

# Economies of Scale



**Gregory J. Furman**

**1997**

## **sidewalks of new york**

blue jay head  
on sidewalk  
another blue  
spring day

## **private school girls in a line**

museum bound  
red jacket B's  
pony tails  
may breeze

## **potted geraniums in a window**

looking out  
while dressing  
the buildings  
red clay and green  
sing **fortune**

not shout

## **shining penny**

shining penny  
shining penny  
seen from a moving bus

## **white throated sparrow**

you  
and the waves

a duet  
two dancers  
one of them breaking  
one of them you

## **direction**

why always roads  
why not paths

## **our century**

this age  
is not  
the age  
of wood block prints  
etchings and engravings  
we're suspicious of precision  
we like the broader stroke

## **positioning is all**

newspaper  
rain of print  
under spring trees

## **emily dickinson**

she looks out  
of the fishbowl  
and in

## **engraving of dead child with skulls at the metropolitan museum of art**

Beham's dead child  
with drained hourglass  
and skulls  
all traditional symbols  
of memento mori

## **annie dillard**

i do  
no wrong  
but sowing  
joy

## **norman mailer**

i exert  
my will  
to control  
their displeasure

and vet  
my rage

**dylan thomas**

i burn  
so painfully  
i sing

**edgar allan poe**

i bury  
myself alive  
to join the company  
of brutal mysteries  
one burial removed

**it's found**

it's found  
if you're looking  
without expecting too much  
without expecting anything  
without expecting  
it's found  
and then it's lost  
it's found  
and then  
it's found

**stephen king**

my fear contagious  
i scare the universe  
alive

**you can't go high**

**if you can't go deep**

when the dogs run  
on the kelly green sward  
of dog hill  
hill of joy -  
sun streaming down bright

on the lime embankment -  
then the robins sing  
and their voices  
turn their red breasts rust  
belly up cocky in any race  
dispelling all thoughts  
of dust to dust  
then i see an aging walker  
eccentric hat cocked  
and his wife  
walking happily up the hill  
into the setting sun  
and cry like a passenger plane  
red flags waving  
to another's red flames  
haven't you had conversations  
that feel like this  
like you're forever reaching  
and cackling like crazy birds  
as dogs and robins  
tails wagging aloof  
fur and feathers  
wagging good-bye  
to a red setter sun  
barking a merry woof  
when the dogs run  
on the kelly green sward  
of dog hill

**trio**

newfoundlander  
black lab  
green lawn on red sweater

**chinese boy pushing his own stroller**

prince black bangs  
tacking off his mother's shoe  
a moving barrier  
from the street  
all smiles

everything new

**pride**

hot dog  
refuses roll and mustard  
key lime pie  
refuses lime  
lock refuses  
key

**beauty**

dog walking  
a blind man  
buying black coffee  
in the gawking morning sun

**greed**

toothed maw  
of time clock's time  
devouring machine  
more want  
want more

**dogs on montauk beach**

for every dog at play  
the sparrow sings  
a song  
a day

**despair**

blind crow  
flying blind  
to the archer's black bow  
hunting peregrine  
white white dove  
joyfully wed  
in the harrier's red glove

**old japanese wood block print**

the wave -  
carved is caught  
in the mahogany grain  
the seed -  
caught is carried  
on each ocean wave  
the heart -  
each cut married  
to the carver's pain

**ocean side cliff swallows**

skimming dry sand  
for flies rising up from dry kelp  
aerodynamic models  
of winged self help

**new jeep on beach**

sunday morning  
red jeep  
owner proud as a beep  
red bandanna on girl jogging  
oceans calm  
seagulls squonking  
red jeep  
owner proud as a beep

**envy**

masks of hunger  
cemented into high-rise  
scraping the empty sky  
unable to fly

**old shoe on the beach**

yesterday  
all our fears  
all our dreams  
all out of reach  
mean no more  
today

than the play  
of waves  
with an old shoe  
on the beach

**when i lost my hearing in one ear**

when i lost my hearing  
in one ear  
i imagined  
the roar of waves  
the roar of silence  
my very own  
ocean  
in my head

**the red when you close your eyes  
and look up at the sun**

the red of your dreams  
the red of technicolor schemes  
the red of a blow to the brain  
the red that's the source of all pain  
the red with a center  
that's you and that's not  
red in the eye  
red on the tooth  
red of the feeding ocelot  
the red of in between  
the red of you are  
the red of you're not  
the red of an assassin's gun  
the red of your pulse's dreams  
the red of the sound of a spanish guitar  
the red when you close your eyes  
and look up at the sun

**the significance of meaning  
from a lawn chair's perspective**

the significance of meaning  
is much over played  
as long as you're breathing



life continues to be mean  
to ring in all of our ears,  
to behave badly and rave  
to be incoherently coherent  
demeaned and demeaning  
frayed fried subpoenaed or flayed  
no big thing  
why not sing

**red-winged blackbird on blossoming pear**

the two know nothing  
of one another  
neither cares  
red winged blackbird  
on blossoming pear  
the two know everything  
of one another  
pink blossoms and song  
new month dancing  
to their flowering dares

**apple tree among scrub pine**

only the apple tree  
among scrub pine  
sees each blossom  
as a neon sign  
only the apple tree  
among scrub pine  
sees each change of season  
as reason  
not to agree  
not to rhyme

**welcoming spring**

**on the way home from montauk**

one says hello with the eyes  
to the softest greens  
to buttercups, dandelion,  
to snow blossom, apple, pear and lilac  
a quiet form

of silent greeting  
to personal greenings

**tired benches**

benches  
usually look tired  
tired and gray  
having weathered all weathers  
and a hundred rear ended karmas  
of the seated exhausted  
each and every day

**while now**

while now  
unfolds  
worth watching  
all new

**suburban logic**

uncut grass growing  
closest to the cyclone fence  
has the safest view  
of the other side

**what meadowlarks say at dusk**

new white moon  
skies matisse blue  
night rise soon  
so few so few

**a look and style**

as much as one  
denies it  
it all requires  
a look  
a style  
and constant effort  
or the demons rule  
instantly unhesitant  
to fill every vacuum

**when i look down my block**

forty taxis  
fleeing a man on a bicycle

**conjunction**

stars  
in wet cement

**It is is**

let me  
put it to you  
this way  
the way  
it is  
is

**the yellow fields of breughel the elder**

the wheat is cut  
neat like a wpa mural  
the peasants break bread  
drink wine and watch the horizon  
sleep in the heat of the hour  
pee without a urinal  
centuries dance on

under low dutch skies  
you can almost hear  
the harvest grasshoppers  
not far from the cold dutch shore  
sawing their spiked insect cellos  
still spitting their rusty beer  
centuries dance on

**the feeling of the adirondaks**

black infant hands of raccoons  
the heads of frogs  
the sharp smell of pine  
the cry of dancing loons  
umbrella heads of wild mushrooms

rising up from cedar forest floor  
owls hooting somber tunes  
the soft smell of rotting logs  
dusky tree line from canoe  
the bark of startled dogs  
flame of a thin crescent moon  
trance of campfire's smoky runes  
sun and smell of smoke on damp clothes  
knocking knocking on memory's door

**lust**

train  
with flashing phallus

**the memory of dogwood  
petals in my mother's yard**

all there  
whites and ivory  
covering the lawn  
my mother's hair  
whiter

**my nephew timothy's face**

let's keep it terse  
and avoid any sappy verse  
i can only say  
i look at that face  
and finding hope  
and joy bright at play  
can't curse  
this often dismal universe

**on passing from a vista to a wall**

day's light  
sunny day  
river bridge  
cubist blacks  
the vanishing perspective  
of shining railroad tracks  
city sky and skyline give

the train's dark clack clack clack  
even in that shut-in millisecond  
on passing from a vista to a wall  
hope of new windows at play

**rain coat - timothy's home work assignment**

rain  
plus  
coat  
equals  
raincoat

**the smell of horse shit**

the smell of horse shit  
at the base of central park  
is quintessential  
new york new york

**prune danish**

glazed bowel detonator

**pebbles casting shadows at sunrise on montauk beach**

the shining pebbles on the beach  
flung to shore from sand bar by high seas  
do not sing far from each wave's reach

**pansies**

determined faces  
tiny catcher mitt leaves  
brightest whites yellows and greens  
catching cheering crowds of sun's bright beams

**rain on the cabin windows of a 747**

can't be like tears  
too cliché  
but they are  
the entire craft weeping  
from the outside in  
everything silver drops to the ground  
all planes crying

all planes flying

**man holding a sign that says "hungry"**

standing in the rain  
soaked without a hat  
past three strikes  
at bat and fat

**three women reading their newspapers  
on a bench in central park**

the three sisters  
controlling fates  
perusing business, metro,  
leisure and the arts  
turning the pages of centuries  
cutting each of our lives  
long medium or short  
determining  
who knows why  
when we start  
when we stop  
what we sing  
and where we go

**babies' faces**

always a little bug eyed  
heads a little wobbly  
most times naked  
as turkeys waiting for the roaster  
on the pedestals of their necks  
all cheeks and cherub lips  
all plump and pink  
forever hungry  
a little gobbly  
clean slates born ever ready  
come powder or stink  
for life's roller coaster ride

**romantics**

the hearts

they inscribe in sand  
last only as long as an 'and'

**quiet as the bored dead**

as the gold sun came up and over  
the red red mesa  
saguaros stopped talking  
coyotes stopped stalking  
scorpions stopped walking  
all stand watch  
as the morning light  
flickers off the hummingbird's emerald head  
quiet quiet  
quiet as the bored dead  
the bored and sleeping dead

**pansies II**

brightly colored lions  
ferocious cartoon colors roar  
garden jungle characters  
just beyond the reach of civilization's  
staid old english garden door

**when they grow gold**

every jeweler  
suddenly starts to feel  
extremely old  
extremely cold  
extremely no longer wealthy  
the entire currency system  
will suddenly pale and turn unhealthy  
when they grow gold

**when strangers nod their heads**

when strangers nod their heads  
it's like catching a glimpse  
of another life  
beyond the dead  
come back in an instant  
the living no longer dead

**dreaming you're away and waking up  
singing "you are my sunshine"**

the feeling of away  
in your dream  
not a good one  
singing sunshine sunshine  
my only sunshine  
you are mine  
waking in tears  
on the verge of a scream  
missing you  
each and every day  
before and after all my dreams  
my only sunshine  
after all these years

**welcoming the catastrophe of your life**

sometimes yes  
is all that differentiates  
being damned  
from being blessed

**men and beasts in the arena**

the idea of tragedy  
the horror after horror  
is based on the truth  
that men and beasts in the arena  
continue to tear one another  
limb from limb  
and on the idea  
that the eye of one  
the compassionate one  
can still summon a stinging tear  
year after year  
ear for an ear  
tooth for a tooth  
while refusing to sing  
as if it all were a joke  
or a not so comic cosmic hoax



### **proud ridicule**

how many decisions  
fine instincts and dreams  
are flouted silenced or duped  
by fear of proud ridicule  
demon of cruel  
grout of the sheepish group  
snout of the paralyzing ghoul

### **the color of the barrel cactus**

the color of the barrel cactus  
is perpendicular  
to the emerald green of hummingbirds  
and strange scaling dryness  
of the lizard's scuttling words

### **why directional symbols are often red**

the color of blood  
blushing information  
red rose flood  
the instant of erudition

### **sharing our idea of home**

it's always a safe place  
though not always physical  
even the prisoner's cell  
bears a trace of home  
as all prisoners' pulses  
scheme and race  
keeping time so well  
their home in hell

### **on losing an idea**

yes  
it's brilliant  
will change the world  
what was it?

### **guess what's wrong with this picture**

hell  
yes

**color tv & corona extra at the phoenix airport**

makeovers  
blue crane on horizon  
dusty rose of mountain range  
landing planes  
forever turning our lives around  
every flight day  
a new person  
another change

**single engine**

over ragged mountain jaws  
flaming cactus phoenix  
flying above known laws  
no tricks  
no draws  
no applause  
a single engine  
triumph  
flaming cactus phoenix  
over ragged mountain jaws

**lost poems**

our lives  
waiting to be  
to be found

**the ocean is a form of wine**

inebriating  
the ocean is a form of sound  
infinitely classical  
infinitely round  
the ocean is a form of wine  
each wave a note  
keeping drunken time

keeping time

**pulling back the screen door  
so the air flows in**  
simply pulling back the screen door  
so the air flows in  
can be an exercise in subtlety  
elusive as the cheshire's grin  
revolutionary as the ocean's roar  
suddenly ennobling  
like planting beating hearts  
in men of tin

**the joy of knowing you'll never be famous**  
the joy of knowing  
you'll never be famous  
is that it leaves you  
something someone  
to aspire to  
to be yourself  
in all you say and do

**incoming night tide**  
warm pewter surf  
rope of stars  
night bathers bobbing  
under red rising mars  
under black waves astral turf

**walking on the beach with the fog blowing in**  
small groups of people  
couples holding hands  
a man and his dog  
emerge from the cottony bank  
time travelers from other lands  
gone as suddenly as they appear  
the entire visible  
beach fully invisible

**watching a large woman watching the ocean**

she was created for the beach  
like picasso's giant femmes  
generous and expansive  
she sits on a massive driftwood log  
stands facing the sea  
watches a crow  
disappear into the fog  
she seems to talk to herself or pray  
to inhale the ocean and the day  
to embrace each wave's swell  
clearly she is moved by the sea  
and unbeknownst to her  
we are moved as well

**the painting of two gulls at a distance  
and their reflections in the wet sand at dusk**

it will never be painted  
the fog coming up the breathing beach  
dusk on fog on shade  
the dark shapes of riders and horses  
emerging from the mist  
the entire universe out for a tryst  
wearing the seasons shades  
of sand rosa rugosa and sawgrass  
the gulls not quite silver  
not quite pearl  
the shimmering whites  
platinum folds of waves  
cries of least terns  
rowing past us  
ricocheting off wet sands  
vanishing as surely  
as the buzzing dreams of dragonflies  
as the sea sparrow's song  
in shades of taupe and tan  
swallowed insistently by  
the fog coming up the breathing beach.

**one bodhisattva conceives the dream in all its intricacy,**

**lives and dies unknown; the next inherits his dream,  
gains fame and fortune**

which of two  
has true happiness  
the one of mind and vision  
unrecognized unknown  
or the one of voice and fame  
which of two  
are you  
which game of happiness  
which true

**attention deficit disorder**

never used to have  
such a fancy name  
used to be known  
as stupidity  
not being capable  
of holding a thought  
or anything else  
that matters  
can be bought  
or inspires

**some uses of children**

they purportedly take things less seriously  
remind us that people will take care of you  
encourage us to laugh  
amuse themselves mostly  
know exactly what they want us to do  
unlike me and you  
they deserve a better zoo

**the purple blue flags of irises**

standing sentinels  
leaves green bayonets  
against the dawn  
drenched in dew  
like diamonds caught in nets  
gun barrel purple

gun barrel blue  
standing sentinels  
in the morning sun  
no regrets no regrets

**saying good-bye to montauk  
with fog blocking the view of the sea**

weather refuses to behave  
fog sets in  
in tops of trees  
blocks views of tumbling waves  
confusing grumbling gulls  
and bumbling bees

**the primitive in art**

the wish to shatter  
all the old forms of order  
and self-imposed restrictions  
on ways of seeing  
causes certain artists to go back  
to echoes of the cave  
abandoning traditional perspectives  
they wear their new roughness  
like jewelers display  
solitary platinum diamond rings

**reflecting on the medieval illustration of a man tearing  
through the night sky and discovering another firmament**

the thought that on the other side  
to be rent  
like a stage set or movie scrim  
is another brighter world  
another mightier word  
another cooler greener wold  
is the dream of an endless tide  
that waits like seasons  
bright or grim  
to be unfurled  
like a flag or a gift sent  
from another world

for some unknown reason  
in some undiscovered season

**poetry is a way of looking  
a transcript of the honestly thought or found**

poetry is a way of looking  
through the limited various  
lenses that we share  
a way of stopping motion  
to view the circle in the square  
it is value less  
the totem money quest  
as if that will ever buy  
time or health or happiness  
it's a primitive form of stewing  
a mental way of cooking  
discovery of the heart  
of being there  
finding points of rest  
a stifling of commotion  
a stilling of the monkeys of excess

**the purpose of memory**

beyond getting from a to b  
and recognizing those we love  
it's a feeble tool  
most artists lie and make it up  
those that say they don't  
do

**mortal thoughts**

no matter how many  
mortal thoughts  
are few  
having nothing  
to do  
but be  
some small  
consoling company  
for you and me

**the obelisk in central park**

stone needle  
ancient vertical letter  
of hawk pelican and baboon  
sheaves of wheat and feathers  
the omnipresent eye  
erected to celebrate  
another alphabet  
another rune  
in the setting sun of dynasties  
Ra's memory of isis osiris  
eternal stolen phallus of stone  
transported to New York  
still as the desert  
standing hieroglyphic  
alone  
so soon

**innisfree**

out is free  
in is not  
in is free  
out is glee

**fresh wood chips**

fresh wood chips  
words  
for the horse paths  
of our imaginations

**theloniuss monk and the objective correlatives  
of t.s. elliot**

it's not just the notes  
or the singular rain drops  
that define the weathers of music  
it's what's between them  
what's left out  
that counts  
has clout



feels felt for the first time  
follows the acappella  
accompaniments of ears  
concentric circles  
widening rings  
pebbles dropped in lakes  
stones thrown in ponds  
all breaking and making  
reinventing new forms of calm

**why certain phrases insist on hanging around like  
cartoon bubbles in the mind**

pop up tarts  
or three dimensionals  
those constructs found in children's' books  
be they dragons or palaces  
certain phrases insist on hanging around  
like cartoon bubbles in the mind  
waiting to get out  
like wine from chalices  
dangerous as guns  
from their obscure dungeons  
plucked from obscurity  
they lead parades of prisoner words  
blinking from the light  
down the streets  
of other peoples' minds  
knocking on random receptive doors  
until they breath in the sun  
curled up like cats on chairs  
or tired dogs on dappled floors

**deer drinking seen from a speeding car**

phlox in bloom  
so blue  
hillside appears to mimic sky  
with their waving blue  
sun sloping down to pond

sparkling sushi seaweed green  
deer drinking  
reflections rippling with each draught  
hooves meeting watery hooves  
soon the unseen cautious fox  
drinking shyly so shyly  
will be caught in this mirror too

**what is it about Broadway musicals that ring totally false**

as much as we strive for heroism  
and need to glorify  
our hours  
our short stays  
the absence of memory from past lives  
prevents us from having a better perspective  
on all those contrived hooplas  
foreshortened time spans  
too grand passions and force fed feelings  
life cries false!  
contradicts this mass melodrama  
why can't the grand catharsis  
be plainer simpler  
not so nervous  
why the hyper song  
why the phony waltz

**staying calm in the pursuit of the elusive dream**

wanting it to happen  
will not necessarily accelerate  
the pace of realizing the elusive dream  
the unfolding of fate  
is in the steadfast hands  
of those whose pace is present  
in the always present  
of those who muster the patience  
to act and at the same time wait

**after the red-tailed hawks**

**and their nestlings left their high-rise nest\**  
the rough sticks of their high-rise nest

sharply miss their gleaming ravenous eyes  
the hungry bustle of their departed hunting guests

**the goldfish of matisse**

lily pond green  
orange gold fish  
arapaho earth  
on cardboard

**the idea of romance**

the idea of romance  
contradicts life  
experience  
a black dog wearing his leash

no master  
watching the sun  
listening to the birds  
napping on and off

**so bright**

as the sun fringed setter running  
as the man roller-blading  
the couple walking  
the sitters on lawns  
the readers on benches  
the sunlight on summer lawns  
flies by  
so manicured  
so bright

**roundel with bust of wild man or other rustic**

why rustic  
why wild  
because mounted above  
a 16th century tile frieze  
he looks down  
on 15th century limoges tiles  
and six bronze medals  
with heads of nobles

a dragon recently slain  
and a cupid  
riding a subservient fish  
commemorate the visit  
of dauphin francois  
to lyon in 1533  
why rustic  
why wild

**the battle of the sabittini and the conference at achilles' tent - wool silk  
weft by pasquier grenier of tornai**

there are two  
mortally wounded knights  
one at the top of the tapestry  
spear plunged through his armored heart  
the second  
shaft of an arrow  
buried to feather in his throat  
horses more horrified by war  
than the glassy eyed soldiers  
caught like drowning men  
breathing in destruction first hand  
tossing in the sea of battle  
some flowers remain uncrushed  
mostly those courting  
the king's removed  
and silken damask tent

**that which i should have done i did not do (the door)**

roses encrust battered door  
hand grips lace  
handkerchief pulled  
offstage  
by an unknown force  
two cala lilies  
too callous lilies

without energy  
exhausted mentally and physically  
and fat

sitting amongst the masters  
and wanting to paint  
and sing and dance  
like that  
like that.

**advice from an artist to himself  
and anyone else who might listen**

find your pallet  
and paint it  
till death  
with as much  
as one is given  
no want of praise  
greeting the days  
happy to give  
happy to get

**two worn out brooms**

at the top of the trash bin  
one black one white  
good and evil  
day and night  
well beyond sweeping  
incapable of weeping  
a draw  
so far

**wanda's photos of our backyard in new york**

if it weren't for the society building  
we'd have better sun  
the mirrors in the back  
against the fence  
reflect the latest addition  
to our pigeon family  
the house sparrows and finches  
can't figure out the birdhouses  
city birds  
but this year the robin's song  
every morning and every dusk

reminds me of how i miss them  
during the still of february  
when we might as well be  
in the adirondaks  
where winter is cold and far too long

**photo of picasso which everyone knows**  
holding a tiny owl  
the eyes less searing  
than his own

**girl watching her boyfriend piss**  
standing  
emptying his bladder  
like a spanish wine skin  
on the trees  
two steps from their picnic blanket  
his girlfriend observing  
it is what it is  
as if it were a soccer match  
piss of pisses  
pee of pees.

**the spike shall not forget the forge**  
**the plank not the darkly woods**  
still ringing in my ears  
is the sound of the hammer  
sending sparks flying off the anvil  
like the sweat flying  
off the blacksmith's back

still buzzing in mine  
is the swearing whine  
of the maddened chainsaw  
and the memory of sharper tearings  
through my fragrant bleeding bark

now we are married  
in the wall of this cabin  
listening to the winds of our memories

pretending to hear one another  
as snow and sleet marry the early winter dark

now the sound of the hammer  
the sounds of our fall  
are joined in our joining  
as the morning glories' shadows  
dance lightly up our summer wall

**algonquin july 1997**

the rhythms of the wind  
water lapping on rocks  
leaves trembling  
are they being drawn  
to winter or  
the one who asks  
summer

**dust of rain**

if it had been winter  
under the big sky  
of algonquin  
a silver pewter  
dusting  
as the finest snow  
but summer rain  
a silver squall  
the wind swelling  
great white pine  
and granite shore  
the dry land  
asking for more

**algonquin loon I**

you are guiding us  
back again and back  
winged spirit of all things wild  
big lake bird  
elegant your formal white and black  
riding low in rough waters

silhouette visible for miles  
even on troubled inlets and bays  
your laughing echo raves  
bordering on crazed  
as outlaw winds panic the waves  
your laughter is guiding us  
back again and back  
your red eye catching the setting sun  
like one red cathedral window pane  
catching the setting sun at Chartres  
back again and back  
into the cathedral of Algonquin's dark



**love's markers in our lives**

with each small love  
a tiny marker  
a celestial guide  
to darkest night is transcribed  
transfixed like some luna moth in memory  
we build the constellations personally  
star by star by star  
and every distinguishing song  
of birds of every feather  
none given to know  
whether this be the last  
night or spring dusk  
so holding on  
we all muse about  
thinking more before we act  
living more methodically  
making time to love  
chewing slower  
as if to make the finite feast last  
alium old fashioned iris  
simple dandelion water lily  
azelea lilac morning glory  
if you take your microscope  
and drill down and further down  
you'll never again find the feathered past  
what makes it fly  
what makes them bloom  
come flights of plain or fancy  
all you own in common  
with the simple mourning dove  
calling softly calling softly  
is the morning's simple glow  
a beautiful fact  
like the hand of a loved one  
in the softest leather glove

**dog rolling on newly cut lawn**

i cast my legs and paws  
up to the sky

running upside down  
like a thoroughbred  
paws race  
paws pause  
reaching beyond  
my dog self  
on my back i slide  
i fly  
i glide

**look: the setting sun, my friend**

yours too  
if you open your eyes  
you will see  
the entire universe testifies  
through and through  
to luminosity

**conversations with the insignificant**

a speck  
a breathing of star mote  
a fly on a calico cat's nose  
a flash of summer sun  
a shadow under april skies  
the cry of a gull  
one wave  
one solitary candle  
snuffed by an evening wind  
a wet feather on the beach sand  
a hollow shell  
waiting for the ocean breeze  
one last glance at the stars  
one staccato note  
an event ignored  
a minnow's rise  
an insect disappears  
a single sneeze  
a tick of one second's hand  
a pride of gnats  
whose beggar dreams

of the infinite  
buzz in the dark before  
the light's switched on  
a hundred million years

**manitou moose**

his eyes met ours  
even at two hundred yards  
from our silent canoe  
we could feel his grand stare  
we could see his hulk shift back  
but not before submerging his massive rack  
to take another bite of cattail tubers  
and only then fading  
back into the forest dark  
into the ground fog  
where the chocolate of his wet coat  
matched the shadows  
of the white pines and balsams' bark

**the one lake calling and waiting for us all**

there is always one lake  
calling and waiting for us all  
this is the lake of our dreams  
the lake we have always wanted to see  
the lake just after the last lake  
of all lakes the bluest of blue  
waters perfect full and deep  
waters calm and glad  
waiting only for you  
waiting for your dad  
waiting for me

**algonquin loon II**

sister to the waters and the winds  
i have borne my fuzzy chicks  
without complaint on my ample back  
haunting shores with my hunting laughter  
through all and every changing weather

grateful for the simple dry and warmth  
provided by my insulating feathers  
there is nothing that i lack

**trillium near the cliff face  
overlooking manitou bay**

i never dream of leaving  
my only joys  
day by day  
are the gray mistings of rain  
upon my white petals' face  
the view of the distant bay  
mirror to a slyly smiling moon  
moved by the algonquin wind  
the morning sun and afternoon cloud race  
the osprey and the tumbling crows at play  
i never dream of leaving  
nor have i ever dreamt of leaving  
this my rocky barren place  
this my leafy cradle  
this my leafy shroud and grave

**what the kudzu said**

it's a given  
i am insidious  
gypsy vine and pauper  
to kill me requires imagination  
it's my nature  
i revel  
in my own obstinacy  
and the company  
of my victim trees  
my nurture  
i am the author  
of their inevitable  
doom and asphyxiation  
take glee  
in their aborted bloom  
in their bare leave  
i blanket them in green snow

they will be dust  
before me  
long before i agree to go  
to predatory heaven

**why dogs howl when ambulances drive by**

instinctively they howl and cry  
in sympathy for their master man  
their fuzzy jowls lifted to the sky  
they worry that there'll be no one there  
and in lieu of human company  
alone confused and wondering why  
with no one left no one left  
to open the all important  
the all important dog food can

**awed by the bunglings of destiny**

awed by the bunglings of destiny  
he packed his bags  
said good-bye to his dogs and cat  
pressed his suit  
washed the dishes in the sink  
and eagerly swam out to sea  
into the early morning fog  
wearing a felt fedora  
over his yankees baseball hat  
mistaken by beach walkers for a drifting log  
drunk like a fly in a sea of steaming grog

**she refused to be forgotten**

in his eightieth year  
he could still remember  
the taste of her mouth  
outside snow was falling on the frozen lawn  
it was december  
they kissed for hours in the stairwell  
forgetting all their fears  
her parents having corned beef and cabbage upstairs  
totally unawares  
they never said farewell

he could still remember  
the taste of her mouth  
in his eightieth year

**heart poem**

my heart to your heart  
my heart by your heart  
my heart from your heart  
my heart for your heart  
my heart to your heart  
my heart your heart

st. virgil's salzburg

**dozing off to the chirping of crickets**

the nearest star is alpha centauri  
the sun 93 million miles away  
the moon is out in time to greet the dusk  
the armored crickets do exactly as they must  
sensing the shorter days won't last  
feeling the blue cool of approaching night  
they fiddle and they play  
they fiddle and they play  
while the solemn carpenter ant  
makes his busy way  
through sunset and the chapel  
arbor of the meadow grass  
sensing the shorter days won't last  
they fiddle and they play  
the end of summer away

**finite mind peering at the iridescence of the unknowable**

having attempted and employed all the tools  
telescopic microscopic photographic  
journalistic pugilistic holistic  
ecstatic photostatic linguistic  
voyeuristic heuristic atavistic  
artistic arrangements of mirrors  
beakers and tiny petri dishes  
holding whole a society's essence

instruments containing tiny shards of colored glass  
room-sized magnifiers  
he finally came to regard his prying presence  
as a tiny multilayered half cultured illusion  
a fleeting irritation in the larger world  
a wish which inevitably would produce  
something shining brave and round

**sunlight on lemon slice in crystal glass at 30,000 feet**

the tiny bubbles of sparkling water  
clinging to the half-submerged translucent lemon slice  
congregate to celebrate the single ray of sun  
like small crystal balls foretelling a descent  
the plane tilts to the horizon  
the labyrinth of one fingerprint  
a fossil of one finger's touch  
appears and disappears  
as the sun a lemon luminous  
sets in the tinted glass of stratosphere  
in the failing falling light  
in the brief flight down to zurich

**dog drop suspended by a hair -  
dedicated to the aesthetics of charles baudelaire  
(in the manner of frank o'hara)**

oh dogs! oh doggies' doings!  
the white poodle  
one of three  
the other two black as lead  
all as happy and as curious as can be  
finishes his business  
dutiful his bored bending walker  
dutifully does her duty of follow-up  
failing to notice or choosing to ignore  
thinking perhaps there's more  
one solitary glistening remainder  
hanging from the white poodle's posterior hair  
suspended like a christmas bauble  
suspended in the shining september morning air  
oh! the finite beauties of walks in parks!

the eccentricities of furry things on fours  
that bark and bark!  
oh dogs! oh doggies' doings!

**empathy for lonely clocks**

in bend sinister  
nabakov tells of two clocks  
in a deserted cottage  
"alone intact pathetically sticking  
to man's notion of time  
after man has gone"  
tick tock tick tock  
ding dong ding dong  
genius consists of taking stock  
and the habit of knowing  
the infinite value of time  
tick tock tick tock

**the moon making fish scales  
on the sea's shining tiles**

it is like that  
no painter no poet  
breathes life into a scene  
more vividly than those  
who were there and lived to tell

the night as dark as a farmer's well  
and after a little while  
suddenly to see to see  
the moon making fish scales  
on the sea's shingled tiles

**feeding sparrows in salzburg**

it is raining in salzburg  
and the town's tourists  
with their reds and navy blues  
pale pink white or yellow umbrellas  
are crossing the pedestrian bridge  
unmindful of the river salach's hues  
there are bicycles everywhere



and people riding them in the rain  
the black-eyed sparrows  
hop in the ornamental bushes  
homely wet and brown  
insignificant but with bright determined voices  
larger than their size foretells  
the imported english rain rains on  
the italians germans and the french  
the waiters dressed in white and black  
placing burgundy table cloths  
on white wrought iron tables  
pacing to the sound of rain  
on clear varnished leaves  
tapping shyly on canvas canopies  
the view across the river  
of st. virgil cathedral's dome  
the military mass of hohensalzburg fortress  
the quack of ducks  
repeated and untamed  
cast their feathered spell  
foretelling the end of an era  
the end of rain  
the rush of obligatory japanese pilgrims  
making their way back to package tour hotels  
like characters from hokusai or hiroshige  
they fly the sparrows to your hand  
after asking for their crust of bread  
they are our friends but smaller lighter  
and we ignore them mostly  
the river salach is the color of milky jade  
hearing only german spoken  
from the rained on passersby  
and the tolling of the carillon  
is strikingly akin to meeting mozart  
in some bavarian forest glade  
his ancient voice and theirs hushed  
"hear me!"they whisper  
in the dark and green  
in the oils of Pietro Lorrenzini (?) 1763  
the humble sparrows

the young prodigy  
contradict our time and sense of time  
and cast their spells  
"hear me!" they whisper  
carried by swift waters of times relentless  
the silent clavichord knows and waits  
forever mindful residents  
larger than their lives foretold  
and certain things in salzburg  
are not as you and I might dream

**this is no poem**

this is no mere poem  
my friend my life  
this is me breathing  
here with you  
by your side  
pick me up  
open me  
like a locket or a door  
on the other side of your eyes  
beyond the cavern that is time  
i live quietly waiting for you  
for the touch of your warm hands  
for the brightness of your eyes  
i too have wished and dreamed  
as hundreds of others before  
and here with you  
as one in a hundred thousand leaves  
i am swept up and completed  
eager as the soft woods  
waiting for snow or rain or shine  
glad to sit in this cheering light  
in this day and age  
glad for your life  
as i hope you for mine  
as a husband or a wife  
as a lover of your ideas  
of which i am now one  
glad for the right of your gaze

falling lightly  
and forever on my open page.

**chicago october 17, 1997**

**a hill of sunflowers**  
**on the way to o'hare**  
the sounds of traffic  
spew of truck and van revvings  
are a bilious contradiction  
to your warm dark faces  
back to back snake of red tail lights  
smell of exhaust  
and the day's exhausted from another test  
and you stand watching the sunlight  
move sullenly through the ground smog  
a commuity of raised heads  
lions of this fetid rise  
your height and heart shaped limbs  
tattered and amazed looking over  
the programmed infinities  
of the hard driving east and west bound  
raising your regal heads above it all  
mane of yellow petals like rays of sun  
giving the eyes of commuters  
an early fall late summer rest  
and each and every one of you  
proud proud of your golden hardiness

**the wet of the nose of the english spaniel**  
black and white and chosen  
like one old museum photograph  
or the late fall blooming rose  
the wet of the nose of the english spaniel  
presses cold against my open palm

