
under venus half moon mars
pull of moon to blame

packed ready to go
gear at lakeshore by canoe
loon bids us farewell

fishing poles paddles
coleman stove tent knapsacks ax
in the morning sun

the flaws of others
make us consider our own
wish that it were so

lulu and larry loon
he'll hitch a ride on ma's back
he her soft knapsack

just as we put in
north tea goes completely calm
nature's irony

wraith sprite water nymph
most ingenious vessel
canoe - waters' spouse

the cottage on lake simcoe

rest in the cool grass
still damp from last night's hard rain
gentle spirit dog

nose black like a bear's
says as much as his eyebrows
each twitch sentences

ducks low to water
careening to some brightness
lake a looking glass

a loon two chicks
far off on far horizon
sky and water merge

white wake of speed boat
matched by the white of the clouds
and the gulls' bellies

the warmth of the sun
the fine smell of gasoline
the motor boat's thrum

adirondack chairs
pair at end of long boat dock
their blue matisse blue

the waves keeping time
the nuthatches keeping time
time like poured honey

waves and mourning dove
accompanied by a sweet breeze
new day wakes the dew

gray plate of the lake
gray bowl of the sky married
terns partake of each

osprey hovering
kitting above lake surface
plummets for the kill

like a squeaky door
seagull's screech claims his domain
mine mine mine he shrieks

woodpecker drumming
beware beware you plump grubs
the end your end is near

great creator's hand
grand cinematographer
rights of final cut

no pale artist's brush
no camera lens can capture
rapture the rapture

two swans one cygnet
book-ended by the adults
male's white wings spread wide

dog yammers next door
sound of rain and motor boats
sky's silver lake's pewter

geese on a sand bar
seem to calm down in the rain
stretch and flap their wings

clouds in shape of gulls
seagulls in shape of gull-shaped clouds
which imitates which?

rainy day rainy
yappy dog yaps yaps then naps
lazy day lazy

watching the light shift
with a fine kind of attention
simplest kind of gift
harley: old man's eyes
that were tired of seeing
a fine blue and calm

the geese bottoms up
headless in the shallows
meal time with fellows

sleeping dog dreaming
making little barking sounds
mournful puppy yaps

high form of dog joy
rolling in the wet wet grass
head back tail ass up

please save us buster
whole being on high alert
from marauding geese

when he saw the swans
he became a question mark
who? why here? you fiends!

they disturbed his dreams
the geese their infernal honking
annoying as fleas

his favorite tree
called for a visit and pee
whoopee! pee pee pee!

like a rough-stitched seam
single file the geese spread out

clouds sewn by their flight

he slept in the car
not a bark not a whimper
knew the routine well

slow slow sweeps the bee
pollen laden heavy as he flies
home home to his hive

velasquez

the blues golds oranges and greens
painted metallic chemical as race cars
the vestments of the adoring shepherds
the baby jesus pink as a piglet
casting a worried eye to us and his mother
she reflecting quietly questioning in his infant light
the naked angels carrying a billowing pennant
gloria in excelsis deo in terra pax hominibus
a winged chorus singing for their king

wouldn't it be pretty

after a life of writing
love of books and more books
writing and more writing
to cross the great divide
and meet ezra, william, virginia,
ernest, will, samuel, wallace, emily
and all too long a list to ply
at a party where there is no canon
or any stake in worldly reputations
to have them say one by one
we see how we helped you
ole bravo ok ok brave one
our son our son our son
our future was your past
we too were inspired by you
little you and your work
living as you still do

the downpour

the downpour
turns taxi windows
into crying eyes
streaming silver tears

an empty flooded soccer field
surrounded by stands of sycamores
floats a dozen soccer balls
stitched octagons of white

next to a small patience of gulls
standing so content so still
you'd think the sun was shining
illuminating the hidden all

train haikus

the garbage barges
pushed by the red and white tugs
politely obey

one cormorant
wings stretched like a german cross
wings out in the rain

all things low and gray
clouds along the palisades
water and sky

ossining prison
scariest when there's no sun
river has no say

the judgment of Fall
all things falling all things ripe
reminder to all

falling

to fall softly
is not a matter of choice
falling i feel wind in the trees
i see sun on my fellow leaves
i hear the most beautiful voice
calling softy "come home to me"

prison escape

the leaves are running away
from their gentle warden trees
faster than faster than fast
school children laughing and laughing
on their last day of class

necessity

the necessity of the glass
that held the water
that draws the man to drink
is that same necessity
that holds the man and
as he pauses causes him to think

old birdhouse

we found an old birdhouse well-weathered antique white
we nailed it to a willow just beyond our old field-stone wall

no one lived there

not an overwrought reckless wren not a single homeless climbing mouse
a record-early october snow and the weight of leaves brought them down

no one lived there

after that long cold night at break of day without a sound
it seemed to us that something cruel had taken our own home away

no one lived there

the thing that has no price

your simple confidence in the one
in all the world you most trust
the root center where all things grow

the great V of geese at end of day
or the cozy sleep of cats and mice
the taste unlocked by the rolling boil

in the heart of each grain of rice
the cold autumn sun that burns the leaves
that on the run turns them from green to rust

on the canvas rough the play
of the smooth and loaded brush
the knowing that there is no need to rush

ghost storm

the assassin trees smothered the howls of their children - the undead leaves

the evil snow was engulfing all devouring bushes chimneys sleeping adams sleeping eyes

by three a.m. with darkness black as blood countless power lines' throats were cut

searching for a light to count the carnage of severed limbs the butcher-storm's victims bleeding white

i looked outside up and up into the tops of broken maples and up into the twisted spines of pines

the night wind had molded snow and ice and leaves into bas-relief a dance macabre of zombie devotees

dogs with heads of pike giraffes with wings of gigantic bees toads with horns and razor feet the size of monster skis

skulls on pikes and tortured men hanging upside down schizophrenic clowns with poison viper fangs

dark as a tomb cold as a coroner well acquainted with the triumph of death in his autopsy room

blank as a lobotomy pale as piles of dead fish eyes floating in the mind of bruegel the elder's flooded nightmare room

*for pieter bruegel the elder 1525 - 1569
after the earliest-on-record snowstorm the
day before Halloween 2011*

city mouse

as i ran for a taxi worried about being on time
made small by highrise-deafened cars and cabs
why i saw him but i did smaller than a scuttling ping pong ball
he speeding home as if his life were on the line plump as a plum
each of us destination-bound each determined in our own ways blind
racing to our fates i wondered if he saw me and if
he could hold a thought and did he see and was he fond of me
marveling in this relentless dream of things at how wee we are
in our rush caught up in oblivious to some great-all-churning wheel

manhattan october morning in a cab on the way to vegas pumpkin moon still up

so brilliant an october day
even pigeons are full of joy
bobbing weaving nodding their cares away
little charcoal whirling Qs in queues
lit by the cold morning light at play

arms race

what if we all owned nuclear drones
rampant as plagues of crazed cell phones
fleets of glass and steel terrorists in flight
each enabled with one-megaton bombs
and we launched them all in locust swarms
insane robots razing all flesh and bone

then in legions we would know the tone
of the inevitable shattered like crystal flutes
our moans grim paeans to king death's charms

city pigeons

the pigeons seem really cheery this morning
their Polo purples their Armani grays and white
shimmer bright lit by a smiling october sun
in small circles near curbs on streets and sidewalks
they hunt and peck for crumbs and tiny stones to fill their crops
their feet mostly missing toes a shocking shade of pink
not phased by crowds and maniac busses cabs and cars
hard scabble their play hard scabble their work
just like all of us starting off our days a little groggy
if they could speak surely one would say hooray
on this ostentatious gleaming autumn day

inner voice

who goes there?
who is it? who are you
who speaks to and through us?
who is it that is behind the projector
of our nightmares dreams and daydreams?
i am always listening to your stories
receiving code taking mental notes
that just appear and suddenly i see or hear
that flicker like a film surge like a symphony
it is you not me yet deeply part of me
separate as a spider from his web
yet somehow i believe
i feel i sense my trust in you
gets me from whenever-then to now
from wherever-there to here
who is it? who are you
who speaks to and through us?
who is it? who are you?
who goes there?

postcard

one november afternoon among all november afternoons of all time

looking at a postcard of one giant-antlered moose of all the giant-antlered moose of all time

he standing staring bold-photographed free in front of two white birch and maple trees gold and red as chardonnay and cabernet

lily pad roots like linguini hanging below his bulbous nose his grinding jaws defying gravity and all human laws

purchased in algonquin and inserted as a bookmark into “jorge luis borges on mysticism”

by chance i opened his essay ‘on salvation by deeds’ which ends “...because of a haiku the human race was saved”

and i remembered once in algonquin a great bull moose stared at me and my nephew dan in a canoe we less than ten feet away

in very much the same way as the one captured in the postcard stared at his photographer long ago

then this so still world was ours alone shining with subtle mystery and awe among the many moments under the algonquin sky

and i thought i heard a camera click of all the camera clicks of all time

captured and made into a postcard for some reader among all the readers of all time to one day here and now find

for daniel arnott

migration

the moon an oval target pale against a pail of water-blue sky
big flocks of migrating birds like pellets from a scatter gun
and now come morning hundreds still flying against the morning sun
what great hunter pulled the trigger of what great gun and why

erat hora

the crow flying in front of the vain rising moon
was as a grain of pepper against a sunlit silver spoon

the old bone yard

there’s little inspiration in viewing the hallowed ground of the old boneyard
the passing by the staring blankly the visitation the breathing in the dark canard

and as we pass we pass we pass evaporate as gas
high low middle muddled poor rich fat thin befuddled high to lowest class

winter spring summer fall day or night doesn’t matter a rat’s ass
the felini silhouette of death on the rise his sharpened scythe

swinging like a mind pendulum it’s razor edge itself alive
promoting a certain unsettling inner unconstitutional queasiness

we reflecting on the unrelenting domino-like easiness
of nature’s slippery uninterested slope in appeasing anyone’s lake of easiness

no matter how meticulous one's sense of order this being one border
all of us must cross no matter bug or man hitler gandhi bach or estee lauder
after w.h auden's "on first opening 'the lyric year'" 1913

first lines of winter

removing black to get white
a blizzard whitens night

human and avian skeletons

we we run when they fly
it's hard to believe the x-ray as if seen on tv
and then only in the most hushed of tones
the architecture of our bones
ours so weighty theirs so light
that whether covered with feathers or flesh
advance us so similarly on or up on land in sky
until the scientists strip our species down
and stand us up straight naked side by side
to the limits of our journeys' ends on land in sky
and there in stark white clarity a verity
delivered from the wonder of our outside sheaths
we see backbone pelvis jaw and beak
a truth that simply defied belief
an indescribable unity of two ancient paths
that long ago our two species chose to take
the unseen pylons of our two temples
a mysterious fundament of which we rarely speak
*on seeing in 'on rare birds' pierre belon's illustration -
'human and avian skeletons compared' (1555 anno domini)*

fish moon

with a silver opener
the moon the slices through
the dark envelope of the pond's depths
opens unfolds shines down on
the pumpkinseeds' jacob's coat of colors

on the bluegills' and the blue-black backs
of catfish all their bellies white facing bottom
snappers and turtles sleep in their mud caves
and the moon she does not forget

below the surface flash and shimmer-ripple
in the shallows minnows and tadpoles
those squiggly exclamations
muddle in the slick and shine of mud glimmer
not far from the dark-shadowed shore

beneath the weeping willows cat tails and reeds
their gills shudder open and flutter close and open
and they look up they all look up at her at her
and the moon she does not forget

piggy bank

to be the quiet voice of thanks as children
putting shiny pennies in their piggy banks

small present

i am giving this to you because i love you
because this ink is my blood and holds my touch
i have made it with my breath and best considerations
as if building a small interpretation
of what in the end it might come to represent

an exhalation a lifting and a folding of a silken tent
swaying in the wind's decisions and indecisions
from somewhere beyond mundane mind a gift felt then sent
from some place quiet and very hard to find
from an inspiration a step away from day-in-day-out time

even if it flew this thing that few would pay a penny for
this shadow this exultation this representation of an open door
i offer it to you also as a kind of floor
that you can walk on from time to time
when the shallow ground beneath your feet begins to shift

i am giving this to you because we can hear the wild geese call
a hope assembling on our pond this cold november day
and because tonight the old moon looks kindly down on us below

and soon i well know how well we all will know
it will be time for us too to fly away time for us to go

*thanksgiving poem for wanda
on leaving shanghai
november 22, 2011*

the leaves

the sun shines through them
the finished leaves celebrate and sing
their edges raised fingers and hands
victims of first frost's holocaust
in piles their leaving brings spring

crows

the way of crows
their rusty calls
their patent-leather blacks
against the muted browns
and metallic rusts of fall
the rain's soft filter
on the great lens of it all
tones all things down
bringing winter back
highlighting crow black

hyacinths

the ocean blue of the hyacinths
only demonstrates their longing
to be reborn to fly to escape
their land-locked labyrinth
and flower their way from earth
back to the deepest rolling blue
of our mother the blooming sea

early winter

the throwing away of the dice of green
the fallen leaves making all trees' bones seen
dusk's ballet of last caddis or mosquitoes against the sky
then the lone owl's "who who who" when all sleep soundly
who tells us in our dreams all must in dreams believe

a quiet lie

in the lake of night

one he loved for her mind
and only her mind
and then came to love her

one he loved her for the sex
and only for the sex
and then came to love her

a quiet lie
in the lake of night

one he loved her for herself
and only for herself
and always loved her

now having loved them all
he only loves THEN

and wonders why

a quiet lie
in the lake of night

when they kissed

the caribou of his nerve endings
began their migration across some vast arctic tundra

his argyle socks became barber poles
that patriotic spun relentless red white and blue

his inner television left the 50s
and went from black and white to color

the reality show of his brain
surged in the nielsen ratings and won a people's choice award

dudley the ID the unshaven stunt pilot
did loop de loops and dived bombed local petting zoos

every mariachi band in mexico stopped playing
as the young mozart strode out of a white limousine

nations of graffiti artists sprayed the dome of the empty night sky
with silver spray paint and called their work "stars and moon"

crickets everywhere stopped playing their fiddles
shut up to better hear the wind in the trees and the lapping waves

a black and white cat padded through a light snow
from one red barn to another leaving only footprints behind

he heard a silent orchestra turning the pages
of an unfinished benny goodman score to the applause of crows

the spring peepers learned english
and softly sang the alleluia chorus of handel's messiah

a boy on a bicycle rode down
the steepest hill in town whistling in the summer rain

yo yo ma teamed up with segovia and manitas de plata
across the ages and played variations on 'till the sun divorced the day'

it was autumn in the adirondacks with blueberry pancakes
sausage and real maple syrup with a strong cup of fresh-brewed coffee

his accountant closed a ledger having balanced his books
and in the land of the midnight sun someone far away called his name

at the top of matterhorn on a slate chalkboard
someone scratched out 'today yesterday and tomorrow' and wrote "NOW"

in the massive offices of his head typewriters were clacking
and only one phone was ringing and the call from a long-lost friend was for him

on a steinway grand in a great concert hall on yellowed ivory keys
someone played a very high C and then a few very mellow Gs

that was when he knew it was so much happier to be awake than asleep

lemon

the lemon is the lemon
ad infinitum the lemon
yellow hello yellow
yellow older than linoleum
out-of-the-tube cadmium yellow
rude as van gogh's yellow sun

mid december

the fingers of the rhododendron are curled so tight they hold
the cruel moon sliding low down in the west just before dawn
still bright as an old watchman's lamp burning bright in the night

the lake across the road is now finally frozen over geese all gone
the jays and crows and squirrels at the feeder feast frantic in the cold
a new day red on the east horizon stubbornly begins to glow

first light flushed a kind of ruddy apoplectic infant bright
hoarfrost ice-white on the bold and still green lawn
inside near window in full sun two fat just-fed cats stretch and yawn

christmas worm

how born today? how safe now?
pink-gray he made it so far
missed stiletto heel piercing
steel-toed work-shoe squash
snow tire flattening
crossed the rite-aid parking lot
to tiny isle of earth and grass
and found a lucky place to rest
for a spate of worm happiness

when i got in the car
the radio was playing
handel's alleluia chorus
and if he could stay alive

i thought in cold december
maybe there's hope for us
in some kind of god
who cruel or merciful or not
in hope we worms can only trust

his pain

his pain fed his words
like a well or underground spring
his painted sentence on sentence
light rain on arid plain

a jungle machete
hacking back and away
every inessential thing
every knot of brush

a tangled hell
of vine or thorn or thistle
making of wrath a path
that freed memory to sing

on his worst days
he would whistle
talk to himself and pray

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here they come scattered
but not without direction
like the agency types in mad men
masters of strategic media placement
and all their cloudy cousins
mackerel sky horsetails nimbus
stratosphere cumulous altostratus
cirrus cirrostratus nimbus
their visitation for summer children
looking up at their sails from lawns
what are their viewer numbers?
who's playing to watch them
no one in the universe entirely
on hand held devices
their medium as old as the sutras
more entertaining than tv

the burden of knowing time

the pigeon couples cooking cutting their brancusi profiles
in the aluminum-blue baking pan of the winter sky all soaring up and away

do not know

the starlings imitating other bird's and animals' voices and the house
sparrows resting in every nook and cranny in stop lights' hollow cross bars
and neon signs finding whole oats in undigested horse droppings
at the base of central park

do not know

the dog-walkers and their leash-governed ever-obedient every-amusing packs of canines
poodles bull dogs jack russells labs german shepherds spaniels setters sniffing the
morning air on one another's bums and pee trails ecstatic on their way to central park and
dejected on their return

do not know

the rats in central park scrambling out of their labyrinthine dens from
dusk 'till dawn smelling dog's markings and leftover chips and muffin
crumbs from day visitors of every nation

do not know

the great red tails who one the tops of high-rise looking down from
their twig nests from on the sailboat pond and yellow cabs and their tribe
plucking feathers from the pigeon's breast on fur from squirrels to get
to the still beating prey's heart

do not know

but all of us in queques in rain or snow our umbrella of being
blown out in the wind all of us set on our destinations hardly seeing
the panorama of hundreds of multi-colored umbrellas
the wondrousness of us on the way to grand central
preoccupied drifting in and out of our presents tense
never solely in the now
only we only we know

echo

our every minute
an echo
of our last

our every future
an echo
of our past

green beans

sitting on the porch
in mild december
snipping the vine ends
off green beans
wild to remember
sometimes everything
is exactly as it seems

the cobra the tiger

the monkey and the lamb

all his life he fought
the cobra and the tiger
he was bitten many times
but he survived

all his life he loved them
the monkey and the lamb

and all their lives
they fought the cobra and the tiger
they were bitten many times
but they survived

as they all got older

his mother sisters his wife -
they shaved their heads
and those who loved
the monkey and the lamb

they fought the cobra and the tiger
the boy the man the women
the monkey and the lamb
and those who loved them

they were bitten
but they survived

dream 3:20 a.m. December 20

waking from your dream weeping

one day you may wake from your dream weeping
and say to yourself isn't life rare? isn't life grand?

out of breath from running in your underwear
under a cold sky a bright band of charcoal blue

through full churches packed with geeks organs blastings
through drk alleys in the cold rain down your neck seeps

hopeless because you've lost your shoes
and running anxious along a high ocean bluff

running to your mother and your mother's home
who will not or cannot pick up her phone

out of breath gasping for air falling without feathers
looking down on an empty fast-approaching heartless sea

like breugel's man with the head of a carp
in the buff gasping so hard your gills hurt

or bruegel the elder's six blind men all a twitch
bumbling sightless to trusting without a clue into the ditch

thinking no matter how hard how hard you try
it's never just right not close to perfect never enough

your sobbing and THE FACT that when you arrive
you'll find you've been robbed of your mother

shakes you sobbing awake and next to your head
in your bed is a fat cat predictably fond of you

eyes-wide looking up into your eyes as if to say
where'd you go? where's my food? want to play?

one day you may wake from your dream weeping
and say to yourself isn't life rare? isn't life grand?

aerial real estate

the crows own the cooperative of the sky
every horizon all degrees low and high
north south east west what they do best
is own their trump call and how they fly

who knows

why the crows fly north every early morning
and south every late afternoon

who knows

the difference between force of habit and learning
between one who leads and the buffoon

pine needles on a gravel drive

the pine needles of the gravel drive

driven down in waves by the seasons' rains
own the exact parenthesis pattern
as kelp and seaweed on sore ocean's shore
driven by the synthesis of the tides

mock mood

he appeared before me on a smiling camel
the camel mocking my every mood
said in this vast desert i see nothing as real
impermanence makes me dance
all's a mirage yesterday today tomorrow
and tomorrow will always become
a caravan of closing and opening doors
the one you loved and knew best
the you who once stood with you
in the camel garage past tense
the one who stands with you no more

moonstruck

moonstruck
mine eye
moonstruck
i be
moonstruck
by thine

for wanda - second Sunday 2012

reverse moonstruck

moonstruck
thine eye
moonstruck
mine
moonstruck
not mine shine

phone call

she called when she was listening
to stevie wonder singing
you are the sunshine of my life
that's why I'll always be around you
forever you'll be in my heart
she said good for you

not sure how to take it
insult injury or cynic funny
when she hung up he wondered

am i living in hell or paradise?
the pond ice was glistening when
she said good for you

january

fingers of the rhododendron all clenches
storm windows all laced with frost
squirrels stand under the empty feeder
like old folks stare cold and wonder
by harsh winter double crossed

for man and all his plans and glories

for man and all his plans and glories
is nothing but a sometimes loving master
of his devoted cousins the cats and dogs
and a playing field for ticks and fleas

balance sheet

but for us and if not for the balance sheet
and left to imitate simply that
we all return to the country of animal sleep

the always brightly there
the child's repetitive disadvantageous
the ever-dangerous always slightly shy

walking around our future's globe
and our persistent calls' perimeters
of those we do not yet know

the big chair of the beaches of autumn
the small leaves on the bottoms of all ponds
and the halo of a gibbous moon

the track from march to june now
like a picket fence slat by slat
being built being taken down

being built being taken down
fore all of us a still-indecipherable rune
being built being taken down

how long

how long must winter's dark
seem to the spring peepers

how long after we're long gone
before the frog life and new life

sail us out of our slumber
on some sweet aching ark

no art

art is nothing for man
than staying in the now

our tribe says
we have no art

we do everything
as well as we can

oxygen

the oxygen of the sentence
has been my sentence
has kept me alive
and breathing well
from being barb-wired fenced
out of the worst circles
the tensest circles of hell

late january

penn station

even with this most mild of winters
the bag people are back
from their cold warrens by the tracks
like the bible's sparrows
they pick at half-eaten pizza slices
fries or donut bits from the trash
asking only for the smallest mercies
from rushing pilgrim travelers
bound for long island upstate or jersey
their cozy homes and minor heart attacks

beyond nice

the turquoise of the hudson
waters blue against the ice
the bridges in the afternoon light
blackbirds swarming the frozen floes
isn't it something too rare
and terrible and trembling
at the end of the day
so far beyond 'nice'

marsh at dusk

through our open window
the ascension of the trees
and their movement
their intimacy with the wind
their rustling in the reeds
the mind rests in the sun
between what has been
and what has been done
in the arbor of now to then
i found some peace
in their shadowing
the ring of bright waters
across our country road

the hedgehog and the frog

other than being compact and wily
having darker tops -
forest-brown and pond-scum green -
lighter whiter bellies
and no pressing need
to chop down massive trees
since they own no ax
the hedgehog and the frog
have not too much in common

neither needs to log on
the frog likes his streams and ponds
sitting on lily pads rocks or logs
the hedgehog in the spring
like to water his hedge rows and sing
neither cares for possums raccoons or dogs
and whenever watering singing or sitting
it's a fact the two do grin quite wryly
their google eyes all agog and smiley

three swans

the clouds pewter
the day expected nothing
the new sun had nothing to say

too early for considerations
until as if conjured
by some sorcerer's wand

three ivory swans
descend softly silent

wing by wing by wing

to meet their own bright reflections
in the dark receiving palette of the pond

emerging from the tunnel penn station

the blocks of steel and glass
rise up rise up
there's just a single pigeon
in the lonely road above
above the tracks above the tracks
these magnificences
and all else
the river the bridge
the cars the buses the cabs
all the students and all their books
as tea steaming in a cup
first adam me first eve you
the every first lad and every first lass
in the eyes in the eyes
a continuing munificence
an illumination an incandescence
a sudden light uplighting as if lifted
gently from a claustrophobic trance
into a hall of light celebration and dance

quiver

i am home to all arrows before they are spent
like me guilt free incapable of intent
my master's bow strung taut is always ready
his arrows borne by his will his power his skill
his targets subjects to his aim his royal whim:
in war - enemies; in sport - the warm-blooded kill
i mere witness to his play of mind and hand and eye
sly container of winged messages and pointed messengers
given flight by him in games of art and death and life
my own emptiness a hallowed holding pen
at the mercy of my deadly master-archer

who with no thought and less concern for me
determines which will be struck which will live which die
mine no choice but to serve and blindly worship him

early morning in may

the new day's transcendence
with the clarity of a dart

is appended to birdsong
from the insignificance
of their lightly feathered hearts
they shine like a footnote in dissertation
the subject of which is our insouciance
where the only true significance
is found in our good nature and their art

firefly I

in the jungle of night's persistence
you are a heartbeat a semaphore a cool light
a return to the new and early summer's insistence
in you there is no resistance
to the on and off on and off
of summer's changing dance

firefly II

in the jungle of night's persistence
you are a delicate signature a small semaphore
an urgent pulse of summer's lingering persistence
silent as a star's sigh in you there is no resistance
to the seasons' on and off and on again

night owl

punctuated by star light
as if held by calipers
that great black ball
of the night sky turns

as that small blue ball earth
that blithe little ship that glows
spins at its revolving core
and in this dark hour soars

a single barred owl takes notes
and calls who who who who
the cold silence pierced
by its near-silent flight

Love

god is love
a flying dove
a hand in glove
history his rod
birth/death his nod
if god is love

then Love is
the god of god

roadside raccoon

like a child's cuddle toy
curled into a sleeping ball
the roadside his gravel bed
puddle of blood from his snout
masked head bowed down
it's as if he shyly said
in a raccoon whisper
since raccoons never shout

“no prehensile futures
only ring-tailed pasts
they drove me down and out
beware my brothers and my sisters
the massacre will continue
their headlights can steal
your night eyes' view”
oh boy oh boy!

photo of penguins listening to a gramophone during shackleton's 1907 expedition to antarctica

on the last page of an essay by george steiner (cambridge 2006)
mourning the loss and ever-shrinking multiplicity
of 6,909 languages spoken in the world today
how hopi grammar is attuned to our physics or relativity
how tribes in the andes see their future as their past
since they can see what's behind them never what's ahead
how eskimos have a hundred words for every tint and state of snow
how argentine gauchos have words precise as our color charts
for the many-colored pelts of wild horses in their herds
how even dreams have their own surreal syntax
on the last page of his essay is an image of shackleton

he far right and on his left the great petunia of a gramophone
amid the treeless scree and slopes the ice and snow like rags
the frozen sea in the far beyond and front and center black and white
leaning forward huddled all in a semi-circle like farmers at a fair
a gathering of king penguins astonished at what they see and hear
leaning in disbelief intent on what they never saw or heard before
shackleton is much within himself and mesmerized as they or more
an interspecies rapture a moment of shared mystery and play
who more mesmerized by whom by what? the penguins or the man?

a questioning captured by those that mock us today when
strange species - the i-pod or the i-phone - do not speak to the pen
and one wonders who gave the cue to let those crazy penguins in

sunday

in the yellow iris of the sun
all the cows reclining in their bliss
in their cow-ness on their slope of green
the redwing on the wire just about to sing
looking down on morning glories aspiring
no need for you or me to wish or dream

all things on earth on wing on fire
shining in the open blue as they are
in this harmony this well-contented choir

while we sleep

the subversive quicksand pull
of the knowledge
that so many creatures
bugs fishes amphibians and mammals
are going about their business
all without college degrees
or a single willing witness
like some haunting horror feature
while we're deep asleep
they kill and eat one another
they cull one another's herds
bite off one another's heads
so efficiently before we wake
while we're in our comfy beds
we're totally clueless as we partake
of our scrambled eggs jam and toast
on our second cup of coffee or tea

in the manger

baby jesus in the manger warmed by holy breaths
of ox and cow and pig and ass and goat and sheep
watchful shepherds and three wise kings who followed a star
to behold the infant all prophets said would be truly IT
son of God made man on earth with promises to keep
- his royal nose crinkling at the smell of hay and steaming shit -
snuggles up to sip some comfort from Madonna Mary's virgin tit

fart

the big bowel's craft
the gaseous gaffe
the waft from aft
the righteous rectum's laugh

dust motes

what arbiter is to say
that dust motes ever ambient
abundant as they frolic in the barrels
of the celebrant morning sun
streaming down through a morning haze
riding the flame of the window pane
roiling rising early ascendants
are no greater than hoi polloi
just because they have no name
if only for a moment
do not feel a thing
very close to joy

robin's egg

she found the shell
a robin's egg

the greenest shade of blue
former cell to captive chick

who pecked his way out and through
on this chirping day in june

it was only half a shell
but half was gift enough for two

chipmunk grooming

his race stripes fine indication
of the pace at which he washes
if you were standing under him
you'd need a slicker and goulashes
his speedy paws on a mission
in a frantic flying race to groom
his dirty whiskers chin and face
he's quickest to achieve his goal
not one body part omission
to be the cleanest chipmunk in the room

rabbit

to your den shy rabbit
to your den
the hunter's hour is upon you
a raptor's moon is on the rise
be glad for your bed shy rabbit
and the comfort of your rabbit dreams
be glad for the blanket of night
for those with fangs and talons
and even sharper eyes are searching
starved for the scamper of warm blood
for those above your burrow
the foolish betrayed by starlight
the not-wise trying to hide
in the new-plowed furrows
who scurry for their lives
and will not see a new sun rise
to your den shy rabbit
to your den

farm pigeons

up on the corrugated roof of ramshackle barn
backs facing a meek sun peeping through the morning fog
all feathered pearls whites grays tight together to stay warm
below a calico an orange tabby and the farmer's old dog
as daylight brightens bolder and blue they begin to stir
cooing preening the entire flock awakes as one
facing a moon sharp as a cat's claw on the run
then suddenly surprised they explode all in a whirl

doors

"one door closes - another opens" shit!
the closed one only serves as a goad
you might as soon try eating it
or to brag about swallowing a toad
same tune for the next door down the road
closed or open still dragging the same old load

ruby throat

the humming bird's a most efficient ruby
effervescent purple luminescent emerald green
he visits every violet trumpet flower
on the catnip's high-rise flower tower
hovering in neutral he sips their nectar
each by each by each until he's done

flies off comes back to reconsider
and then convinced there's nothing left
shining in his deft ascending arc
swoops up and off humming joy in search
of other waiting pistils yet unzipped by him
his sole conspirator the tipsy distiller sun

sow

pink pink pink piggy pink
her name might be petunia or daisy
like haystack calhoun jackie gleason or other fatsos
for a massive sow she's very light on her feet
when her owner at last drives up the drive
she's like a dog who's languished all day long
a mona lisa smile - yes, smile - ear to ear that beguiles
her joy her master's return best buddy best friend
her pig body language all "hip hip hooray"
her curlicue corkscrew tail wagging gaily away
her trotters prancing so light and daintily
she shakes with joy she's all "o boy o boy o's"
she knows she's cute her trust in him is absolute
no fear not a care glad to be here glad to just be
she thinks her owner's tops her life will never end
that he will never send her to be rendered
into bacon sausage ham barbecued ribs or chops
sadly for her whatever her name she's wrong

in the lobby of the plaza athenee

black tie starched shirt
black jacket pressed slacks
black hair slicked straight back
in the lobby of the plaza athenee
the waiter on a simple mission
walks briskly from the hotel kitchen
past pink roses in their carrara urn
to the burnished darkness of the bar
in each hand he holds two lemons
their yellow such an apparition
so defying any academic erudition
that it's a shock that none pays any mind
a mystery that no one seems to find
until the fragrance of fresh-cut lemons
fills the air like the wish of some magician
who dreamed it for everyone to finally see
this stage these players this little play

this blink this small scene
this turning of a page

boar's bad dream

i'm a hog i'm a hog my mother taunts squealing it
shrieking it mewling it spewing it over and over
i'm a hog i'm a hog for all my neighbors to hear
i want to kill the old pathetic sow right here right now
her idiotic screams relentless i'm apoplectic full of rage
even with my mouth crammed full she's put me off my meal
i wish she'd act her age as i roll in mud between my chews
and slobber and fume and spit out corn and oinks of doom
and as i fill my face bag - a form of healing - i have to say
i do pause between tasty bites to watch her being dragged away

sparrow on park avenue meridian

from his meridian he's glaring at me
me in my taxi stopped at the light
a cocky bugger his glaring eyes black beads
if he could speak enraged i'm sure he'd say
"hey pal you've put me off my feed
thanks to you you lug i missed that juicy bug
and damn it now i've got to hunt another"
if he were bigger i know he'd pick a fight
please forgive - my feathered little brother

channeling casanova

in the voice of philip larkin

so call me a cad if it makes me glad
to want a girl unlike the girl
that married dear old dad
because in the end it makes no matter

i've played a good boy and bad
i've worshipped a few and used some like toys
and when i chose was an animal lay
and when not an inconsiderate lover

now that i'm older no wiser no nicer
and sagging of parts and weary of roles
no longer amused and stewed in the soups
of a number of so-called liaisons or marriages

i only believe in the power of power and gold
in finishing well before they even start
while happily hanging on to my loot
and not in glass slippers and gilt carriages

i want a young bitch who thinks i'm rich
and pretends to fall for my jabber
who doesn't need to be paid when i grab her
and moans when a fart like me jabs her

so call me a cad if it makes me glad
to want a girl unlike the girl
that married dear old dad
because in the end it makes no matter

the quaker graveyard off salt point

like herring that swim near shore at dark of moon
or cows reclining near the quaker graveyard at noon

or old mates waiting ever impatient for new tenants
one by one they come each to pay their final rent

whose lives and loves were too often haste and wasted motion
now have carved in cold tombstones some pretty notions

only to have each letter polished smooth by the rains
worn down erased by frosts winds and tidal waves of days

each new entrant's ghost failed proof of immortality
once-seen friends here now doomed to invisibility

fly

the fly on the page
of the book that i'm reading
is so delicately small

that a lower case 'e'
and a lower case 'i'
look eloquently tall

here's to good breeding
and most of all
the fly on the page

then it was

now becomes

then it was sand from the jersey shore in my running shoes
now it's freezing rain that seeps down my collar

then it was the spears of daffodils in a glass of water
now the fireflies jump start june in suburban backyards

then it was rain clouds and thundering high pressure fronts

now it's broken umbrellas loud as rainbows brightening the boulevards
then it was the pretty girl in the yogurt shop serving espresso
now she's in my bed discussing jazz and be-bop
then it was caesar's gallic wars and xenophon's ancient greece
now it's struggling to find the right declensions
then it was the moon pulling the window panes past clouds shut tight
now everything shines open as tomorrow's papers
then it was having everywhere to go only most impatiently so
now no day can unfold its mechanisms too slow
then it was looking out on all the greatness that has been will be
now it's wanting time and all the time to look in
then i was wanting every plump figurine that struck the bell in my eye's hungry machine
now an old jungle cat content to growl and let the scene be seen
then it was snow plows at midnight and breasts under angora sweaters
now it's re-reading journals and catalogs of dreams and line after line of yellowed letters
then it was hunger for glory the glory of crickets the glory of rain at dawn
now the leaves are taking a nap in the freezing ravines and boring yawns
then the urgent accounting of the IRS of energy sent daily dunning notices
now the uniformed collection agency is almost at the door
then it was my friend the white dog of joy running after me on the beach
now the bait store by frozen harbor is closed as history
then the black cat with the lantern eyes would search for me
now i'm overjoyed that he hasn't become a purring memory
then it was the hissing silences of snow and freezing rain on icy roads
now it's the shock of june as summer impolitely explodes
then it was total assent to the almighty ascent the assault on the summit
now it's looking down on the ants in the canyon below a long way to fall
now it's no more clowning around

syllables to sentences

paragraphs to pages

syllables are dirigibles
no one looks up for them
until they form a word
then mayhem is born

sentences are mad apprentices
ignors of doctors frankensteins
that once struck by lightning
become monsters with minds

paragraphs are kindling to be burned
in the fire of the eye of the reader
or aliens from other planets spurned
searching for their fearless leader

pages are whatever the rage is
flipped like hotcakes on a skillet
the next one gives the last one a goodbye kiss
and with a turn flat out kills it

can of red bull

watching an empty can of red bull
powered by a janitor's hose
washed in a river to the catch basin on 69th and park
it floated merrily down reminding me
of when i was eight and puddles were ponds
bathtubs were bays for plastic frogmen and balsa ships
when melted snow and runoff created curbside torrents
to be forded in goulashes dawdling on the way to school
when the world was the play thing of my imagination
when the quilt on my bed was the plains of Abraham or iwo jima
and all the battles were won when the enemy's plastic soldiers
lay overturned and when war was done not a drop of blood was shed
and the only gore spilled was inside our little savage heads

fame

fame is a bird
that chirps like a fool
drops a turd in your pool
then flies off without a word

fame is a slug
it slithers along
singing a viscous song
leaves a slime trail
dries up then is gone

fame is an elevator
that takes you to the highest floor
but fails to tell you
that at the top there's a trap door

that takes you to a non-stop drop
to the old incinerator

fame is a giraffe
that looks down on us all
eats the sweetest leaves
at the tops of the highest trees
and sashays away

fame is a waiter
who serves whomever she wishes
and halfway through your meal
leaves you without coffee or pie
with a bill a pile of dirty dishes
wondering why

the list of imaginary birds - new sightings

the opportunistic placenta warbler
the embryonic slur
the incomprehensible desiderata
the slouch grouse
the tweed hollerer
the bulbous blueberry tit wit
the aluminum-crested aardvark strangler
the sweaty rump roarer
the pileated poughkeepsie pine warbler
the insistent inkling
the terminal trout twaddler
the pussy willow penguin
the lascivious lark ladle
the antebellum ant snorkel
the indigenious inset
the tertiary tort twit
the mustard-winged mouse masher
the inventive blurt
the dumb blurt
the three-toed bombastic blurt
the blueberry blurt
the syncopated urban blurt
buddy's blurt
the great crested archimedean blurt
the wedgie warbler
the ostentatious beach owl
the downy rock snarl
the rougher rock snarl
the meretricious worm wrecker
the swollen-toed museum pipit

the aquamarine finagling finch
picasso's penis plover
the jamaican jamboree jay
the seditious skulk sparrow
the fuck it finch
the i'm above it dove
the blue-winged sun drummer
the langoustine lark
the intrepid stink wallower
the fritillary fungus finch
the uncanny udder sucker
the lesser lugubrious gripe
the senile hall swan
the hammer-toed bee buster
the blue-rumped institutional urgency
the policy parrot
the yes-nodding agree
the dithering twitter tit
the lothario tweeter
the throbbing carcass crow
the *plus ca change* pigeon
the *c'est vrais* vireo
the dilapidation dove
the chinky currency crow
the mantra mallard
the soot-winged charnel
the avid frog spermer
the white-throated once
the fire-eyed squirt gull
the snowy investment egret
the brillo-bellied pot scrub
the pugnacious puker
the tweezer-beaked whisker pull
the constipated vignette vulture
the pustulous boil lance
the blab buzzard
the stench swan
the hemorrhoid hawk
the herniated ball dragger
the pimple parrot
the malodorous mud puffin
the infinitesimal bog slurp
the smiling ant dodger
the gargantuan bog slurp
the no-curl curlew
the avuncular avaricious auk

the bleary-eyed pugnacious chat
the dunce-hat dabbler
the befuddled cross-eyed directionless tern
the godless godwit
the relentless grouse
the porridge partridge
the ?could-would? twerp
the lava-lamp lark
the popcorn phoebe
howdy doody's sapsucker
the gnarly bush tit
the ebony-vested tuxedo tanager
van gogh's blue-necked apostrophe
the suede-tailed herringbone mufti
the poncy fob-tailed smug
the fizz-beaked boo boo
the nattering dew booby
the slope-skulled cushion cardinal
the circumstantial pink plod
the thatch-dwelling weevil warden
the impecunious beggar wren
mary tyler moore's merganser
the pantaloons petrel
the silver-crested salamander shiv
the elvis ibis
the nutella nuthatch
meryl streep's meadow lark
the fuzzy throated fling
the south beach flip flop tern
the quarrelsome gallinule
the mump-checked mussel crusher
the sciatica sandpiper
the dusty ding dong dabbler
the seriously slop-toed shrike
the ovary oriole
the rooty kazootie coot
the exclamation point plover
washington's mumbly yelch
the dirt-striped mud dowager
the glabrous gonad dog wit
the blue-bellied google
the robin hood rook
the hulk heron
the sanctimonious screech
the Louisville shrike slugger
the burgundy bladder bunting

sigmund's poop stomper
dunkin's donut dabbler
the ontology owl
santa's slop tern
the dwarf beezele
the gimcrack raker
the vodka swear vulture
the grasping glunk
the liver-spotted early dine
hip hop's lesser hip hop tit
hip hop's greater hip hop tit
the shapely sturgeon strider
the caviar cormorant
the history hackle
the no turd bird
the whoa whoa myna
the shriek shrike
the dirigible duck
the shropshire sin bunting
the who's-your-daddy pip partridge
the lanyard waddler
the double-chinned chip warbler
the broad-rumped chump chickadee
the post-modern paraphernalia pigeon
the golden-eyed minnow mallard
the parenthesis auk
the pearl-winged knit knit
the roadside samaritan sparrow
the black-backed electric sandpiper
the lazuli louse beak
the corn-flake-collared spoonbill
the long-billed louse stabber
the hobo harpy
gilligan's grouchy goatsucker
the short-lived ghost stint
the eurasian willow wander
the evanescent cheezitz
the ecuadorian chee chee
the common suburban cinnamon toast cruncher
the tuba turkey
the hat-in-hand hider
the dusky dim wit
scooter's blue tooting coot
clarabelle's catastrophic canvasback
the oregonian dun doodit
wendy's whippoorwill wanker

the shovel-footed red rummage
thucydides's tinsel-torsoed thunder farter
the louisiana loss albatross
the subservient ha ha
the bavarian stew skimmer
the horned hornet horney
the chuckle thwart
clapper's rough-winged end it
the night flying full stop
the gallinaceous blunt-beaked conclusion
the brazilian oy
the stop already auk
the tennessee that's all thrush
dostoyevsky's done-now duck
the ruby-throated interminable last chirp
the solitary blind enuf