

SPINDRIFT AND SMALL GOODBYES



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November 24, 2005 to January 2007

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spindrift

sea spray off open sea
driven by strong winds
vapor jets or blown mist
born from tops of waves
each of us divided droplets all
fine community of tiny particles
veil of words in book of tears
all mixed up forever together in this
all of us just part of a parting kiss
can you hear us one or all
can you hear our whispered call

evacuation slides

in case of emergency
the evacuation slides
will serve as rafts
which means after plunging
into hypothermic shark-filled waters
assuming you can stay afloat
as the plane sinks before your eyes
and assuming the crew is still alive
not maimed by the crash and can detach
the evacuation slides in time to serve as rafts
assuming you can in ten foot freezing swells
have the presence of mind and animal will
to swim strongly enough to latch on and pull yourself in
assuming your fellow passengers won't push you under
to drown you for their own lives' gain
you can be certain of one thing
reality will differ from your romantic vision
facing the fact of death useless speculation
and a history of organization speak
which invite us to love wishful folklore
and the airline's calming directives
will contrast sharply with our need to always
recalibrate each of our acts against sunlight
and the cruel quotidian of fact

steward

the swiss air steward is a pro

he smiles upon the choice of breads
as if he had baked them himself
and helpful elf was obliged to evidence
an approving 'oh!' before you take one

swiss international 0717 take-off to zurich

you can be sure of only one thing as your ground speed
aspires to 700 kilometers per hour
and the land becomes the illuminated body of what
man? woman? animal? vegetable? mineral? god? giant mind?
computer earth all planet lights blinking on what?
we don't know but prefer from weakness or cunning to go along
play along buckle up and blasé look down
on the pattern of earthbound lights below the sickle moon
shining into the darkened cabin of the plane
sewn by the ancient white-haired seamstresses of clouds
the coast line stitched bright as diamond arteries
an amusement park ride of a million autonomous lights
and the blinking light on the wing tip
saying over and over in some morse code 'so far so far to go'
fine dots of light sparkling cold and oblivious
to all above and all below

spindles of energy

motion spirits all
free and freely sown
stone to wind
window to stone
stone to bone
we windows luminescent
where but do we go
and what we dream
and what we do
and what we merely rent
we at the start
and at the end
in each our evanescence
in each our transparent fall
must finally own

fingerprint on a glass of water next to a glass of wine on a white napkin at 36,000 feet over the irish sea

the swirling fingerprint
on the glass of water

stands out in the sun
is it mine i wonder is it mine
and on the linen napkin
also stands a glass of wine
where the ruby sun shines
the napkin's so much whiter
the wine such a brighter red
as if the world above our earth
is singing as it reads my mind
as one would read a loving letter
from a dear friend or lover
is it mine i wonder is it mine

impulse book buying

i couldn't help myself
i needed to give myself a treat
in less than fifteen minutes
i had to stop pay and leave
or i would not have been able to carry
the titles that promised what?
merely knowledge light and new worlds
two bags seven titles all for \$121.18:
hatchet jobs: writings on contemporary fiction
by i can't remember who but liked the title
slected stories by o. henry
collected poems of kenneth koch
collect poems in english by joseph brodsky
marley & me about a disobedient dog
garbage – a poem by a.r. ammons
on grief and reason – essaysg by joseph brodsky
it was a cold november night
the moon was filling up
with three quarters of its light
like earl gray tea after the milk
poured steaming fills the rising cup
november 2005 and i'm here to report
that the three quarter moon advised me
to carry this bag of knowledge brightly
and diligently save all receipts

a twang of light

a twang of light
like a broken banjo string
gave the final wings of day
and the sliver moon of night
a certain broken ring

thinking about the future and the past

we've sanded all the downstairs floors
painted all the downstairs walls and doors
changed the fireplace mantel and the fireplace cap
turned the upper floor of the bat-roosted hayloft
of the bat-shit-encrusted tractor barn into a studio
that picasso bracque matisse or miro
would be happy to call their own
we've taken note of a vagrant cat
black and white who always looks spooked
with a black toupee to match the guernseys
down the road backs their own road maps
we've rewired the outlets put in central air
relined the pool put in a new furnace bought new porch lights
planted several mini orchards of apple trees
probably 20,000 daffodils of various breeds
fixed the screened porch tidied up everything
built a small potting shed bought some antique cups
watched the rising sun and moon for seven years
sat down to dinner together almost every night
watched the comical expressions of our three cats
when they're happy when they sleep when they fight
we've watched the grass grow and the pears and apples fall
the snows fly the rains pour heard the crow's raw caw
heard the goldfinch's chee and the marsh hawk's scree
all this while working and living and breathing
how many fast days how many months how many chores
no one knows we all like to think we have more than a few more
true they're only years that fly by and i hope
thinking only to me i'd die peacefully before she
not being able to imagine ever living without her happily
and i think of walking upstairs and what a task that will be
when we're both lucky enough to be 80 i hope lucky enough to be 'we'
and i wonder what to make for dinner tonight
all the signs encouraging me to believe leading me forward
to make the leap of faith required for setting plates and boiling pasta
not such a tremendous leap but never really that far from disaster
seeing friends and loved ones fall by the wayside quite routinely
knowing it can be and ultimately will be either sudden or expectedly
interrupted for some now unknown reason one last too short season

ever pause to wonder what it means to be?

in the blue jay's dictionary
it's the thesaurus of the moon
the neighboring phoebe's repetitions

the university of clouds
the community of rains
his feathered tufts and pinion downs
the military blues of all his voices
the medallions of his blue nights
the sanctuary of his epaulets the stars
the vicissitudes of cassiopeia, venus and mars
winging toward the floating silence
that is his open battlefield of sky

in your brief encyclopedia of causes
it's your slippers on your bedroom floor
waiting dumb worn and wordless guarding darkness
without your feet forlorn commanding silence
while born into your dreams you snore
it's then that you might begin to understand
that we have souls that wear down bite by bit
caterpillar like after every electric miss step
it's then that you might begin to see
the warming poetry of to be
and the solitary ray of sunshine
that often falls on the empty bench of it

for those whom time dismisses

what are the years
but a repetition of joys
and fears and smiles and tears
what can they measure
but the decay of one's epidermis
some machine makes us
machines with good gears
and gives us joy every now and then
the pleasure of a poetic seizure
in winter a thermos full of good coffee
and an uninterrupted furnace
in spring summer and fall foods
that won't inflate or worm us

oliver so far

he was albino snow
a pastel of marmalade
a light cotton candy orange
orange set adrift in a softness
playful as a kid at a country fair
big ears foreshadowing
a cabbage head big paws

promising a big cat
he escaped a humane prison
of runny nosed hyper cats
found thelma as thelma found him
just like that just like that
he won courage from her love
from his tiny love she won him
he was comically unflappable
and deaf as granite
tap on the screened porch floor
and he'd come to the vibrations
vacuum the floor and he'd sit
unperturbed on the engine warmed
not hearing the motor's roar
slam a door and he'd lick a paw
he'd obsessively bring
his pet teddy bear downstairs
meaning he had a sense of order
a sense of what he preferred
styrofoam packing peanuts for toys
he'd pop them in the empty tub
with his blanket and his bear
and when the tub began to fill
he'd watch the water rise
and rush to get them out of there
he was very affectionate
loved the company of people
welcomed other cats
was down rarely
save the time he was 'fixed'
when he tended to less exuberance
and walked funny for a few days
but forgot and forgave
and put his chips
on luck and fate and love
just like maybe you and me
he believed in life and loyalty
he had a sense of when and where
he'd seemed to know each day's a toy
like cotton candy at a country fair
for Thelma and Oliver
February 2006

enigma machine

i am the burrowing mechanical worm
that believes my teething through wood rot

will nourish and save me from the all consuming knot
of time inching through the glory storm of my own dreams
closer and closer to the safe soft center deciduous
when you split the trunk of long dead beech
you'll see the convoluted map of my reveries
and not know end from beginning each glory
equally beautiful and torturous

holiday holy day

holi holy holy holi
each day i wake up
and my first waking thought
is i've been given a reprieve
like a criminal in one of those fifties films
when on death row wrongly convicted
the masked executioner ready to pull the switch
stays his command on the governor's call
and i know a holiday i know a holy day
when i in my skin and bone be one

platitude

for all history
poets craved a philisopher's stone
spit fire save matches
go shallow stay surface not deep
instead of chicory brew coffee
unlatch the ire of all irises and latches
their long-dead chorus moans
it's time all idle birds adventure a song
when it's far too early for anything
to have taken a down turn or gone wrong
when early crows muster a raw caw or two
before the kiss of sun up when we all roll over
and go back to sleep made brave
by the ravings of our churning dreams

walking barefoot on broken stars

it's a delicate journey
on night seas a haunting trip
the leap from the belt of orion
to the big dipper's dip
to the mane of leo the lion
a particularly daunting one

bird feeder

there's ten inches of snow on the ground
this morning there were three crows
on the frozen carcass of a car-struck deer
like moon struck or star struck but deadlier
in the way years are deadlier than days or minutes
near the old post office where the marmalade cat
watches from the porch the now uneventful traffic flow
deer on side legs pickup sticks finally at rest the crows
pecking for a point of entry for an early breakfast
and now i'm home hung up on the deadly phone
to learn the mother of one of my best friend's has died at 95
they saw her last night came home to their country home
and the call was their greeting after an exhausting trip
connie was famous for her red sauces
and her ability to summon rage and joy
great sauce great rage great joy
when i told my mother she said that's what kept her young
my wife is talking to our friend about her mother
and i'm reading between their lines to find out what she died of
and they keep on talking and hearing one side i've lose their drift
so to kill time i fill the empty bird bath with sunflower seeds
and right after there's a riot of every winter species
cardinal morning dove wren junco blue jay sparrow
white throated sparrow nuthatch chickadees chipping sparrow
all in a frenzy somehow without hurting one another
dominants first and the rest filling in and all cracking seeds
plenty for all no rage no bloodshed no wounds no vendetta
they appear like a beautiful compassionate machine
as they hop across the snow tamped down by their wire-fine feet
like a computer game played out by a master gamesman
there is not any aging among them they are all equally present
and equally determined and equally somehow calm
they ready themselves for sleep by feeding precisely as the sun sets
the horizon rose with a few gray shreds of cloud has no regrets
birds more urgent aware of the waning light and the food before them
not grateful not obliged merely there in joy of abundance
there in joy of present and the present's good circumstance
like the complications of fine swiss watches that keep perfect time
or the complications of my friends managing the burial tour
and orchestrating our final farewell to their once tenacious mother
let's see how well you and i do once we've flown past ninety-four
the birds unaware continue to feast and it's well after four

waking at 3 a.m.

moonlight passes through the window glass
shining on the pine floor in four bright squares

with all the sureness of a sudden laugh
the half moon sleep walks up the night sky's stairs
some can't wait to be born from what they were
others are impatient to die to what they've been
some argue the measure of the man is the worth
of those and all those things about which he cares
others say come what may we all end empty
empty as an an empty cup

christmas eve

only the glowing
sounds of slow melting waters
running dripping and flowing
in the frozen gutters and eaves
and the cries of a single crow
and in the drains sleeping
of the still frozen leaves

insignificance recants

the wind is defoliating all the trees
stripped bare by the bachelors of every breeze
and each crayola yellow leaf falls lightheartedly
as if instead of ending on a still green lawn
in the slanting autumn sun
they know as dusk knows dawn
that each their journeys have only just begun

crow

all the nervous timid little birds
finch cardinal sparrow wren
chickadee nuthatch junco
disperse in an explosive cloud
preceded by his single caw
one black word and then
this feather flurry ends in silence

and so enters the crow
dwarfing the frozen bird bath
heaped with sunflower seeds
into the maw of his loud magnificence
black oil seeds into sea of black disappear
cunning scavenger his outline obsidian
a violent ebony against the purity of snow

night death the mother and the sea

surrounded on waking by two dark seas
the caverns and industrious bays of dream
the banality of night and the winking stars
two blindfolded angels wings majestic
adrift in this no man's land
suspended between belief and disbelief
between awake and asleep
the mown lawns of all the green lives before
the new wheat of all the lives to be
things stand almost still and stalwart
the ocean sings an inland lullaby
the almost still and stalwart
await the next tick of the second hand
that mechanical unfolding of nothing
fluid as a text composed
by a sandcastle and an hour glass
timing the surf of your own breath
and in this ghost moment
do you not sense the vast slide
the pitiless avalanche of whiteout time
as you drift back to sea muted sparks
blown like spindrift mere grains of influence
we all aspire to be more than a murmur
hear hear mark the dark mother's lullaby
crooned against the sepulcher of a full moon
her pale fingers clutch the ragged shore
her long forgotten children's' lost childhoods
as the barge of desire ferries toward the farthest shore
where lies beyond the familiar lighthouse
the murmured incantations of another ocean's wave

woodpecker tree

she stands barren
having danced a good and joyful dance
now but a wooden womb to grubs
boring beetles and woodpeckers who feast on them

she faces due east and due west
shadowing the sun's and moon's trance
once alive now others live in her
as light cloud sleet and snow in the voice of a wren

there is in her and her kin
the hidden wink of grim eternity
sense of some great ending yet about to begin
some noble work about to give voice to nobility

the birds have come to love her
even in her death she enriches them
she is their home a colony of sustenance
her voice all their voices her limbs all their songs

reading wallace stevens on a snowy sunday morning

the winds are making their january roo hoo hoos
and orders of drifts are becoming disorders of drifts
the whites on grays are white or gray
as the cerebellum of an old cloistered praying nun
the birds are blown off the celebration of their feeders
and desiccate leaves off their tenacious vines
the thrum of the air's vengeance that is winter
persists like a leaden drum drumming time
the thoughtful ones both thinking animals and men
inside their souls wear heated rooms like expensive stoles
the wind in every farmhouse around makes its january sound
down the rungs of chimneys and through the lungs of flues
the woodpeckers' and cardinals' reds think not to ask
whose arrogance of frozen whites and grays are these? whose?
who would guess that merely to view this cold erasure merrily
would be to take a tutorial on what it means to be and then to lose

the breadsticks' revolt

out of the woven basket
of sesame covered and olive speckled rolls
the small french mini baguettes
and raisin studded muffins
a medley of netherland tans and browns
colors of breughel and memling and vermeer
stacked like cordwood waiting to be burned
or bodies on beaches of white sand lightly tanned
huddled together the linear breadsticks
counter all baked roundnesses and wait
to be broken in faint celebrations
at the onset of the meal pallet cleansers
humble proponents of extenuation
and crisp elongations
in nature the intransigence of a straight line
crunch crunch crunch
the comforts of fresh baked bread
a basket a trinket a buttered casket

child crying in an airport

there is no artifice or pretending in it

no more than when the wind's breath rises and falls
or when the ocean beaten senseless by a storm
becomes an ache that climbs from cry to shriek
and slides back down the sad stairs of sorrow
it is no comfort that we learn to hide our grief
as simple as the grief in the song of a wren
our losses and regrets from others and ourselves
in the interests of keeping public places sane
we stow our sacks of woes the monkeys of our minds
until in pain INNOCENCE begins to cry
and then a deep chorus from within us
cries and cries and cries
then deep inside each soul's dark well
the smiler with the knife creeps out of hiding
and stabs and stabs again the apparatus of our lies
and some ancient sobbing something
sobs and sobs and dies another flimsy death

manet's 'a bar at the folie bergere'

in the background a mist of *bon vivants*
in formal wear under a smoking chandelier
to the right a 'gentleman' in a black top hat
trying to stare through the bodice of a bar maid
the white globes of grenadine light penetrate the bottles
green and incarnadine champagne pastille and rose
gold foil covers corks and a simple crystal flute glows
near two pink roses and a glass bowl full of tangerines
she is corseted all in black and white lace
a corsage and ivory cameo on her ample bosom rest
but her face her eyes her mouth are lost in sadness
resigned and reserved for herself and the human race
her resignation draws one back through time
on the wings of a wish to save her even now
her sorrow and ours but dear ghosts trapped in time
inspired to save a ghost of a ghost or less
in the wings of the bar asleep lies a very sleek black cat

vision statement

where i go
a very cruel
or very kind
god calls me
beyond this i know
only to follow
in love with all
bittersweet lemon rind

the critic

well paid he said this
and he said that
was quoted widely
meek and great bowed down
he had done the autopsy
from behind cold doors
behind his thick glasses
the eyes of a serpent

coiled around old dead bodies
what has come from his pen or brush
what been birthed by the effort
of his hand or mind
what found new by him
in the soul of stubborn stone
what notes what fine melodies

riverscape

the gulls are standing
on one or two thin legs stork still
on frozen bay ice
the color of damp cigarette ash

a cloud on the rise of hills
across the span of old river
spies the aimless saw edge of treetops
black branch teeth obscured by cloud

the fuel oil barges move south
pulled undaunted by tug boats
the span of slate river a different blue
than frozen sky and mouth of late daylight

the trees in the early afternoon
show their limbs and branches
red gray and brown to their best advantage
closest to shore it's a ranch of mushy ice

the train rattles comfotingly comfortably
the voices of conductors and passengers chatting
selling tickets as the occasional deer still tan as a target
stands on thin legs in the thin decline of cold winter light

the firsts floes of ice are forming

clear as a school boys' whistle
the duck blinds off shore in the reeds
cormorants mergansers sad face of sky in water
harsh thorn in the purple thistle

our lives are a single silver mirror
our distances tattooed on the silhouettes of birds
the lighthouse with its flapping flag
a thin postage stamp of red white and blue
contradicts the cold effects of winter on our skins

river far side

the chin of the rise
across the top of hills
the sun and moon are eyes
maple oak and trees
\are stubble on a big chin
every day a big surprise

you can almost see from the train
far side distant figures in the rain
swaying in the winter breeze
begging to be shaved without pain
of a misplaced razor stroke
the leaves the trees the sky

home poem

write just one fine poem
find trust in the warm home
of you with your work alone

willie the whale

a stray who came to a sad end
willie the whale in january of 2006
subjected to relentless media and infinite pix
on a barge near the very end of his journey
back to the safety of his beloved sea
from an overload of stress and scary attention died
more than a few of his newfound friends
in london and 'round the world cried

facing st. paul's from the top of the tate modern

behind st. paul's the new city architecture snubs the old
on the far side of the thames are constable's beloved clouds
the january sky is not exactly laughing but it's not sad either

white gulls fly over and under the bridges
and the determined pedestrians mime colored crickets
willfully seeking their tiny irrelevant destinations
barges tour boats red blue yellow polka dots surge up the down river
the oddly dubbed 'gherkin' swears at st. pauls with a glassy gaze
the occasional kayaker on the river below magnetizes children
with strawberry cheeks and blond hair and little feet and hands
who press their noses against the museum's window glass
and look down in wonder on the bridge a silver vein pumping
circulating leucocytes in this case humans back and forth
pedestrians pigeons like pepper grains a geometric stand of white birches
women with orange hermes shopping bags silver baby carriages
dogs loose and on leashes street magicians and musicians
determined joggers line the limed rocks of the muddy river
even at low tide everyone and everything seems so determined
even those trying to step out of the flow and merely watch
hypnotized mesmerized and quieted by the simple reassurance
the generous flow of an abundant january london afternoon
one little girl practices her whistle stop high pitched scream
the voices of the people looking down on this scene
are in one instant hushed by parents quieting their child
londoners call their millennial bridge "the great wobbly"
over a merlot someone reading out loud to someone listening says,
"oscar wilde said the final revelation is that lying
the telling of beautiful things is the proper aim of art"

hyde park mews in january

here in january the camellia is still blooming
and a light frost coats this london morning
pigeons approach you with a happy waddle
in the sunlight one flies straight toward your eyes
and banks just in time to avoid a kamikaze collision
as if you and they were eternal friends
the squirrels come over and look up
as if to say good day, governor, any tips
it could be a game of hide and seek with childhood friends
the palm tree stands content next to the towering sycamore
and everything smells of the rich damp london earth
black loam that speaks of loving tendings and tenderness
those two joggers are young and in love
he wearing forest green sweats
and she with pony tail swaying right and left
they could be adam and eve and this could be eden
where their breath rises up like an answered prayer
as the rising sun rests on the rhododendrons
it's hard to see this world of ours as a very dangerous place

the piebald magpies the blue-winged jays the ring necked dove
look like their suits were tailored on saville row
to match the park's february emerald greens
like the smoke in winter of our everyday breath
a potpourris of every size and shape of dogs
new joys incarnate one dallying a black and white collie
another an old dachshund 'mortimer' hears his master call
smiling as only contented dogs do he picks up his pace
given our ancient cleverness in inventing ways to survive
it is impossible to believe we have the power to erase this all

on seeing hockney's "mr. & mrs. clark and percy at the old tate

to see it reproduced in art books
you'd think it was 'fine painted'
the printing process unifies it
in a way that the painting itself is not
unless you step back and give it space
the painting does not up close unite
you realize the cunning liberties
the artist was happy to take
the cat percy a white blob
with enough detail ten feet away
to allow the eye to fill it all in
and this true of the clarks' hair and skin
the outside the window view the trees
not like vermeer and the dutch
where your nose against the canvas
or ten feet away it is the same
and this is one of the miracles
of hockney's virtuoso brush

birds flying over heathrow

what would it be to be deprived of the of birds above us
would our lives not suddenly be bereft of an appreciation
of the frowning clouds and the empty dour sky
think of park pigeons and their sharp and sudden swervings
against a gray paris new york or london sky
of the airport gulls miming the planes
fluttering to the tarmac gray leaves in the morning mist
the shy british robin rusty red chest
popping out from his rhododendron cave to say good morning
tiny cousin to the robust american red breast
the gulls flat winged or flying in flocks of compressed v's
breaking up the boring dome of a too clear sky
or stopping time stationary in strong winds an ocean ride

the red tail circling over central park
injecting terror in the colonies of rats and squirrels
the vultures creating small vortexes over a discovered carcass
a cornucopia funnel the point of which is carrion
the rookeries of crows flying north at dawn and south at dusk
the slow motion descent of geese on ponds
a choreography of orange feet breaking water in their descent
the elegant cut outs of body wing feather and quill in motion
the effort to rise the effortless glide and swoop and plummet
born to the air to drop dive tumble soar flutter plunge
looking down in winged innocence on humanity
and rising above us all free of all human woes
wind dogs of the air frolicking in packs
these eternal boomerangs of joy
in the infinite park of the air they play

flying doubts

sitting here in the lounge at heathrow
staring at the baboon red rumps of jumbo jets
the gulls wheeling overhead come and go
the great metal birds heaving in their stalls
like winged dogs whose masters have returned
vault liberated from the vaults of their kennels
the sky a robins egg blue the new sun's nest
here i sit wondering if you my dearest
who i've always loved has been true to me
waiting for our plane to lift us up
above the shadows of doubt and worry
like all who know not why or when
free at last one fine day on wings of eternity

transparency of an infinite thing

we are but a transparency of an infinite thing
a person a process a god a cruel novelty
there is no way but through the loyal dog of faith
to know and know in the act of knowing
we all have seen our brethren and our kin
pass on to some strange and unbelievable invisibility
addled by the regular disappearance of now
the regular disappearance of then and when
robot repetitions of now and then we die we live
again and again and again and again

still life

linen as painted by dali
as dali painted bread

a sophisticated medley of whites
wine deep as blood is the wine
mere water a fluid crystal a diamond mine
the clouds below a black sheep's curly back
against a high pale vault of open sky
not one fool looking they're all sound asleep
the founding out and showing of
is what artists do with their time
so be glad to be steeping in this tea
another setting sun this one
all so rare and painted red

winter

gone white with frost are the few remaining wild grape leaves
and their spiraling tendrils on the foolish vine
too bright is the clear skin of ice over pond skim
stones thrown fail to produce the concentric circles
and the frog-like splash and plunk before descending
dark down to the ripe mud of crawfish floor in summer
instead they clack and skitter as each skids to a frozen stop
now the air is a high farce of summer's dead voice icicle sharp
the dour birds waste no energy twittering gleeful songs
they puff ball themselves to insulate their tiny hearts from trite joys
even the thin daytime moon shivers alone in its own cold parlor
of the milk thin sky there is only the compliment of a frigid wind
a wind whose only role is to rattle the shingles on the farmhouse eaves
to take spirals of smoke off chimneys and banish them horizontal east
everything is flattened by the cold even the sound of the slightest sounds
the shock of crows on country roads explodes above the silent snow
bursts off white ground dark as the wings of printers' ink fly off a vellum page
the roar of snowplows plowing intermittently reminds country souls
that this season's clock is the clock of old men and old women winding down
that the city's engines - blood and money - are coldly coagulated here
by mute comforters of cold and snow by the icy refusal of all things to move

the death of rosie evans

I want to speak for my whole family
to thank all of you for the prayers
and thoughtful support at this time of grief.
For the past year, Mom's health has been deteriorating,
yet she would rally whenever we would gather around.
Her caretakers were amazed by the improvement
in her condition after each visit. She taught us
and all our children the power of unconditional love
and I'm pleased to witness it in the grandchildren.
She truly believed and lived by the Sermon on the Mount,

trusting that God takes care of all the birds and
the lilies of the field and will surely take care of everything
she needs today. We're still learning from her
to let go and put our trust in God.

Tom

dear Tom
rosie sounds like the mother
of all our mothers
like my mother
who taught us the very same
power of unconditional love
may none of us settle
in getting or giving it
for anything less ever.

for tom, pat and butch
2/10/06

**some words i had to look up
in the order i stumbled upon them
only to wake and find myself ignorant**

EMBRANGLE

EMBRANGLEMENTS

to embroil

throwing into to disorder

confusions

CONTIGUITY

having contact

touching

along a boundary a point

UNDINE

water nymph

an elemental being

SHALLOP

two masted ship

small open boat

propelled by oars and sail

DIAPASON

burst of harmonious sound

CARTOUCHE

an ornamental frame

PALINODE

ode or song recanting something

from an earlier poem

LOVE

strong affection for another

attraction based on sexual desire
the object of enthusiasm or devotion
unselfish loyal concern for the good of another
a beloved person
affection and tenderness felt by a lover
the fatherly concern of god for man
a brotherly concern for others
a person's adoration of god
artist's feeling for his painting or poem
a god or personification of love
an amorous episode
a score of zero in tennis
holding one's opponent scoreless
your soul's my soul's true home

the briar and the rose

the flower pink or red as blood
fragrant soft as baby's skin
the thorn drawing blood
the protective first blush of kin
defending the pride of each rose
reminding us in a rush all sharply
married in the whipsaw joy and pain
no operator's manual available
no user directions provided
go figure make it up as you go
on his deathbed painting flowers
the briar and the rose
manet told us this is how it goes

emily dickinson

they thought you a dunce
what you have said
no one ever said before
now we all love you emily
more than eternity's call
more than any open door

they tried to mute
your capitalizations your hyphenations
your quirky states and nations
your voice your exclamations
meter of your small mortal soul
at once frail afraid frank and strong

grand go the years

the dead and their defeated hopes
are as nothing a bunch of dopes
smaller than we than wee
they cannot sing
they have lost their shirts
they are too meek
yet we call to them
needing to break out of our skins
we want to hear them speak
give us the simple comfort
of a simple 'amen' we beg and beg
like laacoan they are enmeshed
and slowly crushed and tied up in
the binding snakes of time
none of us untouched
don't listen to sanctimonious pastors
we are all born and end in alabaster
each our chambered nautilus shrieks
our legacy is a legacy of worms and dirt
the unfeeling breeze hums like a bee
sweet with the mission of a winged missionary
astronomy's vaster impersonal metric
does impose on those who refuse to weep
the mechanical tick of the robotic clock mourns
the fragrant soup of the newly risen rose
stands proud in humble testimony

school buses in the snow

thought bright yellow
they still feel gray
like the day
even white is gray
winter's way
winter's will
relentless cello
cold season's wheel

every singing fire

every fire begins to sing
with a few old logs
once they were young
now they are merely dry
tonight groggy and cold
old as they are
they are totally expendable
they will confirm

our destiny is to burn
victims all living on air
we flicker between hope and despair
even as we breathe
once we were young
now subservient as dogs
are we destined to be reborn
meant to appear and reappear
reborn again and reborn
singing far away far away far
no one can say
not one thing dependable

mushroom head

i came from a dark dank nothing
some giant mushroom-headed thing
that stank of mulch and loam and shit
that rose up wet and dank to sing
a corpse white song (what's its worth?)
dedicated to all buyers and sellers
to the hurly-burly of give and take
that i met at the imperial bank of earth
where earthworms were attentive tellers

condensed 9/11 commission report

terrorist entrepreneur venture capitalist
applies imagination to hatching terrorist dreams
conventional car bombings, political assassinations,
hijackings, reservoir poisonings, aircraft as missiles,
guided by suicidal operatives finding the right
specialists outsourcing flight school training
to america the beautiful – the optimistic imagination
budget: \$400,000 wet and dark as blood

frog in a well

all its life this simple frog
lived content in an abandoned well
saw the stars and moon pass quietly by
the sun and clouds rise and fall
through the round narrow mouth of
of the ancient well

then one day a thirsty traveler
threw a bucket on a rope down
into the well near the pale frog's home
and the curious frog rode up on

the rim of the bucket
and hopped away to the stream nearby

how wide the frightful sky
how bright the alarming day
how vast the darkness of night
my entire life he thought
full of wonder and awe
he thought o boy o boy

until now my little life has been a lie
the smallest slice of a big world's pie
he was so happy that he cried and cried
and soon thereafter died from joy

blue mesa colorado

lava poured long ago by earth's pitcher burst
and flowed a random downhill syrup
fractal course of blue white and blue
a mist between plane hull and ground
egg shell of terra firma thirty thousand feet below
the silver veins of frozen rivers and gorse
the dark green stands of evergreen and fir
the isolating snows forbid civilization
and taper down to the dull purples and browns of towns
where developed land aspiring to blue mesa and higher
the roofs of tiny homes small gods' monopolies shine
in the early afternoon sun and shadow play
nature's sax piano base and guitar
a valley smoothly shaved as a *mons veneris*
leads up to the orgasm of another towering range
passions of clouds kiss the spikes of mountain tops
like jazz musicians run their joyous riffs
what composer this reach of elements and how
what genius this span of air and sky and tree
and our tiny fires, my beloved, my fairest love
sun shine here miraculously and extravagantly new

arriving and departing

the mercy of birth
is that we have no memory of it
the cruelty of death for all of us
is that in that hour most go out conscious
sparrows in the talons of a hawk
carried away in the grip of our last trip

nadine

nadine nadine
at ten fifteen

irene

irene irene
a hummingbird's stuck like a dart
in the screened porch screen

irene

irene irene
a hummingbird's stuck like a dart
in the screened porch screen
goodnight Irene
we end before we start

julie

julie julie
can we call this
dish calaMOORrie

josephus

josephus
was always blasphemous
with his blunderbuss

fridge dream

the rubber capillary that fed the ice cube maker burst
to fix it and stem the tide of water flooding the fridge
the mechanism was dissected studied and the truth revealed
to prevent the flooding of the kitchen floor a new tube
had to be threaded through a hole where the old one failed
even as water spread across the kitchen floor cold
as a river of nails by the time the surgery was done
the refrigerator was frozen shut forever sealed
and the fridge the kitchen a hail of cats butter ketchup cream
the neighborhood the town all human ifs ands or buts
were washed away in a torrent of floating condiments
in an oceanic logic the sea the aperture of my dream
opened the door of what we know and what we mean
like a blizzard of dinner mints sweeten
the worst breath of a band of chimpanzees i trust
you figured this out over a martini or cup of herbal tea
i'm rambling on about you and me and where we're headed
some days i wake and see it is others as not so funny
we spend our days searching for the solace of a bridge

match point

i stick a burnt match
into a cork coaster
and its tip charcoal black
hard and pointed stays
suddenly slowly burning
as they die a death on a burn so slow
it does not cause the white chevy van
parked near them to burst into joyous flame i have a memory
a fleeting wooden catch
of what it meant to early man
to burn a stick to a carbon point
in the fire's sharpening rage
and to take it to the kill page
open a door one more chapter
in the survival of our crafty race
burn on brilliant gene so sage

last tulips on park avenue

the red tulips are

fridge dream

the rubber capillary that fed the ice cube maker burst
to fix it and stem the tide of water filling the fridge
the mechanism had to be taken apart and the truth revealed
to prevent the flooding of the kitchen floor a new tube
had to be threaded through the hole where the old one failed
even as cold water spread across the kitchen floor
by the time the careful surgery was almost done
the refrigerator aperture was frozen shut
and the kitchen fridge the cats the butter and cream
the neighborhood and town were washed away
in a torrent of condiments in an oceanic logic
down and down the open sea of my dream

blizzard of time

the blizzard of time
makes pale and freezes
seizes everyone under its rule
conspires with the great lion
the sun its massive head now
under our tent no domestic cat this
each and every day eats its share
of women and men alive
even those who survive

either hale or weak
or bleeding limb from limb
leave weeping torn and rent

for granted

for granted the ending of each day
for granted the white clouds of late afternoon
turn pink then pink-edged purple
against the upturned cup of a crescent moon
so white against a bleached hydrangea sky
that the humbled snow looks only gray blue gray

mole tracks

to finish from start
the mole tracks
melt a snow trail
back to our hearts

ant mound

last spring it was two feet
in diameter this spring it's four
intransigent cosmopolis
obdurate juggernaut
unstoppable they raise the dome
of their dark universe
grain of sand by grain
their seething home
their maniacal ways
their furious metropolis
determined grows and grows
a thousand years but a day
tunnels of fury filled
with the panic of their order
antennae groping antennae
infinitesimal army traffic
no life worth more than another
blind mandibles build
build and defend
defend and build
unyielding refusing to bend
intractable without end
below the earth undaunted
their cities live and prosper

photo-cam in the brain of a shore bird

the late season ice gathers light in the bays
the shore birds are frightened by the train
they fly so close to the surface of the river
that i struggle to say whether their beauty
is their lift-off or their flight in this fine rain
what exactly is it that they feel that they see?
one man wondering who is the architect of this
in this simple instant who is the taker who the giver?

house god

god lives in this house
the outside walls are just a way
to keep the outside in
house lives in this god
the inside walls are just a way
to keep the inside out

crows on a country road

I

mid winter you can go through long bouts of silence
early in the uninterrupted morning the sun aspires to day
you can drive in the half dark still waking the demise of long night
you can see the sun over first lit-fields
as suffering van gogh would have painted them
you can breathe the aching aha of existence
and feel deepest joy of morning
and wonder if the mercy of light will ever return

II

you drive down your life's gray road
and as sudden as an attack of black
realize that the new happens one day of its own accord
and suddenly the suffering crows two hundred of them
a silver winged brilliant resurrection of black
and feel deepest joy
and you know life is the holy continuing of the unexpected

III

they rise up
a varnish of sun on the straining planes of their wings
the pale fields a contrapuntal to their dreams
they are a rain of black falling upwards

IV

they rise up

a contrapuntal concert of their own private dreams
straw lemon light taupe beige the fields stubble

V

the snow gives them instant royalty
makes you question are they silver are they black are they gold
a big part of it takes you back takes you back

VI

they were a burglary of sun and light
as they rose their dark wings stole blue from the snow
from above they were rough stubble
cawing on the chin of a giant called "corn field"
pepper rough ground

VII

their rising wove an invisible braid of air
as their flights intertwined
resourceful watchful once persecuted
they congregate a black confetti in a parade of black
with the swagger of a night watchman's walk
and the massive coughing caws
their entire thorax propelling their crownness to the world
they prefer the top limbs of dead trees
when they survey their estates

woe to the fluffy hatchling unprotected
to the unwary field mouse fat on autumn corn
or the vole sleek from feasting on the crickets of summer
slow with winters' freeze fair game easy prey
to crow omnivorous crow ravenous crow eternal

they are the cleaners the devourers of roadside carrion
perched atop the highways they eat their fill of skunk deer possum fox squirrel and coon
entrails their delight companions of all the lonely highways
cousins to raven and jay persecutors of owl eagle and hawk
harassing fearless and brazen redwings' nemesis
communal rootsers communicators of the carrion cache
dawn to dusk patrolling for the whereabouts of fresh kill
never seen at night their nests a mystery

they swoop black without eye without thought with heart
the liver the lung the blood in its silent tunnels
they could not pronounce the sun black rainbows negation with negations
emptiness at play in the high heavens pirouette plummet like a stone
the other birds they sing and flit and joyous greet the day

and you you merely plod darkly on

the crow has no vanity
the crow has no idleness
the crow has no fear
the crow requires amusements of its own design
sometimes plays chick with oncoming trucks
in the interest of fresh vic hera
sometimes cunning hops to the robins worm or the kestrels mous in the abundant fiels

the crows finality is the finality of nigh
wakes in dayoing
on the wing
counterpoint and serenity to the opposing sun

the expression of your beak
is not an arrogant triumph
not the fatuous smile determined and straight
how you flutter and pause high mide air to land lightly on the highest branch and caw in
joy

the black flag of you
the air swimmer as closed fingers pull the lgithsing of you
absorbing light as a btter
swim forward brave bird
your hear is not black
not charrcoal no carbon
despite your darkness you have not hardened beyond joy
but your toughness is that of black diamond
i know that from the force of your repeated hoarse cry

your caw caw caw caw caw caw
is not a laugh but a magnet and a reminder of the grace and presence of the birds god
now now now caw caw caw

and there they all were a dark flock hundreds
from the snowy fields
rising up exemplarily
thus so should all of us
their timeless company
if any could see
if any values memory

in the transition from fall to winter
from winter to early spring
the crows own the sound track

morning noon midday dusk, and night
friends of the geese migrating
and creating noise in the bays more determined
more and more insistent

caw caw caw caw caw caw

the rising up of them
the weave and wove of an invisible brand of air
their admirable black ascendance
their flight paths intertwine
they play an intricate sonata of black
against the sparking snow of my grateful mind

i thought of st. francis of Assisi
and his love and compassion
his admiration of the forgiving kindness of animals
which we in our suicidal arrogance
insist on treating as somehow less than us

mourning doves over hudson

the soft gray bellies of mourning doves
each morning their fright brand new
winging away from train's rude thunder
brave river still running blue deep blue

snow drops

little white bells
stubborn intransigent
if spring were a poker player
you would be the first
of its white-lie tells

mid-march

now the naked woods
are full of chirping birds
barren grass yellow in the marsh
the lake ice free
everything conjuring spring
not a single voice too harsh
not a single voice too harsh

the sad beauty-light of day

the early spring fog dims us
the woods and fields and lake

are a gray sheet with dark verticals of a few dead trees
darkest the big locust closest
the lightest birch cedar and pine farthest away

the porch screen
is a net of rain drops like dew
gathering gravity some run down
like light stripes on a dark shirt

the morning doves are cooing
overhead the returning geese make a ruckus
carolina wrens and red winged black birds
trill their songs contrapuntal to the caws of crows

everything is soaked or damp
and all living things chipmunks to chickadees
go about their business as if lit forever from within
by some kind inner-warming shining lamp

breakfast at acqua - salsalito

across the inland salt marsh
a single figure in yellow
dwarfed by erector-set hydro towers
cable and power lines singing their charge
the gulls over the bay
and a line of morning traffic
cars like blue and black and yellow bugs
light rain on the patio
willows as green as a cheerleader's sweater
pompoms of green cheering
unleash teams of ardent fog
running down the hills
huddle in the hillside and run to the sea
like rectangular eggs
snug in their weather protection
their masters free of small disasters
in a lost sun for this small day it lost sun

dust to dust

this fragile jar
this begging bowl
this nagging pain
the empty heart
this unfilled hole
this fertile rain
this new day's start

across the bay

golden retriever ahead of red-shirted runner
red-shirted runner behind golden retriever
brancusis of snowy egrets fishing
through their own white reflections
for fleeting shoals of silver fry
smell of eucalyptus and salt marsh
singing in the fragrant air
make one wish no regrets

to singapore

the planes all stacked
like playing cards in a metal deck
one by one two by two
waiting to be thrown skyward
by some master dealer card shark
into the call of an infinite blue

broken mirrors

the broken mirror on the city street
reflects by chance all that passes over it
pedestrians' feet pigeon clouds the sky
the random traffic of city life with equanimity
why should it be any different for you and me?

minimalist dog #1

he sees each relieving
as a glazing of hydrants
a mapping of relief

minimalist dog #2

he sniffs the cold
chipmunk drowned
floating face down
below thin crust of ice
in water bucket
getting old

minimalist dog #3

piddle trails everywhere
so much to do
too little time too

minimalist dog #4

bow wow
wow bow

the trip

this river ride is a gift
take the wrapping off
before you tilt your head and cough
between where you where and where you are
you notice this sudden rift
no tax on ducks ducking in bays
no wax left from the candles of our days
no matter the end how near how far
hitch your galactic wagon to a shining star

hand-knit socks

hand-knit merino wool
hand wash in warm water
rinse and wring
lay them in a towel
to slowly air dry

silver bridge

color of a midge's wing
old silver bridge silver bridge sing
when you cross the pewter river
oh will you be afraid to ask
were you a taker or a giver
an asp or a woodworker's rasp

against the time when there will be none

this recent breath
against the wreck of all intentions
this upstart glance
against the reticent yes of stars
that refuse to shine or dance
with recalcitrant skies
with an intransigent moon
surely tell us there is no such thing
perhaps they're both inventions
as the faint monopolies of lie and death
that all things great and small
are woven in a warp and woof together
far lighter than a junco's feather
that vaults above the far green hills
as peregrines assault and plummet in the pristine air

powerpoint

the way the cardinal
against the white grid
of window panes
set into the old red barn
hopped across the lilac branch
a power point presentation
where the earning curve
went from bottom right to top left
as illustrated by this wise bird
who was less interested in profit
and more in his backward eternity of now
his low growth curve was reverse entropy
small and red against the dusk
an eternally positive trending

writer to Writer

your discipline is exceeded
only by your polished words
i see everything clear standing there
there is no sloth in your finish
your attention is an extended grace held

for you i wish
that you go to those unexplored places
of unexpected beauty most personal to you alone
and bring that back to us

as you have carved
the memories of the objects of your childhood
the recollections of your mother
the remembrances of your sons

and through the aquamarine crystal of your courage
dive deeper to the unspoken unimagined unwritten
and lay them out as you would a landscape
a dedication to all rivers
and all objects in their flow
of every color tone and shining hue
for akiko busch
april 3, 2006

two daytime moons

one late april afternoon
there was the lightest milk of a moon

in the bottom of a light blue cup
not so long after another
was the ice cream part
of a vanilla ice cream cone
tracking the cosmic swarming
of the early planets and the stars
through their circumnavigations
shining sisters shining brothers
through the not so comic cosmic zone
at times it's hard to know down from up
or what's near from far now or long ago

my sister bernadette and her ducks

she was as pale as parchment
or porcelain in a strong light
beautiful as frail
and because frail beautiful

so thin my mother fed her egg-nogs
to put some flesh on her
she had two ducks
daffodil one and daffodil two

they would not walk and waddle
but speed waddle and run
and hop up into her arms
as if she were the safest nest

and there within her skinniness
and her long blond pigtailed
find protection the closest
any lucky duck has known to rest

i can never think of her or see her
without thinking of these two ducks
and bernadette when she was young
in the summer of our summer suns

the only thing more golden
than this memory was their feathers
and my sister's blond blond hair
and love her and them a little more

billy collins

there are many things to admire
about billy collins concision humor wit

he can turn on a dime and walk the high wire
one minute you're in the back seat of a car
perhaps the hamptons driving by prosperous drives
and well trimmed hedge within earshot of atlantic's roar
the next you're wearing a butchers apron
and your carving up the brain of your host and driver
sudden lobotomies and listening to loved ones talk about the dead
a tiny mound of spilled table salt becomes a cosmos of white
through which our fingers etch a path to the redemption of discovery
it's as if he took the words out of your minds mouth always as you saw it
but always with sudden lightness of the great lightening bolt of aha
and our hearts under the systole and diastole of his words
between which well edited and well omitted is a lot of blah blah blah
is basho's frog not an actual frog but the prince or princess of your dreams
there before you radiant and bold saying so what my love are you waiting for
and a million branches some willow and lightest green make that comforting shush
the hushing breath of a cool spring breeze
and you feel that wonderful burst of relief that everyone experiences when they sneeze
and the exhilaration of gymnasts or acrobats as they hurtle net less through the open air
on their flying trapeze and don't you know the pets you put to sleep says
"everyone here can read and write the cats in poetry the dogs rats goldfish birds
hamsters rabbits and gerbils with the greatest of ease in animal prose"
your point of view always leaves us readers a little weak in the knees
savoring the landscape of a new view none knew was new

time spent reflecting ink

i find myself deep in it
i hear the voices of those i've never met
telling me things i never knew
could never know without them
i see what is distant near
and what is near and seen
becomes known and dear
from strange to known from stranger to friend
itextraordinary that these so ordinary marks
scratches in black and white
can contain the drum of our dreams
and everything anyone has ever dreamed
and the thrum of every heart
that was or wasn't what it seemed
like geese on bays these glyphs
these small black marks with wings
rise up and carry us sweetly away
letters commas periods exclamation points
schooners yawls galleons stately sailing ships

spring – two variations

I

spring

every waiting vein opens
and bleeds green
every tiny leaf
every greening shade
of baby green
bleeds grateful green
from root to shoot to sky
for the blade of every eye
for you and i
to see to see to see

II

spring

every vein opens
and bleeds green
every tiny leaf
every greening shade
they all bleed green
for the blade
of every grateful eye
to see to see

l'aviara

the insistence of the birds is such
that their songs all multiples of brave
make you believe it is the first day of days
a new world and their hearts and yours are
one sweet braid of sun and clouds and green
foxglove periwinkle peony tribes interwoven
a maze of pinks yellows apricots and whites
not far from the turquoise of a vast lagoon
courted by a slim day lit reluctant moon
when it comes to love shy as we are
each of us are given at least this much
before each our little day is done

match point

i stick a burnt match
into a cork coaster
and its tip charcoal black
hard and pointed stays

suddenly i have a memory
a fleeting wooden catch
of what it meant to early man
to burn a stick to a carbon point
in the fire's sharpening rage
and to take it to the kill page
open a door one more chapter
in the survival of our crafty race
burn on brilliant gene so sage

last tulips on park avenue

the red tulips are slowly burning
as they die a death on a burn so slow
they do not cause the white chevy van
parked near them to burst into joyous flame

requiem for oliver

you two sweets
no malice in you
sweet on one another
Thelma and oliver
oliver and thelma
from the very start
and now sorrow for you two too soon
our sorrow too that you two had to suffer
fear and pain and unknowing incomprehension
and leave us so terribly
there was nothing but goodness in you
deaf yet undaunted as a stone
you wore your alpine climbing jacket
patient observer of your own protection
patient as strangers held you
and Thelma harness you for safety
long suffering of funny hats and sun glasses
photogenic and besetwith troubles
the last an intestinal seighnot fair
that causes us all to contemplate
raw inequity and unfair pain to the gentlest

i'm tired of writing poems that weep for loss
and tire of what robber pinsky in his 'history of my heart'
calls 'the figured wheel' grinding the mortar of all our skin and bones and brains and furs
and purrs for what the wheel where the feeding pig unknowing eats the baby chick
the wheel where jesus speaks kindly to his tormentors
his flees furrowed by the plosy of their razored whips
their spit and mocking sorrows

the sadness of small goodbyes

only a twenty minute ride to the train station
where the hudson dreams its mighty dream
and this ride to the station today
the most ordinary of rides is but a dream
i see you at the wheel and our aging
the dogwoods with their riots of white in bloom
the rhododendron paging their way to new glories
and this nervous feeling in the stomach of the breeze
that schoolchildren feel on their first day of school

like all i have come to regret that we must accept
that all is merely beginnings and endings
followed by more beginnings and endings
hellos and goodbyes when we know neither
and mostly take for granted either
after all it's just a jaunt a short trip a few days away
but silly me as i kiss your hand goodbye
i want to hold you as if it were the very end
which silly we know hooray it really isn't

though this ending is only a small one
a breath a grace a note in a life of spring and fall
we say goodbye and i collect my ticket and myself
and trackside sit on a bench carved with the names
of graffiti artists friends and lovers i'll never know
and i look at the blue shoulders of the catskills
rising above the green of the hudson valley hills
and i think it was just a short good-bye after all
as we know most all are and most save one will be
for wanda may 9 on the 8:56 to new york city

dumb as rocks

they outlive generations of generations
they keep still as lost kings paupers trees and leaves
while all of every species fall they are impervious
inscrutable and unto an infinity calm
riverside lakeside ocean side pond side
they share an old joke - the laughter of waves
they enjoy the company of bugs nuts and ants
they are silent and quieting impenetrable
they snuggle into and hug the land
they echo the sentiments of the ever passing weather
fickle rain sleet snow wind heat and cold fog and freeze
the seasons leave them indifferent as a fleeting breeze
they remain steadfast in their love of the earth

their uncomplaining erosion and slow lessening are nutrient
they were forged in an old maelstrom of flame and melt
and have witnessed many worst and many best births
unwavering they are consistent in their indifference to all

night lawn

the night lawn is full of dandelions
hundreds of lion-headed white puffballs standing tall
evanescent geodesic globes transcendent
the moon lights their manes through to their dandelion hearts
their dandelion centers delicate lit electric like bulbs
the moon herself a dandelion the cosmic queen of dandelions
almost full with the great halo of a fairy ring around her
and below cast at our feet mere legions of worshipping dandelions
and i mere nothing cast too in the scheme of things sitting on a stump
petting a shy black and white cat who feels safer in the dark
who looks up at me and beyond at the moon in feline wonder
the first few crickets of spring begin to sing as if at last on cue
can you imagine them bronze and black at the base of field grass stalks
they've come out to pray their due to Luna the white goddess Diana
pale huntress stalking the planets through a haze of stars
who in her own majestic hunt so softly lights this vast maze
proscenium of farms and fields with her resplendent night

james bond

when he'd flex his pecs
and bellow from his solar plexus
gone mellow the girls perplexus
would scream, "nexus and cathexis*"

- investment of libidinal energy in a person, object or idea

the speed of robins running

few pay running robins any heed
yes sometimes they hop and stop
during their earthworm hunts
usually at dusks or dawns
on their diamond dew studded lawns
or on baseball fields pristine green

long after balls strikes hits runs or bunts
they often they run unchecked
their black and redbreast torsos
steady as ships' decks on smooth seas
their spindly legs blurring speedily
at breakneck running robin speed

UNFINISHED POEMS AND TITLES WITHOUT POEMS

some feathers of wild birds

turkey striated tan at tip dark brown below
and then a series of dark brown and tan twill
in alternating ribs the top of wing feather blunt

a few poisonous mushrooms

my mother on a good day

on the plane to boston

the manic and the modern

fire tossing girl

reginald

sylvester

Octavian

telling myself stories

what happy people know