

**wish i were there**

O three blue folding chairs  
O lapping Lilliputian waves  
O barking gulls stick-fetching dogs  
prancing in the surf like happy seals  
O snoring sunburned nappers sawing logs  
radios playing bach cantatas  
or funky ghetto gangsta rappers  
O copper-toned babies  
producing messy sandy diapers  
or copper-toned babes  
winning five-star bikini raves  
O trashy novels junky snacks  
O slimmest sliver of a daytime moon  
pale as a fingernail clipping  
O great bronze gods of summer  
your beach chorus august keeps singing  
whoever wherever take me back  
for lacking the iodine ocean air  
or ocean fragrance of rugosa rose  
i fear my pale nose might despair  
please fly me to the outer banks  
where all our woes so quickly heal

**wish i were there**

O blue folding chairs  
O lapping Lilliputian waves  
O barking gulls fetching dogs  
dancing in the surf like happy seals  
O snoring nappers sawing logs  
radios playing Mozart or gangsta rappers  
O copper-toned babies and babes  
winning five-star bikini raves  
O trashy novels junky snacks  
O great bronze gods of summer  
whoever wherever take me back  
for lacking the iodine ocean air  
or ocean fragrance of rugosa rose  
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**the thing about the ocean**

the thing about the ocean  
is the sky

the thing about ocean sky  
is the sea

gray blue white infinitely  
defies horizons and all time

as polka-dotted orange  
is it octopuses or octopi

drawn by little muses  
delight the eyes of passersby

**the dot over the i**

the dot over the i  
is called a tittle

oh to be smarter  
by a very little

**ASYLUM FOR MY AFFECTIONS**

**May 2015 – July 2017**

**37,678 words**

**wish**

wish i could live  
like the red bird does fly  
no thought to the future  
never wondering why  
pure joy on the wing  
under bright awning of sky  
blue lakes and rivers below  
his nest in the marsh  
among cattails and reeds  
when at rest hidden at home  
only then does he sing  
no more no more than this  
does this clever one need

**lily of the valley**

smallest of the small  
in You lily of the valley  
like some lost land  
i relive my childhood long gone  
my mother and my father call  
you tiny grand perfumier

your fragrance stands  
the titanic tests of time  
small but most elegant of all  
mighty in may's fragrant rhymes  
on you so many springs have shone  
eons-lasting as quarry stone

### **favorite chair**

what a clod what a dud  
he plops himself down  
like the thickest book on a shelf  
put back in its place with a thud  
mindlessly adjusts my back pillow  
to conform to his stressed-out spine  
he lets out a wordless animal sound  
closer to a rattling mutilated gasp  
more an ape-like grunt than a whine  
juggles some books in a pile  
deciding which is less full of crap  
and finally thinking only of himself  
like some guttural beast pretends to read  
when in fact reading is his excuse to nap  
settles in moves no more and in a while  
snores dreaming of water turned to wine  
how i envy my lucky cousin the sofa  
whom he always avoids across the room  
and the gentle company of his wife  
she knows how to bring a room to life  
quietly elegantly sitting so softly down  
i can almost hear my cousin sofa sigh  
oh! to exchange places i would die

### **hair brush**

one thin afternoon in a rare stroke of clarity  
pondering a few of my old master's hairs

nothing else to do in my boring bathroom  
two days after cold december's balding moon

his hair in my bristles more silver than black  
when i saw this lack his loss with a rush of despair

it was then that his sole denial inspired dull me  
to always serve his thinning follicles happily

i his steadfast brush

### **the poo-less cat**

instead of air-lite kitty litter  
shag rug towers or tunnels sold on twitter  
or t.s. elliot's "cats" on olde broadway  
someone should invent the poo-less cat  
that way one day cat lovers would say  
none can recall when their cats last shat

### **ducklings**

clouds above hudson so low  
spring rains falling so hard  
the tops of silver bridges  
cannot be seen

the river a tarnish of flows  
three anchored rusted barges  
and there at river's edge  
a mother and her addled charges

ducklings! eight in a chaotic row  
barely keeping up - their one reward  
paddling frantic fledge by fledge  
chasing down some downy dream

### **a man with nothing**

just outside central park  
six a.m. museum mile  
surly dawn banishing dark  
concrete bench his bed  
sidewalk his open living room  
he was throwing crusts  
stale bread on cold ground

starlings sparrows  
street wise city birds hopping  
about a trusting congregation  
they seemed to know him  
feathered guests brethren

no thought for tomorrow  
no fear no sense of doom

some were cooing  
some brightly chirping  
some singing this new day tune  
some missing toes or feathers  
doing just what vagrants do  
proving a man with nothing  
will still feed a sparrow

### **the lawnmower**

i can't repress my well-oiled siege  
yet nothing i do seems to restrain them  
my weekly mowing barely contains them  
summer long i am their dedicated liege  
each estate's votary order-wielding rotary

each day i can't wait to roll out of garage or shed  
to wreak havoc my art lopping their green peon heads  
the tragicomedy of their communal foreshortening  
like ozone on hot august days after a heavy rain  
fresh cut their chastised scent freshens my lawns

my motorized knives trim crop shape and mulch  
in sync with goldfinch cardinal and robin's songs  
they my chorus as my engine roars summer long  
still each stem and tendril thinks itself adorable  
as i mow my chattel down the grass grows stronger

### **aging gracefully?**

lawless as snowflakes  
their hair whitened  
their pale skin gone slack  
their time shrinking  
causes those few thinking  
to bank on a new currency  
of forgiveness and mercy

### **imaginary birds continued**

the nickel-plated nougat sampler  
uncle tom's watermelon wastrel  
jockey's gastric jamboree gull  
the quaker quack quack  
the dunking donut darter  
the greasy wig warbler

snooki's sea shell babbler  
the dalmatian dollar dimwit  
the nocturnal moon stud  
the starry-chested marsh tyrant  
uncle gibroni's bulbul  
the befuddled foot inch  
the nouveau gnat nicker  
ed sullivan's silly shearwater  
the dunderheaded door dunker  
the emasculated wee-wimper wing  
the stony stank cranker  
the philodendron say sip  
the erroneous felon stalker  
the gibbous moon martin  
horowitz's viola veery  
ignacio's idle cronk itch  
darjeeling's imperial toad tern  
the twitchy rump rump  
the itchy rump rump  
desiderata's desert doodle bomber  
the backstage book blabber  
the reverse-engineered bleep barbet  
sonny bono's lollipop lark  
the dusky fryer friar  
pavarotti's plump punk lark  
dr. doody's doo wop  
the delicate didactic dingle dove  
the fuzzy-eared rifle egret  
the peckerheaded checker puffin  
the swallow-all swallow  
the bungling bitter bittern  
holy horoatio's hornbill  
the not-so-hot toddy tooter  
stinky's surcharger  
hollygolightly's lute lurcher  
the mountainous mump muzzle  
colonel sander's slop thrasher  
the twinkle-toed tap hen  
wunderkind's wild hog walloper  
the fuzzy nutzen  
woozy's fuzz finch  
the dreadlock dickisil  
shakespeare's shrieking night shrike  
shakespeare's dawdling day digger  
the seditious lurch  
oldenburg's oily octopus owl

travelocity's tomahawk turkey  
the dilapidated dowager duck  
dudley's dip dunker  
the instigating imp thrush  
stinkwad's pustule petrel  
the polymorphous peckerhead  
the tyraasaurus tea tit  
the tinsel-backed turtle tickler  
garibaldi's groan goose  
the gregarious gosling herder  
paperdella's ant pipit  
the egalitarian equestrian egret  
julian nicolini's nubian nuthatch  
mario batali's bread buzzard  
napoleon's nit slurper  
the fudgy-the-whale-jus'-folks finch  
the tiny mischievous wheee  
the soft-tufted buffer fluff  
the vivacious fluffy thump  
the october outage ouzel  
the cretaceous crust cruncher  
the burlap bee catcher  
segovia's guitar grebe  
the plunk plunk  
the flabbergasted goop goose  
the avaricious albatross  
the impecunious albatross  
the bibliography bluejay  
the polka dot dot  
whimsy's rubber rump wren  
the ribald rent a wren  
the cod scrod  
the nicotine-orange organza-chested pinky pigeon  
the hickory-smoked rumple hen  
the tousled tin foil finch  
the salinated saltine psalter  
the dusty desert diddle dribbler  
the pugnacious pillow puncher  
the no-exclamation-point punctuation peregrine  
the sho nuf flo mo  
the significant lost serendipity pee tee  
the bo jangles jingle jangle  
the metropolitan museum sir merganser  
seignor studlee's stud jumper  
the sway-tailed cricket dancer  
the delicious dee dee chee

madame envelope's push pecker  
the culinary crank cuckoo  
the instigator ibis  
the alligator-toothed tick snippet  
the ivory beaked ignatz  
the hopalong cassidy bud hopper  
the roy rogers red rotary rook  
the silver throated ticket punch  
the three-ring-necked vole puncher  
the vermilion vested bellboy bird  
samson's hair lock lock  
delilah's deceptive scissor beak  
the thin stick-legged stump thump  
mr. nobody's snood sparrow  
the simon says saw-whet skeeter owl  
the wheat-grass-shearing wax wing  
beestingoe's bee snatcher  
chesterton's chimney sweep tweeter  
the sawtoothed hog slitter  
the cellophane geek canary  
the octagon blue punch  
the wooly-crested crack jammer  
the ululating unguent cassowary  
the fetid gulch flicker  
baudelaire's badminton bunny buster  
the hydraulic lick pipit  
the off-white whistling whittle warbler  
the by bye and buy beetle bustard  
mother theresa's truculent toast trouncer  
the syncopated puppy petter  
the dusk chanting chump chump  
the Caledonian chop mopper  
muppets moth smotherer  
the irreconcilable twee  
the hook-beaked scurf  
sidney's scrottle blurb  
the syrupy skunk caddy  
the sonorous snork  
the some day some day  
the eleemosynary chortle burp  
the rambunctious rook startler  
mickey rooney's rune swallow  
the nomadic neutron scullion  
aunt matilda's mush jumper  
the wool pull  
the stentorian snort



phlegma's flea hopper  
the fudge-bellied clown thumper  
pirandello's poke thrush  
the glabrous helium shaver  
braggadocio's pot swaddler  
the scandanavian crumpet crusher  
sid caesar's chalk chat  
chuckleberry's cave canary  
the witless pump pigeon  
poltergeist's stump sparrow  
von hindenberg's cinder chuck  
van buren's bronze bell buzzard  
the yellow-crested glue stalker  
mimic's mirror mime  
the elephantine ersatz egret  
the needle-nosed eustachian tube borer  
the stationary blue blazoned app  
the snide snood scrounger  
the v-necked vernacular vireo  
the crustaceous curd chicken  
waymoor's way more  
the pink boletus pecker  
the wiley whim wham  
the seditious once was

### **drowning bee**

trapped wings leaden  
glued to surface tension  
blue-pool doomed  
could neither stop nor start  
my hand a sanctuary  
i lifted him up  
on to a blade of grass  
he crawled no clambered  
shook his wings like  
light leaded glass  
in the august sun  
and quick away he flew  
then true knowing i knew  
in saving small him  
black and yellow fellow  
i saved a part of Thee

### **woodchuck's resume**

woodchuck groundhog whistle pig  
meek easily spooked and smaller

than bruin-brown grizzly  
lawn beaver no waffle tail  
shy chary wary  
scared of all shadows  
including birds' and my own  
won lifetime van winkle award  
(*marmota monax olympic gold*)  
for good hibernation habits  
stands soldier tall in summer sun  
runs with a waddle fast as rabbits  
but don't be deceived  
runs faster than you  
claws like front end loaders  
moves tons of earth  
big rocks small boulders  
when guarding young or home  
fierce and totally fearless  
can swim climb trees but rarely  
has two coats of fur  
appears beauty-parlor frosted  
whistle-warns chubby cubs  
footballs with no-gel mohawks  
to all gardeners a terrorist  
best friend of the NRA  
best marketer of rifles scopes  
and cartridges in the USA  
(deserves a monument)  
all their munitions and double barrels  
aimed right at 'em dawn to dusk  
global positioning system tuned  
to burrow with two doors  
gives a fighting chance  
of surviving their killer blasts  
face washer extraordinaire  
in the manner of squirrels or men  
clean mean clover mowing machine  
sometimes seen outside the den  
standing tall paws on old oak stump  
a brown-robed preacher  
at pulpit prepared to preach  
to a bored and squirming congregation  
of little birds and blindest of men  
wood chucking rodent family  
could chuck would chuck wood  
fence your tomatoes carrots and flowers  
what's yours is truly theirs

every woodchuck prays  
night or day: "I find and fill my bliss  
in every gardener's plot. I invade.  
I blow every perfect vegetable a kiss  
as I devour like a ravenous dog  
every entry in Burpee's seed catalog.  
I, woodchuck, groundhog, whistle pig."

### **ed's shoulder**

ed's shoulder  
had bone spurs  
big as a boulder  
as he gets older  
let's hope those curs  
stay far far away  
so his presence on stage  
with every new play  
just gets cooler and bolder

### **bright bird**

bright bird of Soul our mother  
shaken by thunder in dark we wander

through these treacherous valleys  
adrift across these dangerous seas

far from home and light of day  
to you bright bird we pilgrims pray

### **great sea**

i am moved  
put to a great test  
by a great sea  
borne away

this great salt thing  
has set me adrift  
has set me free  
i cannot hate  
only love or be loved

as i reach out to be  
shouting thanks for this trip  
the best i can be  
here i briefly linger  
here i briefly sing

one finger in the many  
gloves of all eternity  
my truest point of rest  
to make it new each day

### **luck**

luck is a wish  
chance dream of a fish  
etched in the sand  
becomes "Look!  
fresh caught fish!"  
from the end of a hook  
gills pumping dancing  
live in fisherman's hand  
to filets lightly grilled  
with butter parsley or dill  
served on a plain white dish

*• photo of a fish drawn in the sand –  
sent by my youngest sister  
from her ocean vacation*

### **white birds**

white birds rise up  
above a world of green  
a crooked cross  
an empty cup  
a parenthesis  
a form of love  
only gain nothing lost  
nothing but blue  
wide air in between

### **dreamland**

dream a pun  
and after All  
the words  
then worlds

dreamer dream  
a pen of sand  
and the morning sun  
from dreamland spun  
*for Justine on her birthday 9-12-2015*

### **venus**

softly brightly  
small sister to Luna  
through my window  
past black bars  
of maple oak and willow  
from my pillow  
you make me  
count each breath  
you drive the moon  
to another death  
slow horse and rider  
rising sun follows  
hunting your horizon  
then blinding noon  
wherever TIME goes  
all big or small  
may only follow  
who is most alive

### **carbon**

diamonds are forever  
but do they remember  
their birth from coal  
their ancient carbon soul  
diamonds in the new  
diamonds' mare and foal

### **headstone**

when my day is done  
given all to give  
lived all to live  
then will i join You  
all who ever lived  
now when so many  
decomposed into one  
no when nowhere no who  
no worry nothing left to do  
the wind in the maple trees  
with the doves do sigh  
roo hoo roo hoo hoo  
great solitary One  
with you we fuel the sun

### **those that went before**

inundations  
transubstantiations

as if to bedlam  
as if to bethlehem

voices at door's jamb  
naïve ideas and flowers  
apparitions affectations  
their echoes and ours

### **early spring**

oil-paint hues of shimmering greens  
as if no shade of green before had ever been  
skies cerulean as an ancient japanese screen

### **what the violet said**

by many names i'm known:  
tickle my fancy dog violet  
come and cuddle me  
johnny jump up wild pansy  
three faces in a hood hearts ease

the thunder of the peepers in the marsh  
rolled over us from dusk through dawn  
with lion-headed dandelions and accepting daffodils  
i was among the first cut down  
with the first spring mowing of our lawn

### **the plurality of penises**

because i'm small and cute  
more a giver than a taker  
i have more than a few  
fans who are stuck  
on my little candy man  
petite i stand my point moot

so glad i was average born  
smaller than dong and schlong  
heroes of voyeuristic porn  
my size is my strength  
not something i lack  
ecstatic entry front or back

thick extravaganza  
earth shaker top of class  
bongo stick to many lusty drums  
floppy crass bonanza

a thrusting tyrannosaurus  
big conundrum for tiny bums

### **conjunction**

waking from a troubling dream  
beyond the darkness of my room  
through the syrup of the dark  
see venus jupiter and mars  
on fire one above the other rise

no surprise i realize  
nothing do i need  
nothing do i lack  
few things do i fear

across the pond from blue cedar stand  
a barred owl hoots and screams  
who cooks for you who cooks for you all  
october leaves do fly beneath the moon  
as do the leaves of days and nights  
and bubbling cauldrons of the years

no surprise i realize  
nothing do i need  
nothing do i lack  
few things do i fear

### **autumn sun**

october winds are shaking  
all the leaves from all the trees  
red and yellow the bright cusp of fall  
this flaming brilliance remaking all  
the fire behind this great diamond His  
recharging yellow battery of the sun  
all things leaving all things on the run  
this conundrum of light a mystery  
to you and me in our short run

### **tippy's jaw biopsy and teeth removal**

after all his life an ideal cat  
he gets jammed into a cage  
with some catnip his master's shirt

poor comfort scent as he's wheeled  
to a saintly vet used to animals'

outrage and master's fears and tears

he's thrown into another cage  
knocked out cut open teeth yanked  
as thanks for all treated like a rat

### **the wild one**

oh to be the wild one who nests poised at the tops  
of weeping willows and the wild cherry trees  
the one who doesn't give a holy cheep  
the one who looks so calmly down  
with compassion on the clowns  
of gaudy fad and silly fashion  
one not haunted by irony or jest  
sun shining brilliant on his wings  
the one whose truth is go never stop  
the one who flies high above all others  
who shows how to soar and call and sing  
like the arrow's feathered fletch that drives  
the arrow's razor head swift to hunted hearts

### **lost and found**

found  
little white dog  
blind

### **what popped up when googling "oddities of international time zones"**

man addicted to tearing holes through his face  
sets record for most flesh tunnels

man with world's longest fingernails  
hasn't clipped them in over sixty years

man celebrates his birthday  
for forty-six hours by flying back in time

guy kicks himself in the head  
one hundred and thirty-four times  
sets new world record

woman known as 'bouquet slayer'  
caught forty-six wedding bouquets  
is still single



chinese athlete's sets sights on butt skipping record

### **fireflies mid july**

come summer they fight their battles wage their wars  
crushed foil in flight blinking green-yellow off then on  
the semaphore of their cold firing a secret code  
in their short lives an ancient light lives here then gone  
now is their time a battalion they charge night's oppression

their ebbing and flowing their swarming warring  
full moon to gone moon their military strategies  
celebrating as if in a rush the crickets' calls to arms  
the hush of anticipation just before the owls' rally cry  
in the indigo dark they attack commandos to the stars

### **spot of blood on our window**

red evidence that things conspire are deceptive  
or in a trance when the evening light is low  
our fine-winged friends ravenous for mulberries  
who in their frenzied feeding mistake the darkness  
of our unlit living room for an open door  
and against the clear permanence of window glass  
are hurled into a darkness of their own  
the only telling marker a single spot of blood  
warning all that in our hungry flights of fancy  
a darkness can sometimes lead to deeper darkness  
and instead of welcome be passage  
to something darkly more

### **cat dream**

black toupee white face  
nose that goes pale pink to rose  
his severed paw smelling like decay  
impossible to screw it back  
as against the dark one may  
a new light bulb in a socket  
lies severed in my hand  
i pick him up a beaten boxer  
flecks of blood on his face  
he limps away undaunted  
when i awake horror haunted  
i feel that dreams are in a race  
to demonstrate mere waking up  
is preferred to the nightmare cakes  
the dreaming mind keeps baking  
i pour some coffee into my cup

and steel myself against the day

### **early spring**

the chipmunk laity  
each a little Lazarus  
groggy they emerge  
shaky on their chipmunk pins  
from snow tomb tunnels  
crazy eyed squinting  
against the laser sun  
groping their way half-blind  
in their tattered roadster furs  
newly risen this april day  
gnawing on dried maple keys  
born again paying who knows  
for what chipmunk mortal sins

### **in summer**

hour when butterfly takes his masters in *advanced hovering*  
his silent Amens shake every trembling pistil and stamen  
testament to his power - from chaos a fine order uncovering

### **morning light**

opaque glass holding a half-spent votive  
the way the morning light falls through it  
makes it shimmer and softly glow  
an unexpected thing that stops you short  
like a great line you remember  
from frost or stevens or cummings  
reminder that even the banal sings  
if only we could bridle ourselves  
and look as if at a favorite book  
fresh from the dust off our shelves  
and go slowly enough to feel  
like a paper cut that stings  
all things illuminated  
and deeply shining

### **thanksgiving pies**

pies oh pies oh me oh my's  
how they doth make my pupils  
dilate and goeth extra wide  
pies doth banish all scruples  
maketh mouth waters rise  
and putteth all diets aside  
please doth not us chide

pumpkin custard mincemeat apple  
one more tasty slice your choice  
please saveth for us most grateful  
an extra treat super nice  
before this coop we must fly

### **sore wind**

a sore wind blows cold through a small hole in all our hearts  
and mine has proven no different each finish a new chiseled start  
shot by a sundown's gun as clouds pray their sundown prayers  
how else to say with each hushed dusk and diminishing of our day  
always wishing for what we can never have all that vanishes

### **you have to love**

you have to love  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century  
and our little Buys  
when your e-order  
from HSN arrives  
and the box says  
on its two flappy sides  
"This package is HAPPY  
to see YOU too."

### **lament**

all the leaves on the old pear tree are trembling  
in a chilling autumn breeze they shiver  
like small animals on a day turned cold  
as if the sun great giver gave them will to fall

to a decomposing poem of earth and raw rain  
how sad somehow to go how glad to leave  
as cloud shadows cleave their way across the pelt sky  
how the old land smells like a moonshine mountain still

### **the purpose of dreams**

the purpose of dreams is to show us  
we think and see even when asleep

if nothing but good dreams  
you'd never want to be awake

if nothing but bad dreams  
you'd never want to sleep

so in dreams as iron rusts  
no choice but to trust

### **troop of skunks**

near our mailbox end of day  
none in a rush a troop of skunks  
five young ones plus mother  
were lollygagging on the road  
their playpen oblivious  
scattered all naïve and curious  
no notion of cars as injurious  
or a roaring form of doom  
the mother stymied on guard  
as to how to herd her wards  
sees me coming to get the mail  
and in a flash turns the quintet  
from mayhem to “yes mum”  
made orderlies they forward march  
black and white pawns advance  
from evening’s open chess set  
to the densest roadside brush

### **the swallows**

the swallows are so excited  
cheeing swooping swift-swerve diving  
hunting in speedy arcs almost colliding  
under a teal-blue canopy of cloud and sky  
sun and green fields below their accomplices  
their sweet whistling they might be signaling  
as they turn and dip and seize and glide  
whatever hatch of what has inspired such fury  
slick-winged split-tailed never derailed  
houdini’s honing in on this temperature-induced  
harvest their every hurried parry and thrust  
their flying arcs and bows like flying violins  
in their diving flights sing in august we trust

### **toothpaste tube**

#### **to toothpaste tube**

just a few brushings left  
mornings follow nights  
nights follow mornings  
i stare at their mugs  
as they gape and jaw  
and lift their brushes  
from their toothbrush jar

just wait you too will dream  
of the blessed day when  
you have few brushings more  
when they have to buy  
a new replacement you  
from a local convenience store  
my advice my sequel toyou:  
no need to feel bereft  
be prepared in every season  
there's a reason why 'tube'  
always rhymes with 'rube'  
our job's deadly boring, dude  
the best part being when  
you are all squeezed out  
empty as the air and  
can join me at the dump  
where all are equal  
and all at last is fair

### **feel bad for god**

feel bad for god  
it's all his fault  
being in charge mostly sucks  
spelled backwards he is dog  
even worse he rhymes with clod  
fraud flawed scrod and sod  
invisible invincible infallible  
never needs to wash or pay a bill  
doesn't bleed is never ill  
he's never wrong always right  
can never be just here or there  
because he's everywhere  
always giving or taking  
(who knows if or what he eats)  
*grand chef et piece de resistance*  
a cosmic groundskeeper  
direct reports: angels and seraphim  
only enemies: devils and grim reaper  
he never takes a nap or sleeps  
our souls he's always raking  
not known to laugh or cry or dance  
will-o'-the-wisp always ghostly  
he's all seeing yet never seen  
doesn't break never begins or ends

never kowtows or bows to the lash

being at once more and less  
one and many yet never stressed  
our dire last-minute prayers  
may serve to ignite his ire  
or make him feel badly used  
no present past or future  
he's stuck in the infinite  
his own design and making  
his breath moves the seasons' sparks  
shooting stars' planets' sails he fills  
so when he fails to take your call  
put aside frail human reason  
*stay calm!* it's not his fault  
his truths most ancient of all  
fire's maker grand olympic vaulter  
no land no galaxy he can not vault  
the world his ark from bugs to ducks  
(who knows he may have claws and fur  
if things keep up we'll soon call him 'her'  
end to White Beard though still to be feared)  
given arcane dogma and holy esoterica  
trumps cash and lucre He The Mighty Buck

### **the snoring of cats**

the snoring of cats  
is semiphore  
to fat mice and rats  
code quite magical  
gives them casuse to play  
vermin maniacal  
no matter night or day  
safe zone sabbatical

### **pigeons**

life is hard in manhattan  
if you're a pigeon harder

just look most are missing toes  
walking on stubs and stumps

in their scumble for scarce crumbs  
admire their pigeon will

crumbs dropped are their larder

they live and hobble none bitter

no pigeon ever known to kill

### **cover ups**

nothing like a pair of calvin klein boxers  
covering the genitalia of bull moose in rut  
now that's civilization in all its regalia  
a mad magazine of no dicks ands or butts  
banning shows of all animals' colloquial nutz  
except of course all maine lobsters'  
royally displayed at bacchanalia in italia

**reply to email from 'flat freddy'**

*There was an "effort" years ago  
to put clothes on naked animals.  
It may have been instigated by  
"MAD" magazine or a similar  
publication of serious thought*

### **to sleep to die to not ask why**

each night tucked in bed we sleep we die  
always children on our metaphorical knees we pray  
of those who close their eyes a sleepless few ask why  
and stay up staring through their windows at the sky  
feeling like the end of the world will surely come  
when it's just the vend of one day's world unstrung  
dead as lead or an idea forgotten by a dunderhead  
so why then is the final sleep (put pain and suffering aside)  
so different than the close of each day's ride as we slide  
cheated into the theatre of gone from which some think  
there is no wake this final thing no figure of speech  
rhetorical as a pen's last stroke indelible as the black in ink  
as we fall down the funnel into The Well each by each

### **celebration of a solitude**

red tail lights flicker all else end of day umber gray  
the past is melting mounds of snow mother-skunk yellow  
her car curves elegant down the empty bend  
past our country road she's off to meet an old friend  
optical illusion of christmas tree lights reflecting  
through our window projected onto the macadam  
onto the wet road shining slick shining black  
in the mist red squirrels play catch-me-follow  
in glee scuttling down and up the red cedar's trunk  
fireplace flames happily hasten firewood's end  
the cats curled up like caterpillars in a huddle  
comforted by their own cat smells and maybe mine  
the end of the year but one short day away

those that think trying to sum it plus or minus  
what dreamed what done what wasted what failed  
in old year's pail memories drift and dart like minnows  
past future present blend luminous into a kind of halo  
not an end but an augury of things to be but what  
rising up like moths out of a long-unopened trunk  
or optimistic geese escaping the prison of their pond  
four swans elegant in the marsh their necks as if carved  
their Carrera white against the slate of quarry waters  
whiter than salt on snow their feathered bottoms upended  
paddling they feed on what roots or tubers they need  
warm december inspiring them to flight procrastination  
soon they too will disappear as will this punctured year  
all things flying if not south to some well-dreamed juncture  
a place of no fear a rich center a nerve of inspiration  
each unstoppable day a chance to fly a new migration  
new year's eve 2015

### **domestic animals**

sent from a good god's far-away place the animals  
we love are Joy's filters heeling to our every turn  
best mirrors best models of how each day to show  
how we feel for those we love and each day trust

they are compassion's hand in the glove of now  
they know how calmly to live when all seems bleak  
their mere looking up is truest foil against most grief  
wish like them we could find instant healing sleep

depends on how brave we are how well we see  
if so we'd find ourselves by measures more merry  
we'd hold their animal ways deeper within us  
we'd better practice their lore of animal love

### **captive bird**

alone in my cage solo  
moon and the stars  
gifts my captors gave me:  
protection from the household cat  
and the dark and endless sky

alone in my cage solo  
i thought of all of you  
sky and stars slowly moved



like the heart of some small  
frightened thing close to the ground

alone in my cage solo  
i dreamed of being held  
and of holding you and  
how that makes years gone by  
and years to come always fine

### **howl of the homunculus**

the germ of the spermists  
before birth in all wombs brief  
i grow on tomb-blood and piss

i never wash my sheets  
i crap in and never comet my tub  
am proud to be a filthy schlub

i don't look both ways  
when crossing any street  
don't obsess about what i eat

i pee on peoples' lawns and rugs  
wake way before dawn  
scheme all day out-slug slugs

my ambition is to spit on peoples' food  
my dirty secret definition  
of the ultimate good in nutrition

before i do my daily evil duty  
take twenty sugars  
in my tea or coffee

i love to poison domestic pets  
wake before dawn to ladle out  
the lethal dosage each one gets

i'm always bitching and complaining  
about the smallest inconvenience  
my list of phobias is a form of genius

i'm always picking nose and scabs  
clawing at anything that's itching  
demonic or metaphorically stitching

always late never on time  
don't give a damn what people say  
or how i squander dimes and dollars

i blow out all candles  
on everyone else's cakes  
spit on everything people cook or bake

i wear the same socks for weeks  
my BVDs until they reek  
wile away my minutes hours days

my months and years too  
wish i knew where time goes  
never polish my shoes

don't believe what's on TV  
the bullshit of the news  
wear browns with blacks and blues

never wash my hands  
i like to keep it gross  
after every single poop

when i walk my dog  
i always fail to scoop  
wet brown logs on every stoop

i fart in church in elevators on trains  
in airplanes i shriek on my cell  
quiet cars can rot in hell

i stumble aimless from here to there  
do everything half assed on rote  
i chew tobacco drink smoke pot

i'm democratic in my hate  
i fear and loathe all peoples  
niggers jews chinks brits or yanks

i hate to shave never bathe  
i only love to listen to my self  
projectile vomit tantrums rants and raves

i disdain all soaps deodorants and gels  
use no brushes combs or Q-tips

think my shrinks are full of shit

through all history you'll find me riding  
with four horsemen of the apocalypse  
with crows and vultures savaging the dead

goya did me justice in his disasters of war  
which inspired me to viciously do worse and more  
to widen the meaning of (D)evil in my dictionary

i love to curse and swear  
"fucking" is an in between-every-syllable  
habit i don't intend to break

the more totally miserable i get  
the more i explode delirious with joy  
not sure if i'm a girl or boy

i'm fat as a pig  
and getting fatter  
i'm losing all my hair

i stink so much i empty busses  
i never wash my hernia trusses  
me myself and i THE only thing that matters

do-gooders miles and miles away  
smell a prodigal salvation day  
with me freud'd have a hay day

i despise work as much as play  
i mope about waste time day dream  
do nothing break mirrors spill cream

animals and children deplore me  
no limits to my foolery  
mayor of the village of Idiocy

in public i pick my nose  
scratch my balls eat my snot  
all things i like a lot

my teeth are rotten my breath is foul  
hate smiling love to scowl  
tout each movement of my bowels

i'm a walking booby prize  
for me self-hatred is the way to go  
when picking scabs i pick them slow

i put dishes away half washed  
when it comes to clean i'll take dirt  
i like stains on all my ties and shirts

i'm apocalypse and pestilence all in one  
biblical whale that lives to kill human krill  
in the same way god made oranges

i create cancer pustules and STDs  
spawn of war torture and despair  
i am THE rabid dog unleashed beware

i believe in unprotected sex  
i drink and drive do all drugs  
i eat bugs that are still alive

i deprive all drowning men of air  
i greet all life with a hateful stare  
amazed i turned three thousand eighty-five

for me joy in all things' perdition  
is the highest form of erudition?  
i take great glee in the law of entropy

nightmares misfortune disasters pain  
species extinction global warming  
crazed politicians anthrax nuclear war

nuts putting cyanide in candy bars  
hooligans random slicing folks with razors  
lasers firing down on planet earth from mars

cops killing everything that breathes  
with choke holds hoses clubs guns and tasers  
beggars in our parks living in the trees

just like god and my best pal the devil  
i'm always there generation on generation  
seeing some die in despair in that i revel

the one best thing on which i thrive  
is feeding on others peoples' worst calamities

i'm sure i can't be killed will never die

### **rainbow chasing**

the year was nine days new  
at dusk the horizon deep teal blue

mild as spring this early winter eve  
sky now all turquoise lemon tangerine

following the downpour of the storm  
light gained weight a shimmer of celandine

by sleight of light some magician unseen  
drew a rainbow arching its back like a siamese

stretching stronger the feline prism blushed  
at day's end even the song birds hushed

knowing how fickle winter light can be  
of the photos i rushed not one was caught

what my eyes saw camera's eye could not  
proof that chasing rainbows often come to naught

### **fragment**

lost in memory a dream a maze a midden heap  
peering into a massive high-ceilinged long bar

a mural of beaten copper pots and pans gleaming  
in the dark lit outside-in by the headlights of a car

things reek of wet concrete mildew musk and rot  
dank piles of newspapers bloated with dust and grease

things seen as if through a negative in half light  
a ruin held up against a rusted sun at end of day

urine of cats and flea-ridden rats trying to sing  
processions of the dull and drab wandering through

thin shadows of souls searching in this vast cave  
open to what for what hidden elusive thing

### **roué**

given all i can take  
soul now old and riven

in music i still hear courage  
find small magic in the stars  
and from time to time  
frail consolation in art

i calm my rage and ire  
a pale wrinkled staring geek  
by admiring beauty's fire  
aflame in women passing by  
fine women of every age  
bitter sweet my sweaty palms

*first version*

**couraggio !**

given all i can give  
my heart now old and riven  
in music i still hear courage  
still find magic in the stars  
and from time to time  
weak consolation in bars

an old geek staring  
i mute my rage and ire  
by admiring beauty's fire  
aflame in women passing by  
women of a certain age  
my last sweet psalms

**listening to a fat cat snore**

outside it's freezing rain and snow  
other than watching those you love  
sleeping children husbands wives  
few things as joyful seen from above  
make most cat lovers feel more alive  
than hearing a napping fat cat snore  
plugged into a deep kind of buddha peace  
no worries not wanting one thing more  
no thought for next dollar own or lease

a drunk royal dreaming on his palace floor  
expressing what catatonically sounds  
like two balloons rubbed together hard  
or the ungreased hinge of a creaky door  
this simple sound brings cat lovers  
around to the reason why cats are here  
just for us they groom entertain and show

mostly it's the simplest things that reign  
things that can't be bought don't age or rust  
for squeaky (aka the squeaks, squeak-meister, squeakster,  
mr. squeaks, squeak toy, squeak-oh, squeaky-deaky, catso, big boy) 1•17•2016

**some day**

some day  
down our street  
everyone will get along  
everyone will sing  
in many different ways  
the same sweet song

some day  
down our street  
everyone will be a star  
there will be no war  
lion and lamb will lie down  
together in fine or stormy weather

some day  
down our street  
no one will die of hunger  
no one will be shot  
the sound of childrens' laughter  
will silence all gun's thunder

some day  
down our street  
the homeless will be sheltered  
the sick made healthy  
the poor shown mercy  
all hardened hearts be melted

some day  
down our street  
there will be one language  
all will be understood  
like sunshine on brightest days  
best memories of our childhoods

some day  
down our street  
skin color will not matter  
not money but kindness will talk  
grudges will be erased like chalk  
on blackboards or penciled letters on a page

some day  
down our street  
each of us will live in peace  
deep within our little souls  
find some place so much larger  
a place of ease a calmest gentle harbor

some day  
down our street  
there will be no sadness  
no terrorists driving our worlds insane  
no prisons no prisoners no inmates  
no locks on the doors of joy and gladness

some day  
down our street  
there will be no terror or fear  
no concrete walls no limitations  
no barbed wire no electric-shocking fences  
no ego pride attitudes or bloated pretenses

some day  
down our street  
beyond the shores of death  
everyone will meet again  
and all will find a truer breath  
a place where there is no pain

some day  
down our street  
there will be no second guessing  
no fear to follow your dream  
no worry about the differences  
between what's real what's seen

some day  
down our street  
there will be no fat-cat bureaucrats  
living off the poor and disadvantaged  
but governments that serve  
never treating the poor like gutter rats

some day  
down our street  
media and religion will not be



forces of control and domination  
keeping the lowly in their places  
but guides to all souls' elevation

### **cartoon hudson**

ice floes in slow motion sashay up river on an incoming tide  
a zip-a-dee-doo-dah disney animation of oh what a wonderful day  
you can almost hear jiminy cricket's voice his chirping oration  
two clouds hippopotami-gray in pink tutus pli  saut  relev   
get ready to begin their winter ballet oh what a wonderful day  
all but a few amtrak pilgrims blind to the magic of their ride

### **driving home on 84 east**

#### **after buying a new car**

enchanted by the first flash gordon  
na ve sparklers spewing from his rocket's tail  
now a laugh compared to today's effects

when i was five i used to sculpt  
racing cars and spaceships from play-doh

(for youngsters too young to know  
a nontoxic barely-edible modeling clay)

and picture myself inside them  
and dream of driving dream of flying

yesterday on CT 84 east driving home  
highway right out of central casting

into the horizon eating up the snaking road  
the winding road an exercise in vanishing

into an ever-vanishing perspective  
humans in multi-colored metal bugs with wheels

like terrestrial astronauts  
my wife in one car and i in another

i behind her then she behind me  
like a childhood game of leap frog

in two steel bubbles on wheels at 65 mph  
low on gas i have to break away from our

vehicle dance and do i imagine or did she return my wave

see you later wave thinking this is Marriage

two separate vehicles speeding down the same road  
maybe listening to two different channels

one leading then one following one following the other's lead  
and confident that we'll see one another at home

for dinner and an evening fireside with the cats  
but in the instant i turned off the main road

realizing that at some point there will be a turning off  
the main road diverging and at that turn only

one will be following the other's lead  
for whatever is left in the other's drive home

and then I think maybe we do more trips to the same  
place in separate cars and celebrate our arrival and return  
more enthusiastically a small form of happiness and bliss

### **photo of 'the glow' (eight months)**

'the glow' that's what we call baby grace  
chin dripping with a glaze of gerber's pears  
eyes content round as pies in that after-meal adagio  
electric hair more like reddish fuzz or cotton candy  
as if a sneeze or wind of breath could whisk it off  
on the back of her high chair image of a teddy bear  
her breakfast buddy her angel guardian always there  
how she looks out greets her world is a kind of judo  
where she the weakest most vulnerable dependent one  
has the tribe kowtowing to her for their own sheer fun  
the pace at which she learns absorbs crawls and grows  
irrepressible ferocious full of life and tiny animal gusto  
this is what our world has forgotten and needs to see  
shows us what we've lost most need to feel and know

*for Jonathon and Alycia*

### **the captain**

my sister justine had one of new jersey's ugliest dogs  
sandy her name eye-bulging love bringing her game  
chubby as a bratwurst on a plate of kraut and 'taters'  
toothpick legs plump hors d'oeuvre knew no tricks yet rules  
among a least comely few ordained to the order of the bark  
priestess she made the rest look like a pack of hobo woofers  
no matter good or faithful above all others how sandy shone

high above - a chihuahua sun breaking through heavy cloud  
sandy sandoo how we all loved You YOU mixed-breed mutt  
you'd roll over pee daintily with glee when greeting company  
just a tiny drop or two when your merry bladder lost its grip  
but that didn't keep your friends from feeling glad and chipper  
paper towels before the invention of the scented wee-wee pad  
was all it took to sop your past-the-brink tex-mex breed's overjoy  
you swam like a pint-sized seal with my two nephews and me  
in your backyard pool made us so happy we'd laugh like fools  
then just today at a garage that did car inspections there he was  
The Captain was his name Protection was his ankle biting game  
no badge no cap no gun sharp teeth-n-growl male sandy-'n-thinner  
in a bipolar-way friendly soon as you spoke no more savage hollers  
he'd take off his security guard collar and become your buddy  
he must have come from your cool gene pool, sandy (RIP),  
with friends like you two who wouldn't want to swim and play  
mates who keep all dog lovers (you? and me) from being sad  
*for justine and sandy*

### **timothy edward faver PhD**

now that my nephew timothy has finally graduated  
with his hard earned PhD and his braniac brain largely intact  
having spent more time in libraries than most unread books  
he can now opine on mathematical fiction and mathematical facts  
expose fermat gaus ptolemy bernouli turing newton euclid  
archimedes lebniz the whole numbers gang for who they truly are  
a bunch of egg heads now dead to hungry hordes of einstein wannabes  
tell how string and transcendental number theories are vastly overrated

go back to his good old days at grandma agnes's when he was five  
don flowered aprons put pots or pans like top hats on his head  
not because he likes to cook but just because he likes the look  
take a break from burning midnight oil be free feel totally alive  
best of all he can begin to live it up have some fun and dedicate  
more time to sleeping in drinking wine wild parties and pick up bars  
or take a break shave his head become a monk and avoid all libraries  
and lastly, kudos!, tim, for getting paid to be who you will be and are

### **what counts**

what counts means anything to me  
not a damned any other thing  
than love nature music art and poetry

call me a romantic fool  
all arts are born free freely given  
driven frantic yet always cool

so as i look back and back  
no thing worth more than fame or money  
than love nature music art and poetry

### **the world-wide web**

*o tempora o mores* o world wide web  
ya gotta love the times we live in  
when all you have to do is google it  
anything anything anybody anywhere  
and there like a strawberry pop tart it is  
what power what access but is it knowledge  
who cares if the omnipotence it gives is a rocket  
when as kids we thought we were really cool  
after running to the dictionary (a book!) to know  
among the longest words in english were  
antiestablistmentarianism or from marry poppins  
supecalifragilisticexpialidocious now just punch a key  
and shazam and kapow you are as smart as any PhD  
causing old geezer me to quake and swear and drool  
i a dunce most babies more tech savvy than me

### **on earth ten million living things unknown unnamed**

somewhere deep in the caverns  
in the mummy-musty bowels  
of fusty natural history museums  
are small tribes of troll-like classifiers  
three hundred thousand who year after year  
keep count of new or vanishing species  
heads down in the semi dark seldom looking up  
then only to straighten their *pince-nez* wires  
their daunting task avoiding bars and taverns  
their mates - cold tea or coffee in antique cups  
adding deleting counting coup - diligent classifiers  
caught in the flux of who's come who's gone  
crocodilian reptilian mammalian large and small  
the hardest part for them is proving ones just  
found are found and ones just lost are lost  
and ones that disappeared are truly gone  
most unfound are bugs and microbial  
crying for a name and to be cataloged  
not a hectare of jungle forest truly scanned  
will take half a million trolls two thousand years  
each by each they sharpen pencils in their jars  
true to the Linnaean way memorializing all the ones

that once gamboled and ran then slain by The Poison: Man

**starling on top of radio tower  
outside rhinecliff train station**

how he held his perch in a strong winter wind  
on the needle tip of the antenna was one thing to see  
how he drew his mates and family there another mystery  
his eye on the mighty hudson and upriver kingston bridge  
his gaze on the shawangunk their smoky blue and silver haze  
six fuel-oil storage tanks below like giant pepper shakers  
we small passengers shivering on platform in wooly bunches  
bright scarves waving flag-like in the cold to greet the train  
and his flock shinnying up the guy wires like black beads  
an ad-lib live abacus doing what all starlings do best  
watch the morning sun wake from dreams the sleeping clouds  
their crazy-quilt recitals of virtuoso cheeps chortles and mews  
masters of mimicry the only time they regress to Starling Voice  
(the precise sun casting rectangular shadows on the tracks)  
is when less operatic near their nest at dusk they quiet down  
for their day's-end oratorio and crazy-quilt ska-fest colloquy  
their tower standing tall from thin to thinner telescoping up  
in the blue early evening light they rest more blue than black

**aubade**

days lighter  
full moon  
rays brighter

**falling down**

falling falling way way down

down through mickey mouse star wars and a second house  
down through mexican starving dogs beggars and artificial fire logs  
we feel it fly by in a blink hardly time to give it a dirty look or a think  
and looking back it's gone like a puff or a toke or a last-call drink

falling falling way way down

down through big name architects pop tunes and many ghostly moons  
down though emails tweets instagrams mobile devices and italian ices  
it's all melting as we speak the tide is going out all our boats have sprung a leak  
looking forward storm clouds are rising high on the horizon it's looking bleak

falling falling way way down

down through pistachios hazel nuts academia macadamias and fat people with big butts

down through pesto pest control luxury pet shampoos voodoo and urban taboos  
it's all off and running some where some way ahead of us and we have missed the bus  
it's raining cats and dogs we feel a chill and have failed to take our happy peppy pills

falling falling way way down

down through the sewage of reality tv and dumbed-down self-help shows and idiotic tips  
down through weight loss brain loss cat loss dog loss love lost damn the cost and scripts  
the toll it takes is imperceptible until flat out one day the mirror says "unacceptable!"  
and the rain like tears is streaming down the windows of our eyes asking why o why

falling falling way way down

down through train rides bus rides plane rides watching barren landscapes stumble by  
down through ticket stubs holistic body rubs cruel snubs someone else's blood in tubs  
we know the police and IRS are on their way can't find one shoe are just half-dressed  
the jailors laughing in the corridors the prisoners gnawing pigs knuckles on prison floors

falling falling way way down

down through a circus collage of surreal dreams and half-remembered molten memories  
down through driver's licenses inspection stations root canals and serial colonoscopies  
time to charge our batteries but no outlet found every hole square and sadly we are round  
the jigsaw puzzle is missing the last piece the deck is stacked the consequences profound

falling falling way way down

down through wishes aspirations accusations procrastinations many raw inflammations  
down through trendy hairdos tooth whitenings liposuction dry skin and sore incrustations  
the legs the belly the eyes the feet the knees the hips the maw off on their own crazy trips  
no postcards poems songs prayers exhortations incantations will calm this foundering ship

falling falling way way down

down through yesterday today and tomorrow and tomorrows we late and latest to follow  
down through misunderstandings inconsiderations hesitations and the latest play stations  
the difference between yes no stop slow go red green or amber too rapidly dissolving  
present future past are a blur a *catasrophe* a short stop before that last good to last drop

falling falling way way down

down through good intentions desperate prayers faux inventions belief suspensions  
down through late payments credits debts strange arrangements unbalanced books  
somewhere a blind accountant that has the key but lines cut or blocked from you and me  
the mind a barrel of crazy apes in a zoo without a keeper fighting for a bunch of grapes

falling falling way way down

down from a tower of babbling politicians recuperating from a bloody democratic nose  
down with no answers to poorly phrased prayers like naked *triste-tropiques* nude dancers  
in a painting by Matisse all piggy pink in a circle hand in hand on a hill of fauvist green  
a form of joy The Imagination painting through his hand what no one 'till him has seen

falling falling way way down

down from propaganda blitzes of smug so-called experts who think they can think for you  
down from all the data in the world with one key's press an i-pad will tell you what to do  
all the while Knowledge stands shivering naked and alone antiquated as a rotary phone  
or statues of martyrs in catholic churches or Frost's stands of solitary bending birches

falling falling way way down

### **eleven english words**

#### **that beat counting-sheep**

honorificabilitudinita (27 letters)

antidisestablishmentarianism (28)

floccinaucinihilipipification (29)

supercalifragilisticexpialidocious (34)

praetertranssubstantiationally (37)

hepaticocholecystostcholecystenterostomy(40)

pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconists (45)

antipericatametaanaparcircumvolutiorectumgustpoops (50)

osseocarnisanguineoviscericartilaginineruomedullary (51)

aequeosalinocalcinoceraceoaluminoscupreovitriolic (52)

bababadalgharaghtakamminapronnkonnbronntonnepronnt-

uonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawntoohoooordeenturnuk (100)

## **july july**

july, you are really shaping up  
showing yourself like first love  
or a radiant poem  
or a lakeside summer home  
you carry summer calm and light  
so seductive that your fragrance  
awakens and rules a continent  
so beautiful you frighten

i blame you, july  
for my lost working notes  
written while driving  
stopped at traffic lights  
it was all about you, july  
i was too busy trying  
to translate what i saw into words  
that like many photographers  
who too busy framing and shooting  
was blind to truly seeing you  
and when i read my notes  
i knew i had to look again  
as is too often true  
with seasons people things  
so, july, here's why i love you:

birds or dragonflies ask the sun to rise  
mightiest clouds our eyes can find  
the pizzicatos of children laughing  
bringing echoes of childhood back  
the alchemy of white catalpa  
blossoms against chicory skies  
the translucence of mayflies backlit  
by Great Projector the setting sun  
the facts of bicycles canoes rowboats  
sailboats yachts motorbikes firecrackers  
smells of burgers on charcoal grills  
coney island fries bubbling in lard

beachside mobs and suntan lotions  
people in lawn chairs napping in their yards  
the smell of youth that brings us back  
the sounds of waves and people laughing  
dogs' and seagulls' barks lawn mowers revving  
waves imploring radios to change stations  
the shock of red-orange day lilies roadside



bees mosquitoes ant lions ants of every size  
worms dropped by clumsy robins from the sky  
bull frogs' croaks night heron's sullen honks  
the complaint of rain giving leaves their sheen  
boulevards' and lawns' monopoly boards of green  
new corn swaying to rusty tractor's roars  
fireflies still new and i still loving you

### **moon over my shoulder**

so bright  
moon over my shoulder  
early morning moon  
sharpened sickle  
or shallow bowl  
spilling night's end  
or new day's light  
into the toy of my soul  
few things as untiring  
or bolder than you  
moon over my shoulder  
early morning moon  
so bright

### **the etymology of BOOGER**

whatever did the romans call them?  
their sneaky kids like school kids of all times  
gluing proof of their ancient nasal archeology  
to bottoms of slate tablets on their laps or  
under seats of amphitheaters or dusty coliseums  
remains fresh to drying ever green a mystery  
no latin word exists even shock jock catullus  
poet of profane penetrations is mute on this

“booger's” roots are obscure:

1800s British “boggard” (nose goblin?) or  
medieval Bulgarian heretical sect The Bogomils  
(notorious for their deviant sexual practices –  
sadly no mention of nose fetishes in their erotic lore)  
leave a trail from “bugger” to “bogger” (bothersome)  
rarely heard in board rooms synagogues mosques or churches  
still worshipped in grade schools “booger” onward lurches

in english other orifice words more privileged  
have formal names for polite public use  
“farts” are “flatulence” “poop” is “stool”  
“piss” “pee” “tinkle” “whiz” is “urine”

less immaculate “come” or “jism” are ejaculate  
poor orphan “booger” owns no proper word  
just a phrase “fresh or dried nasal mucus”  
summed up by uninspired scientists among us

too busy to consider kennings like "nose slider"  
or "Kermit-custard" "nose-splodge" "snoot-slime"  
"citizens of the nasal village" or "external excrescence"  
the thing that gives kids joy to dig and pick and when they find  
even sing to the nose gods of olde who also are not named

### **interlude**

for all of this Amtrak is to blame  
as nature hates a vacuum train trips  
have an alpha and omega to them  
a similar thing on planes and ships

### **alpha**

on the early train to rhinecliff  
i pulled down the seat-front serving tray  
and on its outer edge touched a crust that lurks  
under school childrens' first grade funky desks  
and like proust was flown back through the nose of time  
radiators clanging steaming up the windows  
watching the clock for recess bell to ring  
surrounded by a gang of compulsive nostril pickers  
a bunch of bring-em-back-alive deep-diggers -  
rhinotillexomaniacs  
(will they ever get their index fingers back?)

### **omega**

returning from café car with a coke  
and a bag of utz's barbecue potato chips  
the aisle blocked by a *skinny-ma-link*  
(my mother's phrase) three feet short  
gremlin so thin he'd hardly cast a shadow  
on a bright day on an old barn wall  
his index finger so far up his nose he  
could have been extracting his frontal lobe  
eyes rolled back in blissfull treasure-hunting reverie  
my shadow's tower made him step aside  
then in a flash thanks in large measure to  
eager excavators like him i saw a Grand Tradition:  
*the power of leaving something small behind*  
like an operatic aria an old religious hymn  
continues preserved on his fold-down tray as he  
eternal proud miner savors a perfect way to start a day  
*for billy collins and my friend bill prout*

### **the pumpkin**

the pumpkin  
that once sat proud  
on our highest step  
autumn orange  
lit from within  
deified each night  
with a toothy grin  
outlived all the leaves  
the treat or trick of Halloween  
braved snows late winter sleet  
is a flattened sack of seeds  
and mold and sallow skin  
a sand-brown burst balloon  
no differences now  
between out and in

### **proof**

god is just good god thing  
that when he gave us farts  
they don't burst out in quarts  
but only stink and sing

### **nocturne**

ever wish you were the moon?  
glowing down on Oceans Uomo  
softly inspiring chopin or debussy  
glistening off backs of sleeping geese  
your alchemy of night and bone  
and blood of stars and cloud  
shining down on barns and farms  
forests mountains fields fresh mown  
night to day Witness all alone  
everlasting galleon stubborn hope  
cold antidote to man's old lunacies  
your unbroken celestial dance  
mocks all man's vain contrivance  
grand generalissimo next to you  
armies of stars but dim archipelagos

### **ever wish you were the moon?**

ever wish you were the moon  
enlightening emperors kings and queens  
civilizations from Neanderthal to Qing

waves of assassinations assignments  
muting darkest deeds with softest light  
making poets and lovers tremble  
touched by your unearthly lunar light  
trick or treating little ghosts on Halloweens  
commanding the tides' ebbs and flows  
against night's black vault our great shining O  
giving night hunters light enough to kill  
and shivering prey reason to be still  
you are a planetary switzerland  
never judging mans' hallucinations and  
on snow your shadows winter-moon blue  
after eons still you rise and set so true

### **why poetry**

for warmth against the cold  
like a caveman at his fire  
and for those that love  
words with no idolatry  
like the experience of gloves  
taken out of the closet  
off the shelf and put on snug  
to keep one from freezing

### **first dandelions in may**

from the yellow orb of an eye  
spring's most hardy ground flower  
so common yet with such distinction  
to the intricate architecture  
of their delicate geodesic puffs  
parachute seeds that fly  
a form of drifting rapture  
that children try to capture  
each of them are guaranteed  
in their humble hierarchy of need  
that a strong wind will liberate them  
freed to their delicate destinies:  
immunity from extinction

### **happiness**

the bush that's blooming bone white  
across our field near edge of marsh  
stays white for only a week  
and then turns sour apple green  
like many kinds of happiness  
a memory of a memory

of how delicate spring can be  
pale as driftwood ocean side  
bleached gray by an outgoing tide  
betrayed by the traitor Moonlight  
then gone like a favorite dream  
on Holy Saturday (*Sabbatum Sanctum*) 2016

### **music lit from within**

certain music ever-new listens  
in the same way a great steak eats  
the opposite of stained glass  
in the gothic cathedral of Chartres  
as if lit brightly from within

certain music ever-new listens  
so deeply felt none need ask  
ferrying a few open hearts  
to where note-smith's soul still beats  
merry One that forever lasts  
for my friend fred siesel

### **did you hear me, Pain**

please take your finger out of that imaginary hole in my brain  
or the one in the cavity that causes my eyes to bleed imaginarily  
or the one in the patient sky the pale round wound of the moon  
leaking white blood and blue shadows down on the plowed earth  
that nocturnal magic that genome that some refer to as moonlight

did you hear me, Pain

you heartless shit stop tormenting those i love and know and those i don't  
bring it all to me defeat me lay it on my shoulders like job's or frida kahlo's  
and leave everyone else alone including goldfish horses dogs cats and hamsters  
give it up already stop your demonic sadistic insatiable game  
we know you for what you are: Evil with no brakes a cancerous runaway train

did you hear me, Pain

stay well away from the little and most gentle innocent ones  
bring your worst to the ones who carry and can fire back their mental guns  
the toughest (richest, oldest) who have a bank of stubbornness callous to your worst  
why don't you take a nap or a long vacation or a trip to another planet  
why don't you invent another less vicious way to spend your nights and days

did you hear me, Pain

you keep hurting all of us and whatever have we done to you but accept

my mother accepting her end away from her home in some ammonia stinking room  
my father dropping dead upstairs on the bathroom floor with a last pathetic sigh  
complete strangers killed by the act of hanging up a phone or choking on a bone  
the unlucky ones that linger in exquisite agony one after the next forgotten memories

did you hear me, Pain

are we just bloody crumbs of toast falling off your cruel breakfast table  
brushed flying to the kitchen floor while you nonchalant walk out the door  
your butter is blood your bread is us loaf on loaves of the sliced and broken  
your indifference to the scrim of skin that covers us was goya's worst dream  
you pare us back dress us down demolish us like third-world fishing shacks

did you hear me, Pain

clearly you are a mindless torture-robot a heartless mastication machine  
mercy or compassion are not words saved in your dictionary of foreign terms  
you keep no count you count no coup lives are just numbers no matter to you  
there are scientific terms medical or mathematical definitions of what you do  
nightmare cellular armageddon aids cancer nuclear war flesh your horror screen

did you hear me, Pain

it's time to account to at last come to justice for your cruelty and blind disdain  
what if you were the trembling one in closets or cellars hunted ruthlessly down  
the one hiding in some paleolithic cave hoping to outlive the tyrannosaur's reign  
whose dumb puppet are you? is it god or satan pulling your strings making you bite?  
don't you get it wouldn't you prefer another role and stop flaying our gentle souls?  
for the courageous and enduring brother by another mother, my friend, bill prout

### **gray squirrel vulture hickory nut and me**

a young pup squirrel struck in the other lane  
killed by car or truck likely felt little pain  
next to his sleeping head a hickory nut  
a prize from last autumn he clutched as he crossed  
nut's meat exactly what his winter diet lacked  
naïve not knowing his gain would be his loss  
like a dark hard pillow beside his gray head  
bald vulture perched in hickory tree looked down  
vulture eye foresaw all clearly long before me

### **the crows**

the crows fly south at end of day  
i ask and wonder but do not know why  
they fly north at start of day  
i ask and wonder but do not know why

it is the same with light and dark  
it is the same with day and night  
they fly and we from them from light  
to dark until the end we wonder why

### **good company**

do you ever look up  
at the passing panoply  
clouds on clouds on clouds  
in all their majesty

if it makes you want to shout  
then nothing can interrupt  
your dance to your divinity  
the wake-up call of you to Thee

### **crime's victims**

crime has such beautiful teeth  
its victims stricken or razor bitten  
they barely know what hit them  
they lie beneath a berth of earth  
reap their rewards of hell or heaven  
a stone a prayer is all they're given

### **let's assume**

let's assume  
after all of this  
there is nothing  
below or above  
not hell not heaven  
so just before  
the closing of the door

it comes down to this  
(less or more  
poetry or prose)  
a very small list  
of those we love  
the few we chose or  
those few who chose us

### **here's to**

here's to naysayers, game players, idea slayers

bureaucrats hiding in their computer vaults  
vicious cynics their dismissive assaults  
those that answer the phone rude as bots  
the ones that keep you chilling your heels  
closed in the comfort of their tiny cubicles  
hiding behind the boulders of tried and true  
cozy in their offices with no respect for Time  
(or you) the ones that lord it over 'little people'  
and kiss the bums of those at the ladder's top  
the smug humorless self-important icicles  
control freaks who look down their noses  
on the untried the innovative and the new  
sticklers who live by letter not spirit of the law  
those who rule by title fear and petty politics  
safe in finding fault and always saying NO  
ever suspicious ever suspect dead in eye  
to any spark of enthusiasm energy or joy  
the know-they-know-it-all too closed to learn  
do nothings who pass the buck and still they earn  
those who have misplaced their moral testicles  
the arrogant takers too cheap fat or lazy to give  
there must be a favored spot in hell for them all  
where white-hot coals to their thin skins stick and  
cherubs sipping sodas watch them burn and stink

### **the role of poetry and art**

the role of poetry and art  
is to shake us up  
to make us wonder why  
to bring a tear to the eye  
and strength to the heart  
strong tea in a porcelain cup

### **the ant says**

the ant says  
season after season  
i know well i know  
though less than zero  
how well i know my duty  
with friends to carry  
bodies or wings of moths  
or flies or wasps or bees  
to sustain our family  
in our living labyrinth  
a choreography of codes  
an intelligence of roles



our colony the Hero  
my small destiny to bring  
a single body a single wing  
into our tunneled abode  
where giving all dark citizens  
the no-vanity swarming-many fair  
One in our subterranean maze  
simple reason to sing  
to breath the air and live

**when first ever i held you close**

when first ever i held you close  
a V of geese winning true north  
made gray sky their canvas  
a grateful moon watching down  
on us showered the grateful river  
with softest stalactites  
tier on tiers of waning light  
on a wandering april day  
wondered who to thank  
might warmly listen if not reply

when first ever i held you close  
an ancient gate creaked open  
to fields of new alfalfa and sweet grass  
lambs rams ewes and their only-weeks-young  
rushed out in a dance of such exuberance  
the young ones leaping and head butting  
running in silly circles to and from the ewes  
as if crazy for approval and demented with joy  
such a dance with you

when first ever i held you close  
a hearth fire flared in a first salute  
to the perfection of our embrace  
that our cats sedated by the warmth  
failed to see sheets of rain pouring down  
demanding silver windows pay a tariff  
daffodils bow their gold heads down  
pay tribute to the rain's transparency  
an honoring like violins and cellos  
a showing of respect and even awe  
a following of some brilliant score

when first ever i held you close  
a new sun greeted this new day

the demented chorus of birds in spring  
their crazed tweets chirps and warblings  
shaking the dawn waking the world  
made Morning Light wonder if apple blossoms  
forsythia and little leaves of baby green  
or old white flowering pear could see or hear  
time was braked bracketed and broken  
no such thing as past future days months or years

when first ever i held you close  
to an imperial city of imperial dreams  
our train on shining rails  
rode beside a shining river  
to the choruses of far hills far on  
and their oratorios of spring greens  
their nettle-purples blues and roses  
gave the dry point of the land's engraving plate  
a fine intaglio etched by pine needles and burrs

when first ever i held you close  
i saw us in the mirror of my mind  
each seeing each seen in seeing  
a single point as in donne's compass  
that served as proof that no matter  
how far our souls our fast feet move  
so like the pursuit of moon by sun  
we are one center ending and starting again  
at this true plumb point from which we run  
and now matter mattering not a jot  
we in one another's arms have just begun  
for Wanda - April 27, 2016

### **content**

content content  
who needs another poem  
who to live needs more art  
poor content you dull cement  
joining the voice to intent  
caused by the bugaboo  
the human hullabaloo  
of knowing we all rent  
ourselves will be rent  
so why even start  
why bother to give  
given the horror  
of the closing door

hope and faith answer  
only to honor  
mother and father

**wager**

you can see the line  
waiver

and that's where beauty lies

fine wager  
between artist's hand and mind

**scolding God**

hey! God Who  
Whatever You are  
god of bigs  
god of smalls  
son of god son of man  
god of death god of bliss  
wakey! wakey!

hey! One Who Sees  
how about more give  
less takey takey  
on You we call  
go easy easy  
shower mercies  
on us one and all

as each like leaves  
we flutter fall and leave  
we hope we pray  
we beg PLEASE  
on each of us bestow  
however unworthy  
one small kiss go easy

**san juan before the party**

outside the torrential downpour of warm rain  
the conversation of birds wind tiny frogs and rain  
inside and behind the reception desk  
were hundreds of branches of sanded driftwood  
suspended by near-invisible monofilament  
flowing horizontally miming ocean waves  
or the random play of schools of ocean fish

the american press has been cruel to puerto rico  
the zika mosquito and an economic collapse  
gutting the economy and devastating the people  
yet in a week only one bug a tiny fruit fly  
appeared un-phased by chattering guests  
hotel denizen drawn to sparkling martinis  
or its wish for olives or a tangy lemon twist

there were only thirty people in the airport  
objective correlative if ever there was one  
for men fashion was cartoonishly plaid jackets  
expensive distressed jeans bespoke plaid shirts  
think loud cerulean blue or opalescent green  
and pointy bertolinis or black suede gucci loafers

who'd've thought the sushi and shrimp nagi  
spicy tuna rolls could rival nobu's finest or tokyo's  
all of san juan only ten minutes away and the clouds  
the great, ascending, birthday-cake-extravaganza clouds  
rise up like big cartoon bubbles singing "Caribbean!"  
or "*muy agradecido mi amigos mia amigas!*"  
so many soulful dark eyes so many bright smiles

### **late dandelions**

on thin hollow stalks  
their soon-to-be bald heads  
their geodesic globes  
their fluffy follicles  
blown by the wind  
gone puffs gone zen  
seed hair mobbing  
the air to their home Dust  
Fluffs that can't be killed  
though laid low by the mower  
an *om mani padme hum*  
a mote tide of less to more  
a door an invitation

to a decapitation  
so patiently they wait  
their delicate friends  
the smallest flowers  
so close to the ground  
beneath them swarm  
their brightness sings

have no fear stay calm  
back again next year  
a hello a resurrection  
a win a walk in a park  
a dark to a light a swing  
a salutary pendulum

### **liberté yogurt**

my wife always finds  
the good stuff  
new foods new beverages  
coconut yogurt  
so peel back the lid  
you foodie heathen you  
and yum ! dig in  
coconut yogurt  
so good you even  
scrape the last creamy  
tip of a teaspoon  
from the underside  
of the lid and hidden  
printed in gothic bold  
gold across the divide  
of packaging and marketing  
and years and ! here's old  
Tolstoy (died in 1910)  
speaking from the flip side  
of a plastic yogurt top:  
*"There is no greatness  
where there is not simplicity,  
goodness and truth."*  
coconut yogurt  
liberté leverages  
for wanda

### **osteoarthritis**

as i go i must go slower  
across the stubborn floor  
up and down the hostile stairs  
ignoring aching hip and knees  
pain is my traveling companion  
talented hellion makes me rant  
a guide that makes me believe  
by thinking and moving slower  
my mother and father flower  
frequently in me i try to see

aging as just another door  
my body but a room i rent

### **two phoebes' nest view of their pool at midnight**

do they feel it like we might as a planetary apparition suddenly seen  
a spasm a sudden invasion of an alien click of a being's electric illumination  
that with flip of switch lights from below transform the heads of their chicks  
into fuzzy hobgoblins like children holding flashlights under their chins on halloween

the barn red now a nocturnal beak-red deeper than barn-end-of-day red  
the royal ferns below swaying in their sea of a late-night memorial breeze  
the adult phoebes taking turns sitting on their nest built atop two floodlights  
that illumine the pool and capture the aquamarine tidal looping longings of light  
the changing shimmer-chain of turquoise and bright so well held by hockney  
that illusive hypnotic rhythm of light welded to water in his paintings of pools

what if anything do the adult phoebes feel or remember of this shock of bright  
ever vigilant and protective do they await the next visitation of the security light  
upon which and under which come each summer they anchor their tight wattle nest  
and once dark returns feel the deep cerulean reflection of stars breathing over the pool  
or the white fingernail of a thin crescent of a waxing moon and the silent ons and offs  
of the end-of-may fireflies lulling the two phoebe mates and their chicks back to sleep?

### **crow**

when crow speaks  
his whole body pulses  
with each staccato call  
morning bows down in awe

### **two turtle day**

one an eastern painted  
ear and claw cadmium yellow and red  
bright as a boy scout's merit badge  
top shell elegant as abalone  
bottom side a puzzle of ivory  
smells the air for water like a dog  
makes his way through tall grass  
to the frog muck of our pond  
where in the sweltering noon  
he bakes in sun on rocks or logs

the other an ancient snapper  
black barnacle shell moss-covered rock  
his miniature mountain range runs  
top of spine to tip of alligator tail  
fu manchu nails dark as mold

vulture beak cruel gimlet eyes  
inbred rage from a paleozoic age  
evil fury of antediluvian design  
made to snap a rabbit leg or  
make fingers go from ten to nine

### **my wife and i**

my wife and i  
are forged and tempered  
of fired years  
a two-edged sword  
ask and give no quarter  
hard-scrabble Polish  
some battles won  
together we have grown  
in all we've done

as we age together i wish  
we'd grow a bit wiser  
each day avoid pride  
strive to afford more  
gentleness and mercy  
grow bolder in tenderness  
so when Death steals me  
one will live pacified

### **the at-first-smiling face of all that's sad and terrible I**

the profound indifference of all living things to each of us  
our mite-like shows of empathy so small when most care less  
dawn brighter closer clearer as the end comes nearer in razor focus  
the mirrors say it best: most ignore or choose a form of blindness  
perhaps it's wise to feign a smile to repress the worst not make a fuss

to whimper and cringe with self pity or worry is to be a bore  
like borers' carved labyrinths in logs when bark's peeled back  
the map is on the wall if there really is a wall if there really is a map  
no way to comprehend or justify the whittling down of us all  
striving to sum it up mere proof that words are just a flight of birds

of no more use pick your poison than drugs or booze or whole foods  
no way to close the ever-open sore we stumble into the ring of every day  
wealth fame righted wrongs the vendettas of revenge the meals of love  
wisdoms of the bible tarot kabala and koran the i-ching tallyings of all tribes  
of all times like picasso's gypsy minotaur and his wobbly cart of worldly stuff

the determined seizing of a little patch of joy by every girl and boy  
old testament to our species' old will to play it rough our role to live  
hold dear the ones that have mysteriously disappeared find a part to give  
one small thing in the living room of Ever Mind that can stand ebullient  
in the moon tides of dark and light to make each moment a monument  
to savor each breath against the aching tooth of God's joke of death

**the at-first-smiling face  
of all that's sad and terrible II**

summon us to this moment that You own unseen Lord  
like faithful dogs who see us as our god and never look away  
unlike cats forever half-engaged never will tell never will say  
their love withheld all-conditional full of charm out of play

make us your hammer nail and saw plain builders of this day  
even as you know we know each day you will take it all away  
though hidden so often cold distant and eternally invisible  
don't remove our small hopes of conquering the invincible

let us find that place near impossible to find like bugs in a bed  
under a quilt or mice sleeping cozy under a crazy quilt  
old hound of heaven track us down sharpen our souls' swords  
quell our fears shed light on our words our worlds inscrutable

**most perfect strangers now**

in your fine presence if i am  
or ever will be anything at all  
i am held momentarily by your gaze  
grateful for your eyes your time  
none of these words are truly mine  
just crusts of bread cast upon a sea  
syllables lent back to me to transcribe  
in this troubled time and age

for you to make them briefly yours  
these words but opening or closing doors  
whoever you are i imagine us together  
side by side most perfect strangers now  
having stood or standing on this mystic shore  
taking one another in like the air we breathe  
i dreaming how you may never leave me  
even after you leave this book this page

**the mind**

the mind is a well  
one star shining in it



well waters muddled  
by wind and weather  
and each flying day's light  
shines better when troubled  
in that dark flowerbed  
below the black milk of Night

### **a thing that me didn't hurt**

the other day i saw a pigeon  
rare bird looked SO determined  
i didn't have the prescience to question:

“could he be that one that shat  
on my friend fred as he sat  
there transcendently on his patio?

what's the likelihood of that?  
like winning the ontario lottario  
reverse prize – a pigeon curse

at least, not on fred's bald head”  
ok ok - his shirt was smattered  
that's why 'curmudgeon'

rhymes with 'pigeon' and 'wigeon'  
so on your birthday be sure to duck  
and stay inside, safe under your bed

for fred siegel – june 19 2016  
*contemplating our phone conversation  
when fred told me he 'ran into a pigeon'*

### **adage I**

adage that bodes well:  
love your good wife  
love your good home  
love all the good you've done

love your own good self  
your own agendas minimize  
place them on some lesser shelf  
when it comes to married life

nest your two best selves alone  
not worry who's on who's phone  
who owns what hers or yours go easy  
on the one you love forgive your lies

this will lead to a ripe old age while  
not a dance but a one-two punch  
your lives open doors a renaissance  
before your lives are over and done

### **adage II**

if you just  
sit damn still  
in one spot  
the whole circus  
dam will burst  
and flow over you

like a cold  
just before  
you know you  
are truly ill and  
full of sniffles  
floods turn into rffles

### **bowl of water**

bowl of water you mirror the open sky  
the open faces of parched passersby  
calm when alone and patiently waiting  
each thirst you quench a bold awakening

### **fireflies**

fireflies never shout  
fireflies are entering  
our home outside in  
how their lights do sing  
turn our home inside out

### **takahasi cried**

“my hand is the universe!”  
takahashi cried, “so soon!”  
as he cut it off and threw  
it over a bright sickle moon

### **goodbye**

the sky still blue  
the sun now gone

this much is true  
as you lose me

as i lose you  
we must hold on

merilly merrily

### **ant**

you can never criticize him for not being determined  
on a pheromone track invisible as the power source of Lionel trains  
with a fluidity of intention not to sun or moon or stars beholden  
the filament of his legs devoid of musculature rapid as living twigs  
defies all gravity and picks up speed in bright summer's friendly light  
his three bony segments his wasp-like hind black as brogues well-shined  
helmet head a symmetry a scary mimicry of a samurai warrior's  
battle mask fierce mandibles feathered feelers furious with intelligence  
often seen carrying a dead companion or lugging a too-heavy moth  
dried worm or crumb of bread applauded by softest breeze back to den  
to mother ship to colony to the congratulations of the telepathic swarm  
*formicidae hymenoptera* in may nestled deep in peonies drunk on their scent  
his ability to snuggle into summer's warm hundred-petal blossom-bed  
how smartly his ebony disappears into the opiate center is a tiny wonder

in autumn in wet woods holing up 'round mushrooms or in rotting logs  
underground colony super organization exoskeletons compound eyes  
soldier worker drone something about him reincarnate never dies  
like a pinewood derby racing car he moves with gravity and gravitas  
*formicidae hymenoptera* close to a fourth of our planet's biomass  
i watch him cross the tightrope edge of pool and try to calculate  
the speed at which he runs hell bent on getting past a dandelion patch  
proportionately faster than any man yet thrown off by a strong breeze  
more a diversion than a pain he never will be seen walking in the rain  
relative of wasps and bees in spring hitchhiking indoors his varnish  
dark stark against country white-pine kitchen floors so pick him up  
his pincer nips telegraphing "set me free to my great outdoors!"  
a delicate alien sci-fi subterranean union leader of his working class  
wingless he can fall from great heights light enough to glide and sail  
hard not to admire his ability to land unscathed and soldier bravely on

and then there's his unwelcome family and their battle cry: *Picnic Well!*  
they send out one small scout one sneaky little beast and then they start  
an unbroken line of confident black confetti sneaky creeps zoning in  
peppering chicken cakes and cobblers seething on crème brûlée or custard tarts  
that they herd and milk aphids little insect cows is unlikely as it is ant art  
"dairying ants" a dogma-free sort of mutualism or symbiotic dualism  
in the fall they gather aphid eggs and in the spring place them on plants  
they and aphids both like to eat so summer long they can milk and feast

he is a wanderer tight-waisted as a corset-bound victorian dowager  
he is a gypsy voyager a hardened gladiator a tireless investigator  
curious hiker he walks under arbors of pachysandra and bowed blades of grass  
through jumbled jungles of violets and wolf spider's webs like trampolines  
avoiding his nemesis voracious cannibal green knight Sir Preying Mantis  
nearly erased by a pallet of shadows he is camouflaged and disappears  
and escapes smaller than the smallest bean into a tunnel of umber green

oh ant when you see grasshopper play and sing all summer worry free  
you must hate Aesop and his moral tale of *Provide!* when you talk to your shrink  
when you give it a think grasshopper grasshopper must be a thorn in your side  
while you and your hoard remain obsessed with labor in the heat of summer  
grasshopper grasshopper sings and eats and naps like a fat-cat lottery winner  
sure you'd like to take a break like grasshopper grasshopper and enjoy enjoy  
he sits back legs crossed carefree while you work like fools to provide for winter  
come the cold why not be contrarian old boy and invite grasshopper grasshopper in  
(neither of you were ever enemies or jealous of who you are or in the wrong)  
feed him well then over cigars and port you can both tell Aesop to go to hell  
praising the fruits of industry and the merits of art poetry idleness and song  
lastly your nightmare glass-and-plastic prison The Ant Farm (food and 18 ants)  
cruel science lesson taught by heartless no-soul white coats to voyeuristic kids  
their punishment to live forever trapped like the ancient ant trapped in amber  
seeing happy you and grasshopper grasshopper free on the outside staring in

### **mirror of night**

pair of mourning doves gray on the wing  
owl leaves nest to start his hunting thing  
in the dusky theater of the setting sun  
to what do we aspire when our day is done  
and Who Whoo asks Owl Whoo do we love

### **if goats could fly**

if goats could fly  
(their poops *plus grande* -  
they out-poop pigeons vastly)

let's hope they only poop on land  
or else all of homo sapiens  
and other lesser shitters

including pigeons would  
keep looking to the sky  
our eyes would never rest

to keep from getting blessed  
by goat poop falling truly ghastly

from goats with bad intentions

so the next big invention  
in a world where goats could fly?  
aerial pooper scoopers would be super

### **what kosher dills and espadrilles have in common**

espadrilles go well with sexy 'feets'  
kosher dills go well with smoked deli meats

### **centipede**

thin dirigible with a hundred legs  
centipede quickly turns centripetal  
when poked he rolls into a ball  
tight as an egg impenetrable  
what gall!

### **time and time again**

deluded i pretend to act  
like i have all the time  
in the world entire  
can barely catch a breath  
down to the last dime  
down the long last bend

then one Hard Fact  
intervenes and hurls  
a penalty brew at me  
just the brutal truth  
a cold dish a flat tire  
no heating or pumping

will warm or inflate  
Life's last joke last goof  
The Vanishing of Youth  
when i ran like a gazelle  
days of infinite energy  
now just boring yarns to tell

near the bottom of the well  
i still desire am inspired  
to be like philippe petit  
walking the tightrope wire  
between life death and hell  
wish i had no fear of jumping

## **rabbits**

who knew the word for baby rabbits is 'kittens'  
come dawn half asleep they feast on clover blossoms  
they and the adults stretched out snow-white bellies up  
on carpets of grass and dandelion greens fresh mown  
still wet with dew on the cologne of our gravel drive  
damp fur patchy as thrift-store moth-eaten muffs  
their eyes dark as black marbles hold two dots of sun  
flush with summer they laze in the open playground  
of their own amusement park breezes their lullaby  
little ones asleep one under our car one on the lawn  
when startled the mechanics of their lanky hind legs  
thighs like olympic hurdlers' haunches like high jumpers'  
wobbly crankshafts slow-locomotive into drive then explode  
to high-gear herky-jerky rocket sprint to a dark sanctuary  
to lush cover of densest briar patch and blackberry bush  
feeling safe facing in they almost hide their bottoms  
cotton tails tucked into the camouflage of rear-end brown  
big ears floppy as deers' ever-alert reaching skyward  
something imp-like about them one with bird-clouds that sail  
incongruously sweet their huge hind feet and puffballs of tails  
and here's the catch vital to these hip-hop-mobsters Please!  
boycott all pimped-up sales of incarnadine day-glow rabbit feet  
jackalopes lucky key chains hare-fur throws and rabbit mittens

## **raindrops**

how subtle sweetly  
you build in frequency  
and fall in multitudes

on the calm surface  
of the turquoise pool  
widening you expand

raindrops dancing  
stubborn ever opening  
one next one next

circles wide then wider  
illuminated text under  
clouds of parchment gray

ozone-infusing scent  
my friend july do you feel  
in your hint of autumn

that drunken summer reel  
calling this dizzy day  
to this your summer ballet

raindrops we love you  
you are our youth  
you are life returning

### **beauty and pain**

red fox barks at midnight  
barred owl's sad hoot  
indigo bunting's arc  
by design a loop-de-loop  
a chance? evolutionary  
magical-survival flight  
of black swallowtail  
and scarlet tiger moth  
DNA's full of tricks  
like an NBA player

driving to the hoop  
in fine summer rain  
haunting reminders  
of an overlooked truth:  
beauty holds pain  
and pain holds beauty  
in my dance and yours  
lives a sure-sharpened blade  
a bomb with a burning fuse  
an ache that gives and takes

### **lighthouse**

an obelisk of guiding light  
i rise above a vast and open sea  
and faithful cast my silent beam  
over my ocean who roars or dreams

whose waves rage or drift with ease  
my duty to be a ray of calm  
to serve as savior and sanctuary  
a central compass point of brightness

when moon and stars are hidden  
from fair ships who've lost their way  
whose cargo slaves heroes or knaves

sail blind to hope or despair given

alone every night i confess  
chained to this mighty Mystery  
my light wanders as i wonder darkly  
“Who is it that enlightens me?”  
as i taste the fog’s salt-air balm

### **gull**

that speck of white  
on hudson’s vast blue  
a laughing gull?  
drifting south  
on ebb tide silently  
almost lost to the eye  
a small goodbye  
to me and you

### **chickadee**

black cap  
black chin strap  
loves sunflower seeds  
one of the tiniest  
most clever of all  
the number of ‘dees’  
signals emergency!  
hawk fox or cat  
an alarm call for all  
other birds to flee  
your signature song  
chickadee dee dee  
boasts nothing wrong  
with being small

### **kennings for liar**

twist tongue  
twist speak  
word blinder  
fact burier  
heart hider  
distort snorter  
fact scrambler  
fact dodge  
varnish speak  
muddle mouth  
fact twister



fact fuck  
calumny carrier  
tripe teller  
perjury promoter  
stink syndicator  
shit spinner  
fallacy planner  
fib founder  
fib flopper  
spin nabob  
mendacity magnet  
fog shoveler  
miasma maker  
light blocker  
dark spreader  
truth poisoner  
shade shaper  
slant siren  
whiteout witch  
truth shredder  
fact flamer  
mush marketer  
muck mother  
pig lipsticker  
falsity floozie  
crap creeper  
propaganda plotter  
pundit polluter  
publicity ponce  
twist tongue  
hide truth

**to hold the august sky**

alone on this open sea of days  
in my attempts to hold the sky  
i spread my arms like flailing wings  
of the solitary albatross  
or the cormorants' outstretched  
who after preying prays and chants  
or that brave man nailed to his cross

my attempts to hold the sky  
summer clouds the face of eternity  
are a dream a silly kind of lie  
truth told i'm embarrassed by  
only to find what lost i call "I"

is a gift a tutorial in humility  
embraced and held fast by Thee

### **after a rainfall**

that night a dark and sullen downpour  
hid the saucer edge of a broken moon

that day sun shone through a thousand drops of rain  
sparkling on the edges of a thousand leaves

clouds in awe stood still under a dome of blue  
all in wonder that Heaven showed up so soon

### **the two thunders of success**

the climb to success has two thunders  
going from wondering what to do  
to having no time to do or wonder  
how you juggle this is up to you

### **on seeing a photo of my nephew celebrating the first month after his daughter's birth**

is it the man that rocks the child  
or the child that rocks the man  
each being the very best they can  
fine calm and something very wild

August 25 2015

for Natalie Ann, Melissa and Dan

### **buddha and the beetle**

against all inhuman cruelties  
against history's Shoah car  
of the dying and the dead  
against eternities of infinities  
the Buddha cries  
Compassion!  
toward all struggling beings

flailing in the ocean  
of the suburban pool  
on lone raft of cherry leaf  
the beetle silently cries  
"forget the Buddha  
forget all theologies and philosophies  
wake up Gautama! save Me!!"

### **remembering 9/11**

I

what point all our tears  
all follow the same cold road  
salt point oh salt point

II

black and white movie  
turns suddenly to color  
then the reel goes blank

III

rogue planes two scalpels  
trepan twin towers' steel skulls  
stave small human hulls

IV

bite 'till you draw blood  
taste our sad saline ocean  
from our pulse flowers

V

couple holding hands  
leaps from the divorced towers  
the world trade center

VI

this sadness now one  
without curve or boundary  
systole diastole

VII

ticker tape parade  
for the unaccounted souls  
the world trade center

VIII

the rain of bodies  
falling like hitchcock's mad birds  
or magritte's dark hats

IX

one tooth and braces  
an arm a wrist a rolex  
the world trade center

X

children flee day cares  
look up! the birds are burning!  
the world trade center

XI

eight molars capped  
porcelain on enamel  
tell the truth dentists

XII

fill their mouths with screams  
they've joined the order of sardines  
stacked like thorny dreams

XIII

flies trapped in honey  
september an accomplice  
feel wings tremble

XIV

nature will heal it  
or end it in its own way  
small reason to pray

XV

top of a skull  
wearing an ashen toupee  
the world trade center

XVI

now in the white void  
the white ash makes all things ghosts  
the world trade center

XVII

inside the stations  
people betraying no fear  
the world trade center

XVIII

near the twin towers  
dusk wind bends the fall marsh grass  
the world trade center

XIX

bridges now different  
structures approach an absence  
the world trade center

XX

they ran out of flags  
people started painting them  
the world trade center

XXI

two three days after  
interviewing architects  
the media circus

XXII

no eyes examined  
for dread of truly seeing  
the cruel plot now real

XXIII

cyclist a bomber?  
all we have is the now  
simplest things hold fear

XXIV

the salt of the earth  
mostly ignored  
elevated to heroes

XXV

those forgotten rise  
from the fire and the blood  
the press black with it

XXVI

in all the corners  
the spiders continue to spin  
not knowing the news

XXVII

melted steel landscape  
smell of burnt asbestos brake drums  
red leaves still fall

XXVIII

babies' feet still small  
cool and pink warmed by hands  
loving moms and dads

XXIX

the sun misses them  
their red windows shattered  
the world trade center

XXX

the sun misses them  
the memory of sun light  
plays on lost windows

XXXI

overhead monitors  
drop from the sky being watched  
new insecurities

XXXII

souls from bodies blown  
melted steel crushed glass  
the pilgrimage continues

XXXIII

cruel prison warden  
shows prisoners open doors  
lost souls seeking air

XXXIV

a winged migration  
people flap wings they don't own  
tenderness rising

XXXV

anthrax envelopes  
it's not bills we're afraid of  
the world trade center

XXXVI

to talk or not to talk  
either way tragedy  
drowns out the loud stars

XXXVII

surely we would die  
if we could comprehend at all  
the world trade center

**mens style ny times magazine**

two stevie wonder in-his-youth lookalikes  
one thug rapper in gold lame slacks skin tight  
the other in prisoner-chic blue-black shades  
against the softest rain of purple light  
the thug EYE CRUSH  
the other I AM FAMOUS

ralph lauren's filmmaker son  
cobblestone street in Gstaad  
Porsche gleams ebony in foreground  
of double-page prime-position spread  
who wouldn't want to be here  
nabokov's enchanted Switzerland  
gives credence to the brand

the stand of white birches  
frozen lake drifting snow going blue  
dusk dusts the rolling distant hills  
young man in dayglow orange runners  
Youth brought to us by hermes  
hermes compliments of Nature

three Armani boys  
faces like david by michaelangelo  
the only light against sleek geometric  
charcoal gray and black twill  
of their layered ensembles  
is light that falls upon their faces  
putti-pensive beyond their years  
a strained and feigned intelligence  
that we forgive and embrace  
the staged trick of this fantasy  
the idyll of their beauty is such  
that it serves every sexual dream  
like some kind of silent bomb

the cliché tousling of locks  
the looking to the side  
the self-conscious  
the self-absorbed

leaning on the Jaguar  
loafing by the pool  
the Moment captured  
the diamond of the mundane  
the spontaneity of an airport garage  
the peak achievement of youth  
requiring no effort or study  
beauty born the studied look frozen  
on this faux-reel fun house ride  
back stage something wholly feigned  
and heroically vapid

### **brioni meets metalica**

a failed attempt to fill the slot  
that rock stars always own  
and transfer the magical  
to shoes in light and shadow  
so serious the camera's stare  
that there can be no disbeliever  
since all wish they could be there  
a white shirt shot in black and white  
guaranteed to reset fashion's clock  
take us back frame us save us  
in the manner of irving penn

people torsos topless hatless shop-less  
in search of eros eye or eyeless  
a circling around a wander-lusting  
for a return to something new or better  
classic sleek time-honored  
effortless functional independent  
memorable raw and intimate  
a new infatuation for women and men  
a stew of inference social insulation  
designed to give gusher status to and tap  
what in a year will just be crap

### **hummingbird**

the hummingbird flew so fast  
to a pink butterfly bush  
hovered by the screen  
of the screened-in porch  
and in a blink of a blink  
of a second was gone  
seen then seen no more  
all our lives on the wing



under outlaw skies of blue  
a hummingbird gone  
after each visit a hush  
this our hummingbird song

### **suicide 2.0**

all channels opened  
all blocks removed  
so clever now moot  
he hit reboot  
and disappeared  
forever

### **only a dream**

the kitchen smelled good  
mommy was baking  
daddy was working

i was my age - sixty-nine  
she always happy in kitchen  
in the dream much younger than i

neither of us spoke  
she held me a small child  
her embrace said it all

things will be all right  
knowing i was in a dream  
not wanting the dream to end

touched while sleeping  
still churning in dream tide  
hoping to return i woke

wondering how so  
soon our old ones all gone  
our elders now we've become

### **hitch hiker late summer**

chicory so blue  
yellow butter and eggs  
also known as  
sidekicks two  
line country roadsides  
parades of pretty girls  
who hoping to win a ride

show their pretty legs  
stop! they seem to sigh  
to passing cars speeding by

brideweed, bridewort, butter and eggs (but see *Lotus corniculatus*), butter haycocks, bread and butter, bunny haycocks, bunny mouths, calf's snout, Continental weed, dead men's bones, devil's flax, devil's flower, doggies, dragon bushes, eggs and bacon (but see *Lotus corniculatus*), eggs and butter, false flax, flaxweed, fluellen (but see *Kickxia*), gallweed, gallwort, impudent lawyer, Jacob's ladder (but see *Polemonium*), lion's mouth, monkey flower (but see *Mimulus*), North American ramsted, rabbit flower, rancid, ransted, snapdragon (but see *Antirrhinum*), wild flax, wild snapdragon, wild tobacco (but see *Nicotiana*), yellow rod, yellow toadflax.<sup>[7]</sup>

### **sun and moon**

sun lives within the moon  
within the moon lives sun  
we all sing amen pray all's right  
it all comes around too soon  
above beyond losing or winning  
suns and moons we too  
brothers or sisters as bright

### **pinwheel**

the pinwheel of one red leaf  
failing to join it's fallen friends  
shows that in each fall so brief  
there's no such thing as lasting grief  
when galaxies of spinning leaves  
shine red with joy in falling

### **what the hawk said**

up and up rose the red-tail hawk  
as if to say with his proud display  
of talon pinion wing and hooked beak  
drink deep from october's bright cup  
go slow savor my flight and look  
see how my savior-red wings rise  
negate deepest darkest Night  
are a flight to eternal Day

### **sailboats in the fog**

the hudson's damp sheet of gray  
rocks sailboats silent and blind  
fog-shrouded in their marinas  
keels still as river's still hills unseen

like kneeling nuns with no habits  
quietly locked in their novenas  
all singing praise to the river's God  
that ever-flowing water Mind

hunters hidden in their blinds  
shotguns cocked and ready  
wait patient muted as the sun  
warming wings of migrating prey  
grand lottery of takers or givers  
how many will die anybody's bet  
fog surrounds devours rises up  
calls all into its flimsy circus tent

### **boy in black with a sharpshooter's eye**

used to be when daylight savings first began  
all farmers saw Death in Autumn's Round  
knew Death in all things sown when reaped  
the scythe their tool was Death in their hands  
The Season of Scythes cutting all things down

urbanites suburbanites in harvest time  
city fools removed from land's best end  
have lost touch with harvest days gone by  
when the skull in the hood with a scythe  
once Horror is now just the mask of a clown

b-movies scaring kids at Halloween  
dated as typewriters or virgin prom queens  
now Death pops up in malls and schools  
streets and byways with a new haunting mask  
and frightening smile: a desperate boy no fool

hunting in suicidal black sporting guns not toys  
with a sharpshooter's eye out for some Fun

### **different types of falling**

there's the falling rain  
which falls to wash away all pain  
there's december snow  
which winter-softens where we go  
there's october leaves  
red orange yellow and rust  
which fall like mercy take their time

there's you and i

who fall knowing we'll fall  
unlike seasons rain snow or leaves  
when we leave we sadly rhyme  
we suffer Reason the pull the pain  
the siren call the endless chain  
of full knowing we must go

### **fading in fading out**

it took me seven decades to see  
all i've ever wanted to do is dream

fearing to own that daunted tract  
i troubled myself with less important things

less raided less haunted by mortality  
i wish i knew long long ago that

i am a just braid of oceans tides seasons  
moons suns stars rewoven dust reborn to sing

to wink back at the Soul's wink of eternity  
to hear that voice rewound that softly calls

that unseen breath that says forget Reason  
and follow the call of the mighty hidden All

### **the studio**

the studio is the inside of the artist's brain  
every scribble of pencil of word of brush  
is a hieroglyph of search for glory through pain  
evidence of each imagined flare extinguished  
each imagined rocket of each imagined gain  
a persistent form of stubborn blind ambition  
slow transition to the razor edge of erudition  
a daring fragility an old moon on a new wane  
after every failing run to perfection run again

### **leaf on a screen**

this leaf held by this autumn wind  
outside this screen facing in  
suspended in this shifting drift  
of an orange october's crooked grin

this leaf we believe feels no pain  
in its trip from birth to death's spin  
from its home on mother maple limb

breeze going thin in going-naked trees

this leaf is not a metaphor for mortality  
not a symbol of leaves at death's door  
this leaf is a live leaf at this leaf's end  
and since we think it does not feel

or understand or see having no eyes  
not looking back from where it came  
seized in fall by a Force greater than all  
by a Force on this gentle october day

poised in its last magnetic drift to ground  
with no soul not knowing it's falling  
may teach us in its falling that one day  
sooner than we souls know sooner

than we souls care to know or say  
we each will find ourselves in leaving  
leaves on a screen facing a great Divide  
and know we face a knowing at the end

that we are leaves facing a final "Help!"?  
the one end all face wondering what  
it means to fall so freely to be erased  
each leaf frantic a waving golden yelp

each a broken stem a story never told  
waves a gentle goodbye goodbye  
falls fragile down on dark parched ground  
to die? or just a ticket to an amusement park?

to return with no memory again and again?  
this leaf held by this autumn wind

### **the words**

the words the words  
rested re-drawn reborn  
witnesses witnessing  
as brancusi's celestial birds  
as mountains and cloud tops kiss  
that sing remembering  
from the heart fresh are torn

### **poems that tippy wrote**

**#1**

i love the cello  
as much or more  
than yo yo ma or  
tuna-and-liver jello

**#2**

i run around like a crazy monster  
from window to window guarding my home  
from feral cats coyotes bobcats foxes  
all wild mobsters security's my jobster  
no confidence in what the lock says

**#3**

i clean and wash myself so thoroughly  
raspy tongue on q-tip paws so deft  
a wonder i have any fur left at all  
am not yet a feline elf completely bald

**#4**

after doing what i do in my litter box  
i cover it all so diligently you'd think  
i was digging to china for golden rocks  
maybe that's why my paw pads are pink

**#5**

sometimes i go completely nutz and bonkers  
like the ghosts of rabid wolves were on my trail  
possessed i sprint from room to room unhinged  
scared of shadows being chased by my own tail  
then spent i calm down have a drink of water  
find a cozy spot and sleep off every binge

**#6**

sometimes in midst of a self-cleaning frenzy  
i stick my back leg up so straight and high  
like a furry flagpole reaching for the sky  
my flexibility such a wonder is the envy  
of kundalini-yoga masters worldwide

**#7**

from room to room to room upstairs and down  
i go from window ledge to window ledge  
standing tall on my hind legs looking out  
down country road past maple trees and privet hedge  
day and night head twisting left to right like an owl's  
once i've viewed every window in my house

seen no intruders no outsiders friend or foe  
antennae ears like radar dishes tuned in tuned out  
two swivels hear faint breath of uncaught mouse  
worried sick i howl an awful belly-aching yowl  
and still distraught once again resume my rounds

### #8

what is it why is it i cannot resist an empty box  
no matter how small how big i'm driven to climb in  
and sit and wait and wait and maybe doze for what  
i'm mesmerized like iron filings to a magnet drawn in  
the temptation too great drawing killer me to sin  
hidden in my fort safe in my own safe with no lock  
the promise of what's to catch better than what's caught  
the predator in me waiting for some clueless prey  
clueless to wander by and make my murderous day

### #9

i'm almost embarrassed to give you my advice  
but do listen: forget your fancy dime store toys  
all those cutesy manufactured slick distractions  
wallmart-catnip-stuffed cigars phony iridescent birds  
fake-feathered fish on monofilament tied to bamboo poles  
costco hollow plastic balls with bells inside anything rubber  
mice and rats of every shape size and denomination  
ship them back insipid from whence they came  
give me instead used wrapping paper tightly rolled  
small aluminum foil balls a few new leaves  
sticks twigs or branches (not too thin or brittle so i don't choke)  
anything that still smells of pine cedar maple moss or oak  
pebbles from nearby streams things peed on by cats or dogs  
or other strange foreign country animals like skunks or possums  
any scat of deer chipmunk mouse squirrels or other pussums  
empty boxes of any shape or size ample bags i can crawl into  
expensive fabric arms of armchairs antique table legs i can claw  
flat cardboard strips old towels placed mat-like on the floor  
the tips or heels of socks stuffed with catnip  
and sealed with rubber bands scotch tape or dental floss  
any type of plastic bottle tops or corks  
from a good bordeaux or chardonnay  
a handmade-by-you mouse of yarn with a woolen tail  
a sprig of mint or some fresh cut grass  
a blue jay pigeon chickadee or junco feather  
stuff with smells that linger stuff that has a lasting funk  
things organic in the early stages of putrefaction

if you're going to spend your hard-earned dollars  
and are really serious about your fussy cat's satisfaction  
don't be duped by all that tarted-up slick plastic junk  
spend it on things that i will truly love like  
broiled langoustine boiled shrimp sautéed liver chicken fingers  
or fresh catnip sprinkled on those great scratching pads  
don't be fooled into buying phony feline luxuries  
please i beg you don't buy for YOU buy for your cat ME

### **#10**

when i drink i drink to drink  
but also drink to make a statement  
like a camel from the old testament  
i make such a slurping commotion  
i slurp with such gusto you'd think  
my water bowl was mooses' red sea  
a parting feline commemoration  
a celebrity millennial's blog  
a truly biblical anointed celebration  
of all cats' victories over Pharaoh  
Dog and his slavey egyptian dogs

### **#11**

sleeping yes falling asleep at once  
a major talent of mine maniacally  
i carry no fears no anxieties  
i don't over intellectualize  
unlike worried dogs no skittish dunce  
when i dream fat mice my wish my prize  
i snore growl unconsciously i rumble  
my masters always charmed mostly humbled  
by my gift to leap off sleep's cliff instantly

### **the funnel**

one antidote to existential pain  
and overthinking is to serve  
as conduit for an oceanic voice  
a voice bigger than mine  
pouring down and down  
into bottles cans and jars  
not a matter of choice  
accepting whatever's poured  
a rising tide begin begin  
echoes in the tunnel of my brain  
just a conduit to what's stored



distilled bottled brewed  
canned pickled in rine  
in bottles cans and jars  
i the funnel

### **for all suicides**

when suicides string the rope  
put knife to the carotid  
or gun to the poor brain  
swallow pills an entire jar  
how many before closure  
driven to a final rope-a-dope  
ask when compelled by so  
much pain what's the gain  
if they don't wonder before  
last closing that last door  
before leaving body's *land*  
the meaning of *sleight of hand*

or which one loved one's task  
which dear one still standing  
will leave kill rope in the barn  
kill knife back in the drawer  
take kill gun off the floor  
pills back in the jar  
they fail to see they're not alone  
to see what those thinking know:  
death's a bandit cold ashes in a bowl  
a not-pretty plot writ by a cracked pot  
a knot that will for all time be cut  
a little misunderstanding star lit  
and after hell again and again that's it

### **sheep**

just shorn grazing shy heads all down  
not as white as the thin hoar frost  
that varnishes their field's damp grass

they go about their morning tasks  
rapt in some shared eternal calm  
backs warmed by a november sun

rams ewes lambs days move slowly on  
meander in some new-born round  
time a dream nothing lost nothing won

### **newton the turtle**

is it me really?  
must i feel so soul sick?  
is the fifth estate in trouble  
our culture like desert sand  
when sunday's times front page  
features me newton the turtle  
and the role we turtles played  
in the annals of new music?  
or am i just feeling my age?

### **jello song**

jello jello jello jello  
you know you have to have it  
there's always room for jello  
makes you want to sing  
shake jelly-shiver bellow  
imitate the sweet concentrate of  
jello jello jello jello

some water plus jello powder  
stir it up in a bowl or cup  
stick it in the fridge and wait  
be patient just a little longer  
then tap it with a spoon or knife  
and see it jiggle-jounce to life

moms dads brothers sisters  
fat thin young old bald or hairy  
rich poor no matter buy some more  
behind every supermarket door  
jello beckons so don't be wary  
it separates us from japes and apes

jello and science fiction  
and the race to outer space  
neil armstrong our hero and guide  
like astronauts and rockets  
go together like moon and tides  
space food for kids' fantasy rides

jello jello jello jello  
you know you have to have it  
there's always room for jello  
makes you want to sing  
shake jelly-shiver bellow

imitate the sweet concentrate of  
jello jello jello jello

in candle light it glimmers  
tap it lightly watch it shimmer  
poke it hard watch it dance  
in the right light with right glance  
look! reckon you can see your fate  
in the shade of your own jello face

orange pomegranate pumpkin  
raspberry apricot cherry  
pineapple watermelon lemon  
vanilla banana cream melon  
chocolate butterscotch grape  
lime peach mango all in a race

instant or cook and serve  
in a 50's heirloom mold  
now worth their retro weight in gold  
canned fruit salad or tiny shrimp  
teeth or gums are all you need  
don't skimp on the whipped cream

jello jello jello jello  
you know you have to have it  
there's always room for jello  
makes you want to sing  
shake jelly-shiver bellow  
imitate the sweet concentrate of  
jello jello jello jello

J-E-L-L-O!

**la vaca**

from the cloaca  
of la vaca  
comes a vile pile  
so for a stroll undefiled  
look front and backa

**be like the alpaca**

oohs ahs and ohs  
the cloaca of *la vaca*  
drops concentric piles  
still warm always vile

i wish you will as you go  
that you pilgrim child  
will be like the wise alpaca  
cross your pasture's miles

trust your wits and wiles  
and with an alpaca smile  
skip the squish between toes  
looking more forward than backa

### **full moon**

owl moon  
who who whoo  
how i do love you

full moon  
deer moon  
soon i will be you

### **after a new snow**

after a new snow  
once its dusting's done  
on every black branch

one suddenly sees  
so many dusted branches

shivering one on one  
on all these naked trees  
as a winter wind blows

### **bird feeder in december**

from god or hands of gods or some wizard's hand  
from whatever that powerful always invisible Will  
placing them like chess pieces on His chess board  
frozen white outside past our kitchen windowsill  
blank movie screen the snow beneath the maple  
in finest white of gray like an ermine shadow

on the cloak of kings or queens at the end of day  
bowed body of the land cloaked by chasuble of snow

the birds driven mad by their cold and hunger  
careening royally into arc of seeds' black compass  
summer's melon pumpkin same size and shape  
on carpet of snow seeds falling dark and random  
like some high-school-freshman physics test  
each by each by each from the feeder are taken  
by chickadees jays juncos sparrows titmice  
red or gray squirrels fierce frantically focused

rapt gamers at a vegas crap table enthralled riveted  
on the throw of dice with nothing to win but life  
a nourished collective mechanisms of a fine watch  
species differences find a truce as side by side  
they hunt and peck crack shell find seed eat fat  
dense nuggets of protein in their cold cafeteria  
that hold them harmless from the arctic cold  
that put the spring into their little wiry feet

leaving the record of each hop on the palimpsest  
on the blank canvas of the open receptive snow  
and the low sun the feeble sun shines silver against  
the stubborn black of the limbs of leafless trees  
and upon all of them in their bustling joyful clusters  
of fur or feather in ones and twos and threes  
and what is this their magic in the growing dusk?  
what is this anything-but-mundane enchantment?

the simple yet complex hunger of their joyful hunt  
defying an early Darkening - creatures of wing or tooth  
of feather or fur forever will do by instinct and hunger  
what they do best: bear witness to the beauty of the small  
the glisten of eye bird's flight squirrel's leap and then  
against december's drear gray then as a match struck  
glows the fluttering halo of one proud cardinal's red  
the *raison d'etre* for december and falling winter snow

### **near yet far**

the way the cardinal  
red on his branch  
just outside our window  
intent peers in at me  
as i peer out at him

in the falling snow  
gives truth to the notion  
that though so near  
between our patronyms  
swells an endless ocean swim

### **winter solstice sun**

when the winter solstice sun casts the longest of long winter's longest shadows  
its blinding light through the lead glass window of our living room its icy white  
give fire to the rhododendrons and their tightest pencil curls how short day flies  
the sun's beams drive stalactites to the iris of the eye a near-death-tunnel flight  
and in this wordless stunning bright there lives a wishful wistful mumble of spring  
faintest hint of some understated underrated unanticipated joyful thing

### **who?**

who is it who?  
who speaks to me?  
i His scribe  
feisty elfin recorder  
of small hints of eternity  
wee glimmer  
on a dog a flea  
no such thing as time

### **for phyllis and joe**

there we go  
i recall the days  
when phyllis used to say  
to wanda me and joe  
there we go there we go  
where now are they?  
we miss them so  
and still we say  
there we go

### **possum ergo sum**

just down the road where  
penned-up piglets in the snow  
almost pigs almost fit for slaughter  
plow the field with hungry snouts  
red tailed hawk road-killed possum  
are center stage and steaming

the way the hawk dips his beak  
into the still-warm bowels

looks up refuses to budge  
to oncoming cars proud defiant  
as i slow to witness his primal scene  
he stares at me without a jot of fear

in his small act i saw God in him  
a starving god eternal judge who lives  
Deep Heart of all things that live  
a neutral god a god that's not daft  
a neural god that finds bliss however cruel  
in recycling all creatures living or dead

calf cow pig fish mouse or owl or us  
a god who has no need to win our trust  
who as a carpenter makes his tools makes us  
who smiles or weeps with sacrificial laughter  
over this his ever-shifting ever-fickle altar  
over this his world this his never-ending dream

### **snail**

finger in Aeon's glove  
a man of my times  
of no greater rank  
than a simple snail  
insignificant i pale

i do my best to love  
hope to pass this test

i work i rest  
i paint i write  
i leave a little trail  
against all evidence  
truest testament

held in my microscopic cell  
small slime that shines  
*Aeon: Life, Force Vital as "Eternity"*

### **the mouse that crossed the road and lived**

six a.m. before this new day dreams of morning light  
freezing rain road glistening black in my car's brights  
reminds me of the medieval metaphor of the sparrow  
the one who flies so fast from night to black of night  
window to window above and beyond the castles' walls  
past diamonds dancers dangers profane and sacred loves  
for briefest burning moment flies by health wealth and joy

flies over beauty music romance and royal entourage  
then back to black from whence he came unseen by all  
as in a dream of fleeting youth and age a feathered arrow  
a dream that slips by as we sip our cups of coffee  
in wonder i hope i'll hear that sparrow's flutter wing  
whose wings against my door will fly me on to glory  
bring back to me those i've loved in one final magic story

### **beg borrow or steal**

beg i say beg!  
all compassionate muses  
for their finest music  
for grace each day  
to live not obsessed  
with money fame or in fear  
or worried by world news  
each day so sick  
we might be blown away  
in a cheap alarm clock's tick

borrow borrow  
whenever in need  
have courage no shame  
to live proud in today  
on the road to tomorrow  
in the play land of hooray!  
on the bus of faith hope and trust

steal steal  
take for the taking  
right off the shelf  
the very best things  
very few if any see  
most of them mostly free  
like stars rise of moon  
dawn light's call of loon  
or the silent posse of the clouds  
boldly bringing back to you  
your personal wonder  
like a long-distance runner  
sees the cloudy finish line  
at the end of our game  
let each of us pray  
reinstating einstein's question  
(he said it made him "HAZY"):



“am i or the others crazy?”

### **on pee-wee herman**

just ‘cause he got caught with his pants down  
avid onanist wanking in the dark in a seedy theatre  
to a porn flick in 1991 in the company of other fans  
tuned in to many members in members’ avid hands  
is no cause to discount or dismiss *Pee-wee’s Playhouse*  
where all things inanimate live joyfully animate  
and that time of childhood when every day is new  
when a magic mr. sun smiles and tantric clouds sing  
and skies sparkle and are bluest robin’s egg blue  
and the toaster warmly welcomes the perfect toast  
and breakfast is a Rube Goldberg engineering wonder  
of interconnected weights pulleys and levers that leave  
a perfectly fried egg sunny side up on a perfect white plate  
and with one fastidious bite saying *goodbye goodbye*  
to globey, dog chair, mr. window, clockey and mr. kite  
Pee-Wee mounts his beloved beach-cruiser bike  
his red-and-white royal steed 1941 Schwinn charger  
and with his inane signature explosive zen-clap laugh  
skinny knight cloaked in a cloak of innocence and bliss  
bravely cycles into the cold-war terror of each cruel day  
so naive and radiant with joy that he actually is protected  
and greeted by grocer baker tailor banker candlestick maker  
as the embodiment of Christ tomb-risen or Bacchus at play

### **seminary**

you can take the boy  
out of the seminary

but never take the priest  
out of the boy

### **sink ant**

crossing the sahara of the kitchen sink  
ebony against porcelain white

he has not the foggiest clue  
that Cyclops Man is God to him

his chances of escape uncrushed  
stacked in favor of none to slim

as instinct kicks in his pace now rushed  
neither faith nor hope count for shite

running for his life no place to hide  
is sink ant from us such a far cry

or lion's red hold on antelope  
soaked in morning's predatory dew

only the Monster has time to think  
in Muerte's armory all must abide

**if**

ah! he thought he caught a whiff of quiff  
lingering on his middle finger  
like some egyptian hieroglyph

bah! she thought wish he had been better  
put the bowl lid down when he was done  
did a tenth of what he said he'd do

**the cardinal**

the chinese character for red  
is cherry blood rose and flame

each time the male cardinal lands  
on the snow-covered cedar limb

he's framed by deepest forest green  
his flight a function of pure chance

he puts all haughty reds to shame  
always new vanishing too fast

beyond the frosted window glass  
few friends do sit and wait for him

red red red red he proudly sings  
winged fire blazing on a branch

**two swans**

to see the swans  
two mates rising up  
wings so close together  
white above bright blue  
river hudson's mighty cup  
you and i - i and you  
flying so close together

thru night and light of day  
fly on my Love fly on  
for wanda

### **aging**

then one old fine day  
looking at a tattered book  
or a nineteen-twenties movie  
clip of a daily desk calendar  
pages flying off like leaves  
of a cold dry november  
or road dust off an old rolls royce  
i see the ranting of my days  
slip by most so fast flown by  
egg larva chrysalis crystal butterfly  
more lives lived than to be  
present future past pluperfect

in the mirror that tells no lies  
shows surgical what it is to lose  
hoping to recreate to reinvent  
that you that used to be new  
now less OWN more like RENT  
while hearing an internal voice  
chanting i must i must i must  
like any four-star retired chef  
hold all recipes in your heart  
a precious *roman à clef*

moon by moon season by season  
always choose faith over reason

### **old marriage**

when we're old and fat  
and have mostly stopped talking  
about any fusty this or muddy that  
like two manhattan subway rats  
clinging to a stale piece of cheese  
imitating burns and gracie  
let's hope we can wave a white flag  
grant one or two small mercies

while one of us is still walking  
fine time for another glass of wine  
so much for romance horse or carriage  
proud souls to earth's final marriage  
and your frail heart that in mine

i clown wear like a sad funny hat  
hold as in a sturdy shopping bag  
ballets of memories and other dances

### **beg borrow or steal**

beg  
all muses  
for compassionate music  
for grace to live  
not obsessed with money  
fame fear or terrorized  
tormented by world events  
somes days sick some so fragile  
feels like we might be blown away  
in a cheap alarm clock's tick

borrow borrow  
whenever in need  
have courage no shame  
to live proud in today  
on the road to tomorrow  
in the play land of hooray!  
on the bus of faith or trust

steal steal steal  
take for the taking  
right off the shelf  
the very best things  
very few if any see  
most of them mostly free  
like stars rise or moon  
or dawn light's or call of loon  
or the silent posse of clouds  
boldly bringing to you  
a celestial wonder  
like a long-distance runner  
sees the cloudy finish line  
at the end of our game  
do recall einstein's question  
"makes me hazy  
...am i or the others crazy?"

### **out from under the boot heel of night and oppression**

out from under the boot heel of night and oppression  
god grant that there always will be one fearless  
one soul drunk with mercy one sober one

to drive the ambulance of compassion  
nine one one

**memory**

once long ago upon a time  
there was a stained-glass window

that caught the alley light  
on sunny afternoons

and cast a ray  
that lit up her living room

what i wouldn't give  
to go back there right now

to where she used to live  
and hold her one last time

**it's spring, baby**

it's spring, baby  
when all is MAY BE

bright as a newly-minted  
limited-edition coin

when a thousand greens  
shine like old gold and

old joints and loins  
are feeling a hint

of a sirloin tingle in  
this spring's busy jingle  
for ee cummings

**who**

who is it who speaks to me  
i his scribe and recorder  
smallest glimmer of eternity  
of smallest shimmer of eternity

flea of a dog spelled backward  
god's flea hinting at order

**a piece of sun  
my only baggage**

through the window  
of the ancient glass  
of my dream  
i still can see  
above the line of trees  
against the planetary map  
of night's great sky  
the handle of the dipper

and like a piece of bread  
in the pocket of my memory  
i carry a piece of sun  
for my journey  
to another day

i still can hear  
the loving thread  
of my father's voice  
*ursus major*  
so clearly say

son  
look to your heart  
to always know  
that though  
beyond this line  
which i cannot cross  
my eyes like the stars  
shine down upon you

bright to bright  
voice to voice  
heart to heart  
to join you on your way  
beyond *ursus minor* to me  
*dreaming of my father (stanley vincent)*

**saturdays**

from the time the cat lands on my stomach  
and starts contentedly kneading our blanket  
and purring like a compassionate alarm clock  
i am seized with a kind of apprehensive joy  
at the prospect of a day completely all my own  
and the daunting imperative of using it well

when phone rings i might choose not to answer  
i can postpone coffee in the interests of observing  
tunnels of dust mote roiling in the morning sun  
or the tropic drift of hypnotic light across the floor

over the crumpled himalayas of the bed sheets  
facing today of which there'll never be another  
i'm suddenly seven in a warm bath Frogman  
(special offer from kelloggs corn flakes which  
with two box tops took eternities to arrive  
powered by baking powder or was it baking soda?)  
red plastic motorboat and a white birch bark canoe  
rocking on waves created by the paddle of my hand  
and that moment when the tub became the ocean  
and in that sailing moment i am sailing free

### **spring rain**

no umbrella no hat  
walking in april rain  
to retrieve the mail  
emerging from winter's cellar  
it's simple things that  
(not the fanciest which pale)  
own the mojo to expel most pain

### **coming out of penn station tunnel heading north on Amtrak 63**

the burning stink of steel  
wheel on rail rail on wheel  
damp funk of old cement and sunless dirt  
wafts faintly through the too hot car

the elephant graffiti graffitied over  
with tag on tag of lesser artists piling on  
bottles broken glass empty spray paint cans  
the rag beds and trash of the invisible homeless

the train's relentless chug a chug a chug  
muted voices of passengers on cell phones  
chatting while still waking up fleeing the hustle  
the rustle of hostile newspaper pages turning

the coming out the always-new shock of sun and light  
a revelation the reflections of weed trees in puddles

and dead grass giving the illusion of another world  
the early sun unruly and dull winks on the tracks

and at last! the New Jerusalem of river Hudson  
and the palisades rising up to sky and low lying cloud  
a determined tide coming in as one white gull celebrates  
with one slow red tug boat and an empty garbage scow

two geese at water's edge leave Vs under the GW bridge  
most of this by most mostly missed a secular resurrection  
the visual sum of it a single cell on the drawing board  
of a friday's somewhat hopeful epic animated cartoon  
as some slick Animator breathes in deep silence and brutality

### **late march**

somewhere in all our childhoods  
a place some might call "heart" or "soul"

as if emerging from a darkened wood  
as winter rows away on thin rafts of ice

from marsh pond river lake or stream  
bright songs of red wings and cardinals ring

each year (heard so well when young)  
now older i hear them better yet again

much more urgent now than then  
the mornings no longer cathedral-quiet

the irreverent birds mating a racket  
over dripping trees muddy fields and marsh

the mist rising smoky off the haunch  
of the snow-covered land like steam

off the back of clydesdales or percherons  
after a long hard day's arching plow

the clouds they seem to weep with joy  
and earth bows down to spring new born

### **after the blizzard**

the morning after the blizzard  
the rising sun was a ball of snow  
backlit by a round of light some call god



soft and round as night's slow fall  
furnaces groaned snow plows like wizards  
banished drifts made roads reappear

the morning after the blizzard  
when the new day's gauze flew off the sun  
turned acres into a blinding white escapade  
a canvas lined with shades of winter blue and gray  
tree shadows ran vertical and horizontal true  
across earth's frozen crumpled sheet

the morning after the blizzard  
a puzzle of snowflake hugging snowflake  
a conspiracy of all those interlocking edges  
intricate metric tons on tons of them  
brought the blanket of winter back  
to cover every steeple barn and home again

the morning after the blizzard  
cold hordes of dazed landscape painters  
were confounded by blinding mounds of white  
striving to capture what nature in a blink  
effortless as a child's sketch made light  
summoned and sewn seamless in a dream

the morning after the blizzard  
conventional wisdoms were shed like skins  
the lion of march roared out like a lion  
the lamb of spring stuck in winter's jamb  
bleating strayed berating snow's cold redefinition  
of fields roads and the wet cacophonies of crows

the morning after the blizzard  
seven a.m. a stubborn moon still shone  
broken free from its moorings at dawn  
cast doubt on the potency of spring  
in the marsh red wings continued to sing  
to Moon frozen stiff and clean as a bone

**a piece of sun**  
**my only baggage**  
through the window  
of the ancient glass  
of my dream  
i still can see

above the line of trees  
against the planetary map  
of night's great sky  
the handle of the dipper

and like a piece of bread  
in the pocket of my memory  
i carry a piece of sun  
for my journey  
to another day

i still can hear  
the loving thread  
of my father's voice  
*ursus major*  
so clearly say

son  
look to your heart  
to always know  
that though  
beyond this line  
which i cannot cross  
my eyes like the stars  
shine down upon you

bright to bright  
voice to voice  
heart to heart  
to join you on your way  
to *ursus minor*  
*dreaming of my father (stanley vincent)*  
*february 25 2017*

### **saturdays**

from the time the cat lands on my stomach  
and starts contentedly kneading our blanket  
and purring like a compassionate alarm clock  
i am seized with a kind of apprehensive joy  
at the prospect of a day completely all my own  
and the daunting imperative of using it well  
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tunnels of dust mote roiling in the morning sun  
or the tropic drift of hypnotic light across the floor

over the crumpled himalayas of the bed sheets

facing today of which there'll never be another  
i'm suddenly seven in a warm bath Frogman  
(special offer from kelloggs corn flakes which  
with two box tops took eternities to arrive  
powered by baking powder or was it baking soda?)  
red plastic motorboat and a white birch bark canoe  
rocking on waves created by the paddle of my hand  
and that moment when the tub became the ocean  
and in that sailing moment i am sailing free

### **hollowed hallowed**

think of a desperate man holding on  
for all his life to a hollow box and bow  
thins of cat gut reinvented as strings  
and what this man becomes  
when holding in his hands wanting  
for all his life this empty varnished box

this fine-crafted thing to live to sing  
to give this hollowed box a hallowed voice  
each keenly mortal each with their flaws  
hollowed box and man held and holding  
each given a set of taught strings spring  
that resonate fly fall pray and defy time

reply to pain or joy or *grande ennui*  
like fencers thrust and parry in the valley  
of that vast divide between dream and liberation  
a duet of flesh gut wood man and violin  
one pulse played one playing elemental  
together both reborn one and transcendental

### **crucifixion**

the hourglass bleeds sand  
the loyalty of friends  
fickle as the flights of birds  
mary mother mary magdalene  
lost in shadow of the cross  
oh where has Martha gone  
the guardsman jeer his pain  
a game of torture and loss  
the thunder of the Word  
thunders through the land  
golgatha gulgatha

### **what it might mean to die**

out of the corner of the corners of the all-cornered eye  
darkness subtracted bite by bit to light shining the center  
thinking you own a memory but the memory owns you  
what it might mean to die the stubborn relinquishing of I

### **reducing your chicken stress**

reducing your chicken stress  
is about moving from more to less  
or being loved by kristy and chris

### **crow**

crow at top of dead elm branch  
black back so cold-midnight black  
above a dance of hudson hills and trees  
in their luster seeing what they lack  
will surely each by each in envy blanch

### **catbird**

cat bird pilgrim gray  
hunting on our porch  
bows down to grab a bug  
then will you see the scorch  
of this bum's rusty rump  
his way to say g'day

### **portrait of my father as a young man**

before returning home from the war  
before mommy and daddy married  
before my three sisters and me  
never dreaming what should never be  
the ovens the skeletons borne living and dead  
barbed wire louse-ridden barracks guard towers  
the dull eyes of the well-fed dogs  
blood tricked and locked in the bloody  
stew of the jackboot steel-winged nazi clock

in this worn black-and-white photo  
scalloped edges going yellow  
no fear in his eyes this new recruit  
shoes spit shined to a soft glow  
khakis pressed to a razor crease  
standing self-possessed at parade rest  
he private first class signal corps  
smiling with a kind of uniformed pride

dreaming of coming home before he left  
anticipating the good life oddly unafraid

then and still now fresh joy in my father's smile  
as if knowing the Spite of all that he would see  
could not poison his faith in the good life  
hard work love sacrifice and family  
would set this his greatest generation free  
strangely calm as if he saw his own return  
behind him massive rolls of telephone cable  
a jeep and eyes still bright  
three dead rabbits (hasenpfeffer) on the hood  
fur glistening not a drop of blood  
k-rations and dehydrated mystery meals  
hanging on a fence a stack of boxing gloves  
he no lightweight with a bayonne-bayonet-jersey jab  
the only fight the men enjoyed fighting

africa morocco rome the camps not-so-gay paris  
attic souvenirs – a fez a program from a cabaret  
braless belly dancer overly posed clearly bored  
german helmet dagger luger arm band with swastika  
and twenty small-format images smuggled in  
bergen-belsen buchenwald chelmno dachau flossenburg  
(forty thousand more 1933 through 1945) tombstones  
of hitler's for-all-time-incomprehensible insane sin  
piles of hair eyeglasses watches teeth of gold  
bulldozed bodies on bodies just bones and skin

sniper shot won purple heart  
promoted to sergeant first class  
his Chopin smile lit up rooms  
a gentle man a gentleman  
no hint of macho  
no fear of tears  
permission to feel granted  
how he loved to say  
“we're Polish not foolish”

in this our small plot of time  
in this worn photo  
father's days and father's days  
being born and reborn  
reappearing and disappearing  
slowly as memories yours and mine  
that all our fathers be here now

my fondest foolish wish  
for Stanley Vincent Furman  
G.J. Furman  
father's day 2017

### **pine beetle**

shell shining like shellac in the morning sun  
the mahogany pine beetle transfixed in my hand  
much smaller than the tip of a knitting needle  
small intelligence to giant! Einstein? me  
instinct kicking in he knows enough to flee  
i appreciate his panic so i set him free  
to the diamond dew of the just-mown green  
if the smallest of our brethren like he  
created and reincarnated so street wise  
in the hands of God how vain are small we  
to ever imagine a more sinister enterprise

## **STAGECOACH OF DREAMS**

**APRIL 15**

Stuffed jack rabbit in white winter coat mounted on a split, pine-log table in an Adirondack cabin.

For commercial reasons (the first client had 'shallow pockets'), the taxidermist of record decided against turning the carcass into the legendary jackalope, stuck with the jackrabbit and got paid by a second Adirondack client. Much to the chagrin of the first client whose imagination exceeded his bank account.

The jackalope, a much desired mantel piece in certain circles is, of course, that imaginary animal of North American folklore, often called "a fearsome critter" and described as a jackrabbit with antelope horns or deer antlers and sometimes, rarely, a pheasant's tail. The word "jackalope," as those who've driven the great Route 66 know, is a portmanteau of 'jackrabbit' and 'antelope' (the archaic spelling of 'antelope'). Some say tales of jackalopes were inspired by sightings of rabbits infected with the *shope papilloma virus* which causes the growth of horn and antler-like tumors on jackrabbits' heads and bodies.

Behind the cabin home of the jackrabbit was a forest of great white pines and cedars. Out front a long, curving silver bay with brown sand beach. Nothing but trees and cloud and water and the occasional white gull lazily gliding above. The sound of small waves lapping against the shore punctuated by the call of a morning dove and the occasional caw of a crow.

Out of one of the jackrabbit's glass eyes impeccably chosen by the taxidermist – actually out of a small hole at the edge of the one eye – like black tears streams a trail of black carpenter ants marching with the robotic determination of an army after bivouac,

breaking camp and marching on automatic pilot with the robotic determination of a some complicated but deadly efficient machine across the table, down the table legs, through the cabin, out on to the beach and marching, marching in a thin, uninterrupted, black conga line stretching out as far as the eye can see.

One of them unseen but heard in the dark forest is whistling one of the snow white and seven dwarfs signature songs: “Hi ho, hi ho, it’s off to work we go....”

And one by one the ants go marching on. The ants go marching on to the tune of the song of the same name. Undeterred. Implacable. Maniacal. Efficient, passing under a giant billboard of Salvador Dali in a bathtub full to the brim of milk.

“To what end? To what end?” were the words ringing in my ears when I awoke.

#### **MAY 4**

All my books, all my things, all my clothes, all my friends - gone.  
All my old ways and old ways of doing things – gone.

And now I’m late for a meeting where I’m expected to present, pitch some fatso corporate arrogant client, totally lost and long overdue with no way to contact those waiting for me all of whom, I am certain, are all also soon to be gone.

I wander through interconnected warehouse after warehouses full of gigantic computer screens with strange art and strange programs playing to the accompaniment of atonal music and gamelans. People taking no note of me, scurry about like robots who seem to have a purpose, wear strange fashions including white plastic suits wired to one another with strings of small lights and tubes that inject some kind of chemicals that monitor and regulate bodily functions so that everyone’s most intimate biorhythms are regularly adjusted and controlled by some all controlling force. As they walk their lights blink on and off, on and off. A massive globe which is an all-seeing eye hangs above the enormous space spinning like a sinister-cyclops, disco-crystal ball.

The sawdust-covered floors are teeming with what look like roaches but roaches made of metal and wire that are responsible for removal of crumbs, dropped parts, screws and bolts and metal filings. The all-seeing eye seems to direct the crowds of people and roaches as well through the sawdust on the floor, past vaults and screens and more screens and people working with blow torches on machines that look like printing presses. The cavernous space smells like sawdust, urine and burning rubber.

I can’t stop thinking about this meeting that I’m late for, that I suspect was cancelled, that no one told me was cancelled, that I’m not sure was cancelled, the location still unknown to me. So I continue to wander aimlessly, stupidly looking for a sign through corridors of video screen stacked on video screen everything under the glare of a greasy artificial light, no windows, no doors anywhere in sight. I continue to search for my old department, my old office and my old things and my old colleagues, feeling like a spectator watching myself searching for a specter, a spectator, a lost member of a lost

tribe that forgot where and when the meeting was and where we were supposed to gather. That or they or chose not to tell me.

More and more people, robotic droids, are now teeming through the warehouse canyons where products and machine parts and chemicals are stored. First dozens then hundreds then thousands ant-like, glassy-eyed milling through the warehouse some on electric carts, some climbing ladders to access this part or product for this or that customer. I envy the fact that they have something to do, a direction to take, a place to go. They all know their jobs. I seem to be the only one without a mission, without direction, without a department and colleagues to go to.

How could they fail to reach me? I need to find a way out of the warehouse but it is like a contained, suffocating hive of an industrial metropolis and there are no doors, no indication of any outside world other than this maze I'm stumbling through. It seems that I alone am driven to find a way out. I know I can never abandon my search but at every corner I turn I find myself at the identical crossroads I just left.

I look lovingly at my last possession, a beautiful crystal timepiece, and realize it now has no hands only numbers. I see a hairline crack across the diameter of its face and it is then that I truly understand things will never be the same. All the old routines and calls to action and communities are just lost memories. I will never be who I once was. Never. My only choice is to wander aimlessly, blindly hoping for a sign as I continue my search for the old life, our old life, all the old lives and all the old things of those old lives, a life which seems far, far away, a life which was once, eons ago, full of natural light, open windows and open doors.

## **MAY 5**

In an Egyptian bazaar. Narrow alleyways smelling of curry, urine and burning dung. A standoff. I'm armed with a futuristic bazooka, a red torpedo at one end. My adversary is pointing a double-gauge shotgun at me. He pulls the trigger. Dull click. His weapon jams, a misfire. I try to fire but can't figure out how to work it. He rushes me. In the struggle I drop my weapon but manage to kick him in the face. He falls back blood pouring from his nose.

I pick up the bazooka and once again have him in my sights. This time it fires. Not a blast as I expected but a laser-like ray of green and purple light. My enemy is transfixed, frozen. He begins to tremble as if afflicted with a violent palsy or Saint Vitus' Dance. Moaning he stumbles back like the living dead blood now pouring from his mouth and ears.

His wailing awakens his kin and from doorways and alleys and shops they emerge, a ballet of zombie-like assassins lurching toward me. I take off running through the narrow streets and passageways until at the very end of the bazaar down the longest and narrowest of lanes I come to a magnificent temple gargantuan in height rising up like an ancient stadium/skyscraper to the open skies. Intricately carved stone pillars wide as six men three hundred feet high stacked one on top of the next. A courtyard, vast as a small



city empty but for some ravens feasting on the half-eaten carcass of a camel. And story on story of galleries looking down on the amphitheater of this vast coliseum. The vultures high above looking down on it all as if in anticipation of a feast.

At the very top of the stadium just below its open vault to sky is a massive platform that can be reached only by climbing a winding, precipitous staircase of a thousand stairs each no wider than a child's foot. No handrails or balustrades and connecting the highest gallery to the platform a narrow plank four inches by four some fifty feet long that leads to the platform, my best sanctuary and position of defense. I manage the stairs and cross the narrow bridge to the platform and peer down on the ant-like assassins growing larger as they ascend toward me.

My weapon has one more round. I can only wait and hope that as they walk the narrow plank to reach me one by one I can throw each off balance to their deaths below. Like the Spartans at Thermopylae I have the advantage of a narrow access point and could only hope to destroy as many as possible before plunging to my certain death as well. Soon they would be upon me. I am overcome with a feeling of dread. In this battle I know I am going to die.

#### **MAY 6**

I held the tiny orange cat, a tabby, in the palm of my hand. It was no bigger than a mouse but of course fluffier, rounder and full-grown. And it was always smiling a full, broad, toothy, almost human smile. It was like no other cat I have ever known. Almost human except for the fact that it didn't speak. It would just look up at me with the most intelligent eyes that seemed to say, "I'm happy to be here with you. That's my job." So I was happy. Very happy. I had always wanted a cat that would fit in a shirt pocket, a cat that you could take to work with you or anywhere you go. A cat that content to accompany you anywhere and everywhere you went and would never run away.

#### **MAY 25**

At a convention. A job fair? In my underwear and black socks. The dry cleaner was supposed to have delivered my suit and never showed up. I'm not embarrassed. The fact, I surprise myself to find myself thinking, that I had the courage to show up in my underwear, the boxer shorts printed with a medley of cat faces of different breeds, will distinguish me. And in the dream I think to myself – I know I am in this dream and that's why I'm thinking this so confidently.

To my disappointment I'm not creating even the slightest stir: an emperor with no clothes in my own mind – slightly clothed. I'm terribly congested, that variety of congestion at the end of a long cold when everything loosens up and the expectorate is almost solid (I want my Musinex!): a pudding of stringy, swamp-green slime, the ridding of oneself of it holding the promise of finally! clear lungs and a return to regular breathing.

In that exact condition I am compelled, as if squeezed like a pop can by an invisible hand, to rid myself of the clog in my chest. Ignored before by all, I start to cough like a cat about to retch. Uncontrollably. I'm surrounded by a crowd, all curious, waiting to see

what I will do.

I hack and gag and with relief, even pleasantly, cough up a massive expectoration of shockingly silver-green, stringy goop. It's a gusher producing a geyser of horrible slime. It's all over my cat underwear, my T-shirt, my black socks. The crowd gasps and moves back disgusted yet fascinated. Now I AM ashamed. There is nowhere to run or hide given the circular wall of the wide-eyed onlookers surrounding me.

I'm trying to use the palms of my hands like squeegees to cast the fibrous, spaghetti-like ooze to the convention center floor. In between convulsions of retching I can hear the sound of those mop buckets on wheels and the arrival of the janitorial staff and clean-up brigade and in the distance the sound of police and ambulance sirens

Now I'm angry. Some of the crowd are laughing. I'd like to kill them all but I can't stop throwing up or wondering, worrying about whatever happened to my dry cleaning.

As they strap me to the gurney to wheel me into the ambulance through a tunnel of cruel gawkers, just before they affix the mask to my face before turning on the sleeping gas, my last thought was relief and something akin to joy that they hadn't delivered my suit and that I'd have something to wear when I finally get out of the hospital.

## **MAY 27**

In a race, a strange kind of marathon, starting at the lakeshore finishing at Yonge and Bloor, Toronto, Ontario, Canada and I, yes I, exclamation to myself in this dream, am incomprehensibly in the lead.

The competitors, hundreds of them all in blue, numbered track suits, all on their bellies like marines at a boot camp obstacle course are getting ready to snake-slither under a low net of electrified barbed wire but in this case without the accompaniment of live ammo and machine gun fire.

Somehow, and the oddest part, each of us was strapped into this futuristic contraption that worked like roller skates but instead of wheels was driven and charged by some sort of hydroplane technology made of credit cards – Amex, Visa, Master Card, Diner's Club – which were activated by our frantic, slithering motions.

We were all on our bellies slithering as fast as speed-snake humanly possible. The faster racers slithered the faster they went. The effect of this frantic slithering on the carapace of cards attached somehow sled-like to hands, elbows, chests, stomachs, knees and toes was to turbo charge by a massive multiple the speed of the horizontal contestants.

To the crowd of marathoners looked down on us from above, we must have looked like a thousand blue human worms all on their bellies slithering maniacally, speeding down Yonge street at a blistering ninety miles an hour and faster. The scariest part (no one had protective headgear) was hearing behind me the watermelon-like splats of contestants as they veered off the street and collided face first into telephone poles, mail

boxes and storefronts. I could only imagine the blood and the brains splattering the onlookers but to look back was to crash and die.

Still leading I could hear my carapace-sled of plastic cards making that exact sound that credit cards make when rubbed on concrete or macadam. I was worried, even though leading the pack by a good margin, that my 'machine' was wearing down. I could hear the scraping sound of my nearest competitor not far behind me and see the finish line just ahead.

It was going to be close but I was sure I was going to win. At the same time I could feel myself in the dream waking up, being pulled from the dream.. I didn't want to leave the dream and was fighting not to wake up until I crossed the finish line and was able to experience the exhilaration, the triumph, the thrill of victory. I wanted to hear the roar of the crowd's approval, and almost as importantly, to get out of this infernally weird credit card contraption I was hitched to, to stop slithering, to stand upright and victorious, a man in full.

But it was not meant to be. Like a diver no longer able to hold my breath, no longer able to stay down, I found myself rising to the surface from the bottom of the darkest, deepest pool, floating back up to consciousness. Against my will I woke up feeling bereft, disappointed, deprived unjustly of the joy of winning, being recognized and admired by all the world as a true champion..

Outside my bedroom a garbage truck drove by, the roar of its engine sounding very much like the roar of an approving crowd.

### **MAY 30**

Towering dunes and red clay cliffs overlooking a vast expanse of ocean and shallow flats stretching turquoise far out into deeper dark-blue, almost purple waters. Looking down from on high I can see great fish cruising in the shallows – sharks, barracudas, dolphins on the hunt, patrolling and enormous schools of baitfish flashing in the sun as their massive geometries shift in response to who knows what stimulus from circle to oval to figure eights as if their millions had but one mind.

I am with a guide and we are ascending to an even more precipitous view up the soft edge of one great dune after the next. The going is hard work in the sliding sands. Half a step gained for every step taken. We are in what I've been told is a pristine wilderness. My guide by now, accustomed to the hike and trusting me to follow, is far, far ahead of me.

I have been hypnotized by the view and realize, strangely without any feeling of dismay, that I have been stricken by what feels like a form of snow blindness except that in my case it is from the intensity of the sun off the white, white sands. As much as I try to focus by squinting or rubbing my eyes, my vision is blurred. Like looking through the bottom of a thick glass bottle.

Perched high as I am on this narrow trail of sand and soft clay which crumbles easily and

careens in big clumps down to the surf hundreds of feet below, I am somehow fearless. I'm standing at the very edge of a treacherous and unforgiving path. Clearly the combination of my impaired vision and precarious position on the cliff path should give me pause but I'm totally and surprisingly anxiety free.

I have that restless, nervous sensation in the pit of my stomach that one feels when looking down from any great height, that instinctual recoil at the possibility of plummeting to one's death. But this doesn't stop me from peering out over the edge in wonder, blurred vision and all. Or from continuing my climb on and up to the very highest point.

Now I'm so high up that I can almost touch the great-black-backed gulls suspended motionless, without a flap of wing, hang-gliding in the thermals an arm's reach, curious and eye-level from me just inches from the edge.

When I reach the summit, well past the meandering spine of the red cliffs below me, I see to the south in a blur the rusty corrugated roof tops of a thousand shacks, the encroaching sprawl of a shanty town far below and a vast metropolis beyond. My heart drops with the realization that this 'wilderness' I'm exploring is not pristine at all but an illusion. Nothing more than the remnant of what once was a wilderness and now not much better than a theme park for would-be outdoorsmen and well-to-do adventurers – most of whom fail to climb to the highest peak and are deluded into thinking this beauty goes on forever.

I'm overcome with a sadness of mind and sickness of heart and think, looking north and down on the pristine sea, the sun glittering off the wave tops, the encroaching urban sprawl behind me, that perhaps it is a good thing, even a gift of sorts, that my vision is going and that soon I will be blind.

#### **July 4**

I was eleven years old. It was Holy Saturday afternoon. I was in the confessional having confessed my usual mortal sins. Impure thoughts (code for jerking off): "Bless me father for I have sinned. It has been nine days since my last confession. I had impure thoughts twenty nine times." A stockpiling of mortal sins, one being enough to guarantee eternal damnation and the fires of hell forever. Father Racklee was the confessor. He always wanted to know all the specifics and had a disturbing way of dragging it out of you. I tried to avoid getting in his line but this time failed. He was giving me my penance – five Our Fathers and five Hail Mary's when what sounded like exploding cherry bombs, shots shattered the silence followed by people screaming and running. He was out of the dark box before me.

We were running, he in the lead, for the nearest exit door which was through the sacristy. He leapt over the body of a nun, order of the Sisters of St. Joseph, a single bullet in her head, blood running down her white bib. In the sacristy a priest shot multiple times in the back was slumped over a gold and white chasuble. I dipped my fingers into the pool of blood running black on the floor and drew down three straight lines like tears of

victory and let out a howl like some demented dog and vowed to exterminate all assassins, renegade academics and pederast priests no matter the cost.

### **dream of magdelene and apis – herald of ptah**

In a tawdry slum of a room surrounded my mother, my father, my grandmothers, grandfathers, father and mother-in-law, all dead, and, still living, my wife, my sisters, my friends, my nephews, grand nieces and friends, a communion of them. At the center of the room was the most beautiful woman I've ever encountered reclining on a lush divan wearing only an open white linen shirt. Her eyes! The contour of her breasts under the cloth, her legs an invitation, as if it were just the two of us without shame.

Not embarrassed by the witnesses around us, living and dead. I was drawn in; soaked, drenched, drowning in Her; aware only of a magnetic descent into a magnificent kind of ecstatic wholeness.

She was Mary. But not Mary mother of Jesus but Jesus' other Mary. Mary Magdalene. The whore Jesus forgave and loved. In Her, experiencing a form of the sweetest naked light, I was taking off my body in the same way one takes off a shirt, leaving it behind on a warm beach before entering an open sea.

Floating, I felt on the tip of my tongue what I thought might be a hair, no, a thread, a line which, as I tried to remove it, resisted as if it had a life of its own, a tension like that of a line with a fish on it. I realized I was the line and the fish. The more I pulled on the line, the more it painlessly played out, the more I thought of Ariadne and the thread of Ariadne and, fearing the Minotaur whose steps I could hear not far away, I pulled the line harder and knew that as I pulled I was pulling myself through a labyrinth to safety, to a place of supreme joy and almost unendurable happiness, pulling myself inside out, weeping with the joy of loss and discovery of myself. I woke in the dark to the sound of rain and a light breeze softly blowing through an open window and my bed, white pillows and sheets.

I returned to a waking state desperately wanting to return to the dream with Her and never to awake to this real space of bed and sheets and pillows with rain falling outside and the night breeze in the flowering apple near the open window of my room. What woke me was my own voice, not singing, not chanting but strangely intoning a strange Word from the depths of the dream, a strange Word floating like Christ crucified devoid of nails, blood and crown of thorns, like the Christ of Salvador Dali's painting *Christ of Saint John of the Cross* floating over and looking down on a vast body of water and far below a tiny boat with fearful fishermen crouching in their tiny boat beneath a darkened greenish sky, a sky anticipating a big summer storm.

That strange Word, I, still sobbing with the joy or grief that woke me, even as I uttered it, that Word, the Word that came to my lips and woke me was APIS.

The echo of it in the room like INRI, *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum*, Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews nailed by the soldiers to Christ's cross, echoed in my silent room. The word APIS. The sound of rain. The silence of the dark.

Awake I imagined APIS to be the APIS I knew in Egyptian mythology: the bull made sacred and whole by the total love of the whore mother lover whose haunting and hunting arms and body and embrace I lost on waking and now longed for and lost but, perhaps, not lost forever, please not forever, I thought on waking from this seduction of a dream, this dream of Magdalene and Apis, herald of Ptah, the pharaoh, the king spitting me, spewing me out, tearing me back from her sacred embrace back onto this pity of a darkened world. Through her from bull to man to a god.

## **two in september**

### **I**

for who knows whose graduation i had to stay in the basement of an outer borough chop shop - the bed was a lift with a cot on it - and below me surrounded by muscle-bound guys with lots of tattoos welding - sparks flying - pounding on fenders and engines - i couldn't sleep with all the noise - as a snack they gave me a rotten peach which leaked motor oil - i threw it on the oily floor below me - and regretted it - when i heard the bald headed bearded gorilla of a slum lord proprietor - telling another 'guest' he'd better keep the floor under his lift hospital clean or he'd be out in the freezing night with the "clothes" he was born in - i was too tired to push the down button and pick up the peach - and was afraid he'd see it and evict me too - and still i couldn't fall asleep - then somewhere as if from the bottom of a deep well or from across a vast canyon- a small, high pitched cartoon voice like that of snow white's dwarf grumpy shrieked - that's because you already are asleep, you fool!

### **II**

in some foreign country lost in the underground - like those in london or moscow - those alpine grand canyon-like disastrous descents that go on seemingly forever - except for the disconcerting fact that the escalators were moving at a breakneck speed - and people had to leap off them before they got to the end for fear of being catapulted on to the tracks - one after the next after the next - some i watched land on their feet and others on their heads writhing bruised and broken in bleeding piles - the other feature of the escalators was that they had giant sculptures - tsunami waves naked cararra marble men and women - giant aquariums with tropical fish and cages with exotic wildlife - albino tigers and pythons - the guinness book of record albino raccoon - in the center meridian - which somehow followed the speeding stairs down and then recycled back up to the top like some amusement park ride - i remember trying to concentrate on getting my leap off the speeding stairs right so i wouldn't crack my skull and being distracted by the scale and intricacy of the speeding meridian escalator sculptures, cages, aquaria and riveted by what a feat of engineering was required - i suddenly realized i left my cell phone and my wallet - how!?! - at the top of the escalator near the ticket booth - which was at the edge of and looking down on a subterranean cavern with dripping stalactites and turquoise pools lit from below to astonish the tourist strap hangers - as i was getting prepared to leap - and do the whole thing all over again - in the dream i thought to myself - curious - that in this dream - knowing i was in this dream - at the ticket booth they managed to spell POUGHKEEPSIE correctly

9/18/2016

## **in shinjuku**

in the shinjuku district of tokyo outside a shop selling  
cheap tourist souvenirs i come upon a florescent green  
and yellow plastic frogman in a fishbowl on a pedestal  
for bathtub and next to it a smaller Beatles yellow submarine -  
at a café sitting outside a boy and a girl one wearing ny mets  
one wearing ny yankees spanking new baseball caps

plastic frogman doing breast stroke making unpleasant  
battery-op grinding toy sounds doing imaginary laps -  
in Japanese a Japanese highschool girl passing by says  
THAT'S REALLY ANNOYING -no subtitles in dreams  
but magically i understand

a group of Japanese punkers with blue and tangerine hair  
drinking lots of cheap saki from cans they tell me they have a  
craving for plum wine plum chicken and garlic and can i join  
them please - they take me to a late night hole in the wall diner  
and the cook has neither plum wine nor chicken

i'm thinking they can't drink they're minors –  
but no one seems to mind and the chef is pouring them  
Japanese beer after they finish their saki -  
it's 5 a.m. everyone speaking japanese and i no longer  
can understand have lost my ability to translate a word  
- then enter three japanese strippers with low-cut, silk-flowered  
dresses pert breasts, no bras, nipples up under thin silk -  
i'm in the corner staring, wishing i spoke or could understand  
japanese again

diner chef murikami looking at the girls –  
thinking i think the same as me – silk and  
breasts beneath - wishing there was plum wine  
for chicken wings garlic plum wine sauce

then one bending low enough to stoke desire  
- young girl walks to us - i wake up locked in that  
moment – holding on waking - as if someone shut off a projector  
and it stuck on that one frame of the walking girl -  
feeling burned by reality i stare at the silent alarm clock  
10-21-2016

## **beulah and beauregard beecham and their mad maid hattie mcdundlebee**

beulah and beauregaard beecham and their mad maid hattie mcdundlebee were good

friends of mine - hattie who tags along shrill as a pet pomeranian is as tiny as beulah and beaugard are massive (both haystack calhoun size) - beulah had a mail order business that specialized in rum cake so rich in rum you couldn't unless suicidal smoke near them when opening the fedex box for fear of blowing yourself to kingdom come - beaugard was a retired mixed martial arts champion turned world-renowned blues musician in the tradition of leadbelly - they were invited to the white house which in the dream was just a few blocks from mommy's at 143 east 8th avenue roselle new jersey to perform and wanted to celebrate the occasion with us before meeting the president with the whole furman family in tow - i was 11 in the dream - so we were all wide-eyed...

when we got to the white house there was no security - we found our way down to what looked like every suburban basement you've ever been in - mad tiny hattie all bubbly lead the way - shoed out by the president's social secretary by mistake left beulah's purse on a tv dinner tray

beulah was really upset with hattie for leaving her purse behind and charged like a water buffalo back to the white house with all of us ducks in a row to reclaim what was rightly hers - beaugard who had had more than a few shots of jack daniels to calm his nerves was three sheets to the wind - followed reluctantly along and when we got to the basement - no security again! - beulah started shrieking at the president's social secretary and beaugard in the interests of calming her down gave beulah what amounted to a love tap that sent her sailing to the white shag rug with a lump on her forehead that would require ten stitches - we couldn't believe it was happening - the social secretary was screeching like a democratic banshee for security - exit rapidly rapidly all of us - except for beulah who was still unclaimed, unconscious on the floor...

we came back to get beulah and, horrible to behold, all that was left of her was a heavily bleeding left shoulder as if severed by a chainsaw, the left side of her neck and her head intact - the only way to reclaim her was to stick your hand in her mouth and lift what was left of her by grasping her upper teeth and lifting her head, shoulder and neck like a suitcase off a baggage claim in a third-world country - which i did - we were all running to escape - by this time they had called security not far behind us and shooting - in the hail of bullets that followed the only thing i could think of was that i left no fingerprints and hoped this embarrassing breach of protocol would not trigger a tax audit by the IRS....

10-24-2016

### **dogs' ears dioramas**

once upon a time - in this dream to be exact - there was a Caliph, a very bored Caliph who commissioned three marzipan miniature artists, the Yoyo Ma's of marzipan miniatures, who used all natural ingredients - plant and vegetable dyes no artificial flavorings - to create three exquisite miniature dioramas in each of the Caliph's three dogs' ears - a bloodhound, a French bulldog and a pug - the dogs were anaesthetized by a supervising veterinarian anesthesiologist and the commissioned artists given three themes: for the pug: mountaineering in which the inside of the pug's ear was a miniature Matterhorn with climbers - for the bloodhound (you had to lift his floppy ear to view it) a modern three-star Michelin guide chef's kitchen complete with sous chefs, tiny sub-zero



wolf appliances, copper pots and kettles - and for the French bulldog a barbershop like the one in the movie starring Eddie Murphy

the dogs were lined up in small tents, the only thing showing was their heads and ears facing the viewers on an eye-level platform so you could look right into to each dog's ear and see the intricate work of each artist - the viewing only lasted half an hour and no animal was harmed in the course of this production - the marzipan dioramas, once carefully removed from each dog's ear, were served as a desert delicacy with some kind of coffee, the beans of which were consumed by bonobos, shat out, cleaned, then roasted, then ground to fine espresso and served at a banquet celebrating the event that evening for those attending - i woke with the words of groucho marx ringing in my ears – “inside of a dog it's too dark to read.”

10-24-2016

### **in algonquin**

Dan and I in Algonquin. The reason, indecipherable, untranslatable, obscure, forgotten, as to why we decided to leave all our gear and canoe at the second portage by the monument to some Algonquin ranger and in calm water swim to the first of three goals, past the three bear islands and then to shore – by then the wind had blown the waters high to past-safe canoeing and yet through the heaving swells we arrived exhausted but safely sheltered by the arbor of pine and hemlock and balsam - a roof over shivering us as a shivering sun dropped down

We woke wondering why we ventured out this way knowing we'd have to swim all the way back to our canoe to get all our gear - tent food wine scotch – so, determined not to spoil our trip, we headed back – the long swim, again, the way we came not knowing why we decided to swim out in the first place – but this time the lake was calm

When we reached the shore our canoe was gone and in its place was a flimsy raft left by someone that had been through the same test, the same trial - and taken our canoe

So we took the raft, made two primitive paddles and set out to return from where we came and begin yet again our trip to our favorite place – the great smallmouth bass and moose crossing at the end of the hardest portage – with a great view and easy access to great fishing – only gains in charm and beauty and magic as the years wear by – a holy place, as sacred as the most ornate cathedral – and more so for its simplicity

Full of hope and anticipation we Pushed off and then STRANGEST of STRANGE Daniel was no longer Daniel but his father Alan and Alan and I were on the raft paddling back but through a maze of canyons and high cliffs and islands that we had never seen and our choice was either to go back and hope we'd find our way and that it would return to the way we came and that Alan would become Dan and we'd pick up where we left off before we were compelled to swim and resume our trip again

And we - Alan and I paddled and paddled and it was like going back in time through a maze of islands and land mass that were totally unfamiliar to get back to where we began and find Daniel and our canoe and resume our trek as we always had resumed it - but we

were impossibly lost and paddling and above us were cliffs and beyond us were a series of lakes on lakes that we had never seen and we were on the water in a place where we had never been

It was as if someone some larger power had a finger on a power point and had changed the slides and Dan and Dan my canoe trips and Alan and my and Dan's canoe trips had blended into one where the direction for all of us was uncertain but we kept paddling and I kept thinking of Dan on the island waiting for us not understanding how he had become his father and how Alan and I were back in time to where we were when it was only the two of us that traveled Algonquin before any of his sons were born strangely lost looking for a place we all much loved

### **fox kits**

we were on the way up north for an illicit weekend where we'd spend most of the time in bed and the rest cross country skiing, drinking good wine and reading good books – our first time together for more than a night – she was unhappily married – i was between marriages – driving north we didn't speak – a comfortable silence – she saved her conversational skills for the bedroom

we arrived at the city's edge having taken an out-of-the-way route to avoid the weekend traffic jam to cottage country - having missed most of it, we were heading back to the main route north – the sun was going down – the landscape, if you could call it that, was treeless, a desolate waste, leveled for the development of the exploding housing needs of a voracious metropolis - a light snow falling on the unpaved road was turning to freezing rain - in the dim light of dusk we approached a massive, half-frozen river below us and a drawbridge which was slick with ice

several cars that failed to make it across we're frantically revving their engines, uselessly spinning their wheels – even with windows closed the crossing stank of burning oil and rubber – as we got half way across the bridge we saw a teenage boy in a black parka holding two tridents one in each hand – the kind used in ice fishing for spearing muskellunge or perch – gamboling around him were two fox kits – we thought pets – then without warning he speared them both – they wriggled and bled like some kind of live bait – horrified we rolled down the car windows shouting - *how could you do that you bastard!* – unmoved, smiling even, ignoring us completely, he threw the kits still squirming and the tridents into the dark river below.

halloween 2016

### **albino tiger**

among the many black decorative wood panels in the mahogany library wall – a loud scratching sound made him focus on one panel in particular – a panel that something on the other side of the wall had clawed open – first he saw the stripes on the paw and then the claws each as large as a

large man's hand – it was a tiger - an albino tiger that had discovered the sliding panel and was pawing and fishing for what – an escaped mouse? freedom? – it was also a very patient tiger and given the deep rumbling of its saber-tooth purr a very calm one – all these hours months and years studying, reading writing - and never a hint that on the other side of the wall beyond the shelves and books lived something very large, something very dangerous – he didn't dare get too close for fear of being clawed – still he feared for the creature and worried about its survival – who would feed it – would it eventually claw its way out – and then what?

november 1, 2016

### **admission desk**

i was finally being admitted for hip surgery after a year's painful wait - the head nurse looking very impatient was waiting for me to fill out a very simple half-page form – name, address, birthdate, telephone, social security number and medicare number - i kept trying to write my name but could only write my first name – not last name or even middle initial – frustrated i tried my social security number but couldn't remember all the digits – i kept trying, kept writing and trying until both sides of the form were filled with the same trail of incomplete information – the nurse was now looking at me as if to say what's the matter with you – the form both sides were black with my attempts – at which point i thought if i did some doodles over top of the mess i'd made that i'd be able to finish the now not so simple and frighteningly frustrating task – i drew blue faces with clouds and crescent moons and stars in magic marker yellow – and then tried to write my name and social security number – to no avail – even more terrifying than not being able to accomplish this elementary task was the thought that i'm having a stroke in my dream – a dream from which i'd never wake up - and still have to pay for the hip surgery

october 29 2016

### **winter**

a modern glass house - inside stacks of linens ironed and neatly folded fresh as cold air - a silent geometry that complements the austerity of the interior – bare white walls – steel and glass furniture – ceiling-to-floor windows and sliding glass doors open out on to a view of a succession of clothes lines on which white sheets dried in the sun and stiff with the cold are swaying slightly in a light breeze – the lawn is covered in snow - the sheets where their folds meet the clothes line and clothespins are topped by a thin line of snow – the breeze and the lines' delicate swaying is not strong enough to dislodge the snow - noon sun low on the horizon – sky shroud white

a lone figure casting a surprisingly long shadow methodically removes sheets from the line placing them in a large wicker basket shattering the thin line of snow on the clotheslines which falls in bursts to the frozen ground – a small dog streaks around in crazy circles chasing its own shadow and celebrating its release into the frigid outdoor air - looking down on this scene it occurs to me that outside of a french laundry, open air drying is laundry's best friend and inside a bichon frise, it's too dark to launder – seen from above, in a salvador dali like effect of light and shadow, the sheets piled randomly fold on fold in the basket uncannily look like the face of an old groucho marx just before

he died - all in exquisite variations of folded-sheet white.

november 7 2016

### **catch no release**

He was a monolith: once upon a time 52nd draft choice, the very last pick, the first ever Indian, seven foot two, 300 pounds and in his first two years averaging six points, seven rebounds in seven and half minutes play time. He didn't make it in the NBA and at the end of a downward spiral eventually wound up a hit man for the mafia, pulling heads off delinquent offenders like corks off champagne bottles in a single twist. Oddly, the fatter he got the stronger he got. He was the FBI most wanted, toughest hit man out there. The Indian.

And now, now here he sits thanks to a snitch, a rat, unseen forces, cruel fate, handcuffed to a chair interrogated by the feds. Not for long. He stands up, crashes the chair against the cell wall and still-handcuffed to what remained of the chair's armrests uses the shattered wood like clubs to splatter the brains of his captors all over the walls and floor. And, uncaged beast, makes his break for freedom stampeding down the stairwell, eight floors to the emergency exit. Like some rabid rogue elephant full of blood lust and murderous intentions escaping the circus.

Eight stories below our oblivious dream protagonist was having his daily constitutional happily in one of the precinct's most private bathrooms (even though there was no door on the stall, so few knew of it, his privacy was assured) across the hall from the emergency exit at the bottom of the stairwell, enjoying the luxury of a meditative and undisturbed evacuation and liberation of his bowels. Blessing his own punctual regularity, the porcelain and the smooth banana-like, unforced plop after plop into the receptive, musical waters below, his mind wandered contentedly. Small bliss. But bliss none the less.

When he heard the crash and then the avalanche of something, someone thundering down the stairwell clearly headed for the emergency door directly across the hall from the privacy of his own, almost personal, lavatory, he took it to be movers moving something very, very heavy. It was The Indian. And he (pants down still sitting on the crapper) was The Indian's only obstacle to freedom and mayhem.

Fortunately what he did have handy was his trusty retro-fit, nine by nine millimeter, Walther P99 German semi-automatic taser combine which he grabbed from his cashmere Brioni sport jacket and, pants down, began firing. The Indian was as surprised to have surprised the hero as the hero

was surprised by The Indian. The bullet holes were tiny, miniscule and seemingly ineffectual. The taser no more effective than dental floss attached to a slew of sewing needles. A technical malfunction? A function of this happening in this dream?

The Indian, though undeterred, was leaking like a Roman fountain, spouting thin streams of what appeared to be motor oil rather than blood. The more our dream hero fired the more leaks there were. Still handcuffed to two shattered arm rests, The Indian had the appearance of a 400 pound watering can that had been punctured by a conglomerate of hateful trolls with tiny, pointy jack hammers. Though not fatal, the assault stopped him in his tracks. More by force of surprise at the fact the he had sprung a multitude of leaks than from any mortal wounds.

This gave our hero time to pump even more rounds into the escapee's massive torso and triple the voltage switch on the taser. All to no avail, save the saving grace of turning The Indian into a non-moving target giving our hero time to lift the lid off the toilet tank and in a brilliant flourish, pant less still, pound the brains out of the brain pan of the evil hitman. At which point he thought to look for a mop, bucket and plenty of Mr. Clean or Ajax the foaming cleanser. But, first things first, in the interests of not ruining and resuming his morning constitutional, he put the toilet cover back on the tank and decided to finish his business and in his good time deal with cleanup later. The Indian would keep.

january 1 2017

### **the baby**

When he got the call that his wife was in labor, he was at home, a ten minute walk from the hospital. On one of the top floors in a suite with a waiting area, bathroom and a large window overlooking the Triborough Bridge, east river and hell's gate, there was another room – the birthing room. The entire suite was white including the tables chairs, lamps and tiled floor. The admitting nurse told him his wife had one of the shortest labors on record. As he walked in he could hear the baby crying.

In the birthing room his wife was nowhere to be seen. There were two men their heads shaved like Buddhist monks in white dressing gowns sitting on the bed side by side like partners, one holding the baby. Who knows why, his first thought was: *Men can't give birth. Where's my wife.* They said nothing, placed the baby gently on the king-sized bed and left the room. As they left his wife, also in a white-Belgium-lace dressing gown, walked out of the bathroom and sat on the bed, not a typical hospital bed, not a typical hospital gown, her back against the headboard. Calm but emotionless.

The baby was huge for a new born. An unusually big head. And, caterpillar-like, was squirming, crawling to greet him. Or so he thought. He sat down and began petting the naked baby like a pet dog or cat. The baby made some gurgling sounds and continued to cross the white expanse of the bed. He picked it up. It was a very pleasant baby, very

advanced for a new born, making eye contact, smiling, grabbing his fingers and shirt. Behaviors you'd never expect from a new born.

For someone who had just given birth, his wife was totally un-phased. Seemingly pain free, She sat expressionless, meditatively alternating her glance from baby to window to him. Expressionless but not hostile, not in pain, neither sad nor glad. He on the other hand was overjoyed and perplexed by his wife's neutrality and lack of joy in this determined new life.

Then there was the smell. The baby left a rather large yellow poop fouling the Immaculate sheet. He thought to himself (his wife not seeming open to idle chit chat) *That's a really large poop for such a small creature. I guess I'll be doing a lot of diaper changing.*

His wife didn't react, smile or change expression. The baby, on the other hand, clearly distressed, horrified even, let out a monkey howl of protest. He used a towel and a cloth napkin to clean the bulk of it from the sheet and off the baby. On a table near the bed he saw a clear jar containing an iodine- colored fluid which he took for disinfectant soap and poured some on a face cloth for the fine cleaning. The baby hated it even more and started monkey howling even louder.

He moved the baby to the middle of the bed, went into the bathroom, got a warm damp towel, did the final wipe down of the baby and the bed and put a clean dry towel over the soiled spot which looked like a mustard skid mark on a once immaculate sheet. Almost immediately the baby stopped wailing and resumed crawling around the king-sized bed oddly resembling a tiny naked marine in an obstacle course at Fort Dix under barbed wire and heavy machine gun fire.

He couldn't understand why his wife wasn't happier. It was such a large baby. Such a large, intelligent head. Eyes so alert.

Outside the hospital, the sun was going down behind three white clouds shaped like salamanders and the Triborough Bridge shaped like the Triborough Bridge with its necklace of white lights and the waters of the east river below. Like the famous Monet paintings of sunset on Thames, everything was turning red with the big head of the setting sun going to bed, shimmering blood red, fire red in it all.

january 7 2017

## **CONTRA NATURAM**

### **hawk and crow**

from the trees' tops  
i see the rise and fall of their soft breasts  
down to soft thickets they flee  
no rest for the weak no sanctuary  
the parabola of my razor beak  
geometric surgical and free

my talons wake to warm flesh  
trembling prey still fresh  
my heart is full of glee

dark crows of the soul  
leave my hunting heart alone

raptor king, you'll not dine in peace  
our black envy and jealous greed  
will make you choke on every bite  
we'll black dog your airy pirouettes  
with our shrill cawing flight  
turn your day to our partial night  
dive bomb your dignity and aplomb  
jeer and joust your speed  
of your ferocity make light

dark crows of the soul  
leave my hunting heart alone

beneath the shagbark limb  
light down and feathers mount  
a plucked molt like snow  
from one black branch above  
on one white downy tuft  
falls one drop of red a hymn  
never enough never enough  
the hunter catapults from darkest cloud  
raw hunger bolts from harrier's glove

dark crows of the soul  
leave my hunting heart alone

to glide above the city  
my silence married to the silent sky  
shot from The Archer's bow my high desire  
above the pine and cedar spires  
doves and ducks scattering far below  
the timid flocks panic and cower  
under the predatory span of my wings  
to see the terror in their eyes  
makes my soaring spirit sing

dark crows of the soul  
leave my hunting heart alone

is it fair that some relentless hand  
should have cast a crowning spell  
and played me for the royal fool  
harried sovereign whose harried flight  
draws bloody crows like fillings to a magnet drawn  
black furies they know my story all too well  
my horizon spoiled only by their spawn  
the haunting shapes and shrieking japes  
of crow on crow so loud so loud

dark crows of the soul  
leave my hunting heart alone

### **the same week in early march**

like the deboned fingers  
of tiny pink and gray aliens  
the worms mimicked lemmings  
marching and casting themselves  
suicidal extraterrestrials subject  
to the cruelties of frost and side walks  
melting in the morning sun  
the park paths full of them

the sunday following  
it was snow's turn to cover up  
the walks and blunt the daffodils' spikes  
with soft bowlers of white  
everywhere there were snowmen  
recalling melting reincarnations  
of jesus, buddha, moose and henny youngman  
and the ghost of his much maligned white-haired wife  
the park paths full of them

## **CARTOONS 1999**

### **betty boop**

when i was seven  
betty boop's cleavage  
seemed like a new age  
heaven  
her wiggle and her walk  
made me feel eleven  
boop boopee doop  
forget the chalkboards and the chalk  
boop boopee doop



### **charlie chaplin and hitler**

charlie chaplin and hitler  
sent the world's axis  
sliding out of kilter  
these ministers of jerky walks  
held two primal posts  
one of laughter one of tears  
while hollywood inventors  
created celluloid which talks  
dances, sings and stalks  
celluloid tragic trances  
celluloid ghosts  
celluloid toasts

### **two dogs in snow**

two dogs in dog sweaters  
walking in the falling snow  
the color of the wool  
orange and lime - day-glo  
one's named 'walks too fast'  
the other 'walks too slow'  
one faces future  
the other faces past  
one speeds up  
the other snoofs around  
each eventually finding  
the other's common ground  
the owner, god, made the fool  
torn between the two  
not knowing how to rule  
lets them run helter skelter  
what else to do?  
has anyone known better?  
dog is god  
spelled backward  
forever and forever

### **my feet**

my feet look up at me  
out from under the cotton sheet  
they wiggle hello and praise  
my trembling hands who shout  
they might as well be  
travelers from foreign lands  
wearing tasseled fez or black berets  
singing loony tunes they like to rave

solitary planets out there on their own  
the body one the mind another thing  
each unto itself alone  
when trumpets blast  
when last breath is drawn  
each will surely be forlorn  
about the fact just exactly then  
of having no digital friends  
to whom to wave anymore  
and realizing in the end  
that the body is but a nest  
without the homely wren  
and when the final drop has left the cup  
maybe we'll just wake up  
and this will be the beginning  
of an eternal clapping dancing storm  
an open closing of a door  
the soul's walk out of a closed hope chest  
and up and up and up

### **the lemons of picasso and george braques**

the lemons of picasso  
and georges braque  
marched out of their paintings  
into the landscapes of david hockney  
to their electric sunny shock  
they fit right in just ah so  
like the mice in hickory dickory dock  
who ran up against the clock  
theirs wasn't the pale of drawing room faintings  
of classical sands and precious schlock  
theirs was the bold of brassy virtuosos  
without affectations as a lock or mangos  
aspiring to the condition of cockney  
always on bright vacations

### **tulips in a vase**

of all the tulips in a vase  
only one is open to the sun  
the others play it cool  
and keep their bright heads bowed  
thinking any flower to raise  
a head too high must be a deluded fool  
safer to be petals in a crowd

### **the paper clips' revolt**

one pitch night  
when the moon was silver  
like a spot lit paper clip  
clipped to the carbon sky  
the paper clips all rose up  
tired of their lot as twisted fools  
with a determined metallic shiver  
unclipped themselves with a quiver  
and stormed out of libraries, offices and schools  
to this day stacks of unclipped paper still ask why  
the letters, memos, files and other paper knavery  
were disconsolate and lost  
like crazy gypsy tools  
they unclipped themselves from rent  
from their paper lords and masters  
and like tiny furniture on oiled casters  
left their file cabinets and their shelves  
without a single silver care  
they broke their ancient paper chains  
imposed on them by fat bureaucrats  
and plump paper pushers every where  
the entire paper world fell into disorder  
in the cities, villages and the towns  
stacks of regimented paper soldiers  
in one stroke of paper clip revolt were changed overnight  
into sheaves and reams of flapping clowns  
the paper world of paper mountains was lost  
the paper clips just didn't care  
instead they clipped themselves to themselves  
an orgy of paper clippings ensued  
wired freedom felt just right  
papers clips clipped to paper clips  
clipped to paper clips  
paper clips, tell their children, is right and good.

### **the wooden fold-up toy**

first i really couldn't kill  
the wooden walker with the mask  
or the evil man behind it  
no matter how i tried  
then i learned each time  
with each attempt  
something in me died  
with each attempt  
was born another wooden walker  
with another frozen mask

an army without reason without rhyme  
that lied and lied and lied

**walking through elementary schools  
or being at conventions**

walking through elementary schools  
or being at conventions  
speaking without being heard  
to those obsessed with obeying rules  
or clasping their pretentions

**an incomplete catalog of modern artists**

one who sliced his penis off affectionately and sectionally,  
one who crawled through broken glass in an La. parking lot,  
shot at 747's as they took off,  
was crucified to a volkswagon,  
orchestrated his own shooting.  
one who masturbated beneath a gallery artificial floor  
and recorded his sounds for visitors,  
followed people until they left the street,  
entered their destination and then followed someone else,  
one who lived with a coyote in a german museum,  
one who was chained to another artist for six months,  
one who was buried alive in a locker for a week,  
one who used leaves, pebbles, twigs and logs  
glued plates of spring ice together with his own spit  
into impressive towers until the temperature rose,  
one who dressed up dogs in cowboy outfits,  
one who painted with his own blood,  
one who submerged a crucifix in his own urine,  
one who canned his shit,  
one whose medium was firecrackers,  
one who hung from hooks and chewed the heads off live chickens,  
one who left mirrors in the jungle,  
one who photographed his friends sleeping,  
one who painted naked women sky blue  
and had them press their bodies against large canvasses  
in the company of crowds and a single silent soprano,  
one who made giant sewn giant sculptures of  
dog turds, cigarette butts, electric fans, hamburgers,  
baseball bats, rocket ships morphing into penis guns,  
one who photographed herds of hundreds of naked humans  
in capitol cities throughout the world,  
one who wrapped skyscrapers, bridges, historical buildings,  
islands, museums anything that was deemed unwrappable,  
one who invented and spent his own currency,

one who had multiple identity changing plastic surgeries,  
one who made audiences listen for hours to  
the sound of traffic, random tunings of the radio,  
one who filmed the empire state for 18 hours  
or people sleeping 'till they woke up,  
one who made sculptures of piles of violins, paperclips,  
typewriters, automobiles, telephones, museum admission buttons  
one who slit sharks and cows and pigs open,  
and neatly divided in pieces  
plunged them in formaldehyde and displayed them  
in clear plastic the same one putting the head of a steer  
in a glass enclosure with a colony of flies  
the decomposition and the explosion of maggots  
constituting the work in time the flies dying,  
the maggots breeding the steers head getting smaller,  
one who painted canvases of one color only,  
one who smashed plates and created portraits  
out of the multicolored shards of his friends and heroes,  
one who only photographed cadavers, microcephalics,  
hydrocephalics, amputees, dwarves and the deformed,  
one who told a lot of jokes and was a wit,  
one who remembered the prison camps  
and the prison of the moment,  
one who collected antique tea pots,  
one then one who wrote nothing painted nothing  
sculpted nothing conceived nothing  
had no desire for fame no desire for wealth  
only lived nothing more or less no need for grant  
galleries museums pop up installations no ties  
to collectors no ties to academies or art maggies  
and was content to call that ART

### **uncle eddy and the diving bell**

when i was a kid  
uncle eddy joined the navy on a dare  
he served under rollicking waves  
his hair was dark and wavy  
he managed to retire early  
an accomplished ballroom dancer  
he liked his motorcycles and his beer  
called his retirement checks 'gravy'  
when he died of cancer  
in his later years  
i pictured him last in my child's eye  
suited down in his diving bell  
jiggling like some hooked fish

eyes protesting and wide  
as the tube of air was cut  
leaving him free and clear  
to be slowly buried alive  
with plenty of time to enjoy the ride  
stream of his last frantic airs  
bubbles rising up  
from his lonely diving bell  
still there is no answer  
uncle eddy was in the navy  
his hair was dark and wavy  
he served under rollicking waves

### **a working man's philosophy**

we don't know where we're goin'  
we don't know how it's gonna be  
that's about the size of it my friend  
today however it's really snowin'  
in milwaukee anchorage and moosonee

### **confession**

bless me father for i have sinned  
i just had my newly canonized anus rimmed  
as she dipped her sacramental tongue  
into my joyous levitating rectal aperture  
she stroked my cock and pulled my balls  
with unscented vaseline-lotioned hands  
until we lost all track of the relic of a clock  
our entire pulsing apparatus sung and sung  
we made dog sounds cat sounds bird sounds too  
climbing the sweaty ladder to Everest rung by rung  
and then we came like virtuosi violins come unstrung  
we paused to pee and drink a glass of water down  
and when she asked if i might possibly consider more  
i locked the sacred motel door in that pilgrim town  
and i confess i heard an angel's voice that sounded  
just like mine but pleasure wise more grounded  
say why certainly of course good idea why not sure  
at which point her warm mouth smiling  
on my holy prick went righteously down  
like a saint lost in prayer before my tabernacle door  
bless me father for i have sinned

### **on a sunny saturday**

after i killed my father and my mother  
i killed my brother Pat, my sister Brett

and then the cats, canaries and the dogs,  
one horned toad, my fish and all the neighbors' pets  
with a tiny poisoned spear  
now that it's finally quiet around here  
i have only one regret  
while doing clean-up with the axe and knife  
i got a rather serious blood blister  
which hasn't fully healed just yet  
it stings like hell as i make this balsamic vinaigrette

**some modern art in munich**  
**september 1997**

**I**

a padded cell  
which admits no noise  
an anechoic chamber/stage  
with dentist's or surgical chair  
enter alone beware

**II**

a manic depressive  
quite insane cook  
the white mushroom of his hat  
slashed and gored  
bleeding mustard  
wearing the face of *mad magazine*  
alfred e. newman mad chef de luxe  
trapped in a cage of rooms  
he mutters autistically  
and stabs and mixes  
mayonnaise and ketchup  
he points to his penis  
and gestures obscenely  
cupping his hands below his soiled ass  
he weeps hysterically  
in a shaman trance of inane  
and endless violent action  
the viewers watch and laugh  
riveted as he stabs himself  
and deconstructs his bleeding kitchen world  
bad bad recipes  
bad bad boy

**III**

the photographer has framed

and polarized two worlds  
the old and new  
african women in ceremonial dress  
postcard images  
their bodies breasts and faces painted white  
leaving only smiles and smiling eyes  
transformed by white out to sinister and worse  
exploited the second time  
to reveal the first great slavery

"my little twin"  
with instructions for care  
original blond doll  
and matching dresses preserved  
she the slut mother  
transforming doll child into concubine  
and partner in crime  
both abused  
lipstick smudged mascara running  
turning bruises into cosmetics  
an inheritance of anger and rage  
turning the convention  
of madonna and child  
on its lewd ass

#### **IV**

a bridge over  
all the feeble packaging  
and pathetic residue  
of what we buy to entertain and prop us up  
from pots and porn to breast pumps and popcorn  
our time's rialto and bridge of tears  
looking down on all our junk and fears

#### **V**

maus museum  
the miniatures the inspiration  
souls for the monumentals  
all saved and resurrected  
hoarded hard and soft  
from plastic dog turds  
to clothes pins on tiny pedestals  
the aerial view revealing  
the gallery as mouse head  
with us walking through the brain



### **mary i luv u**

somewhere there's someone  
who loves mary  
so secretly so intensely  
that he was driven to write  
"mary i luv u"  
on a ground level billboard  
at the garden city station  
defacing an ad  
for new balance sneakers  
and just below his confession  
written no telling before or after  
another victim of unrequited love  
wrote jay is gay  
and loves mens (no apostrophe) buttocks  
spelling love  
right at least once  
on an ad for running shoes

### **night is always a giant**

over the seven seas  
under the bed of your childhood  
waits the dark colossus  
the moon his single eye  
the sky his blackened diaphragm  
the clouds a woolly mat  
of celestial hair on his cosmic chest  
the ocean's inward grumblings curl  
regular as digestion  
as tides of unwanted dreams  
yours and mine  
Chronos  
intent on consuming all beneath him  
on conquering the boastful sun's  
pathetic sparklings  
in the vast abscess of his open maw  
turning presence into absence  
swallowing every vestige of anemic light  
each glimmer a headless body  
all adventurers end their odyssey here  
heroes hanging on his pitch lips  
slipping down the starless chute  
of his tunneled gullet  
Chronos  
only his one eye sees

take note sanguine brave hearts  
salute his gleaming orb  
from the eternal pitch cave  
and call and sing and call  
to your dearest departed  
silently waiting one and all  
compose in what calm you find  
your final will and testament  
dark sonata to the moon's descent  
*on Goya's Chronos Devouring His Young*

## **REELS SURREAL – Toronto - 1970**

### **PENITENT ACCORDIONS**

SOME OF THE MOST GORGEOUS FAULTS OF AUTUMN LEAVES SHOW  
LIKE STAINS ON THE LAPELS OF CALIFORNIA SALT-CHOWDER AFFICIANADOS.  
OBELISKS. ONANISM. OLFATORY OMIVORES AND, NEARBY, ASTEROID  
ASHTRAYS AND AWFUL ALIMONIES ARE WITNESSES TO VINEGAR  
AND OLD URINE IN THE SAD DAY'S JAR. WOUNDS PRESERVED IN SALT TRY TO  
RECUPERATE. INEFFECTIVE AND INNEFABLE TONICS TITILLATINGLY CONSPIRE  
(NOT REALLY TO RESTORE) WITH ARROGANT DOCTORS TO GIVE NO MERCY TO ANYONE  
PLAYING POLO OR CROQUET OR TENNIS ON MANICURED LAWNS. BEFORE NOON WELL  
AFTER SLEPT-THROUGH DAWNS. GROGGY VESTIBULES. SOLO CYCLONES HUMMED  
LITTLE CELLULOID VIGNETTES AND THE DARKENED MACADAM BIRDS DELVED INTO  
THE COMMISSION BOX FOR LONGER LIFE AND SUGAR-SWEET TRACTORS PLOWING. IN  
THE outhouse THE SOUND OF PIGEON SPASMS MAKES EASIER EASTERS FOR TINY  
POOLS OF ECTOPLASM. EACH EGG SPROUTS LITTLE CHICKEN LEGS AND WALKS OUT OF  
THE DARKEST PARK INTO THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT.

### **THE POWER OF ANTS AND IMBECILES**

BRITTLE CLAWS AND MORAL PRINCIPLES HANGING FROM THE LAW'S JAWS  
LIKE FOOTBALL GEAR OR THE BUFFALO SABRE'S HELMETS IN SMELLY LOCKER  
ROOMS. A MILLION TUMS CALL ON THE VICISSITUDES OF FORTUNE TO BATTLE ON.  
WALKING STICKS AND GUCCI BAGS WAIT FOR THE PILE OF UNACQUAINTED INFERENCES.  
SOME PINK, SOME ORANGE, SOME CROCODILIAN. MONEY UNDERSTIMATES THE ROSE  
AND FECULENT COOL WATERS. FAMOUS GRASSHOPPERS OF ALL COUNTRIES HAVE  
CONTEMPT FOR ART IN THE SHADOW OF THEIR READERS, EAT CAT THISTLES UNDER  
BANKS OF SPOTLESS REPUTATIONS. THE SULKY SUN GOES DOWN LIKE A DROWNING  
MOB OF HOMICIDAL CLOWNS REDEFINING COULROPHOBIA.

### **GNAWED NUDES**

IN SUMMER, THEIR SERRATED CROSSINGS ROBBED OF THEIR EDGE,

THE GREAT GENERATIONS OF EARLY AMERICAN NUDES WENT TO EUROPE TO TEACH MANICURISTS NATURAL ILLUSIONS AND GOSPEL HYMNS. BURMESE CAT FRESCOES WERE DOMINANT. LIVE LOBSTER WALKING WAS ALL THE RAGE. EVERYONE SIGNED CHECKS WITH THEIR LANCES BLOTTED WITH POWDER FROM BUTERFLY WINGS. THE INEXHAUSTIBLE FURNITURE OF THEIR INTERIOR ALCHEMIES WAS EVIDENCED IN BEEHIVES AND BILLIARD TABLES, CAST-IRON WORKSHOP SCULPTURES, OLD PERSIAN CARPETS, BRONZE ZEN RAZOR BLADES OR GORILLA SLEDS SENT THE HELMET-HEADED DOMESTICS HOWLING BACK INTO THE MOONLIT, MISTY WOODS. THE IMPERIALISTS FINALLY BOWED DOWN, KOWTOWED TO A CELEBRATION OF OUTDATED TOASTERS. AN UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT IN THE SHAPE OF A PUMPKIN SMILE HUNG BAUBLE-LIKE ABOVE STARLIT MARINAS REFLECTED IN THE CADMIUM-YELLOW EYES OF A CAT NAMED ALCATRAZ AND HER BLACK MATE ABRACADABRA.

### **COURAGEOUS UMBRELLAS**

RAINDROPS BIG AND GREEN AS BULLFROGS SOUGHT LODGING IN TEAPOT MOTELS OF EXECUTIVE LAPELS AND HERMES PURSES. IN ALL THE DRIVE-INS WITH THEIR FAUX-WORN DENIMS AND PAISLEYS, THEIR PLAID, MADRAS JACKETS AND HOLIDAY-INN BERMUDA SHORTS, UULATED UNANIMOUSLY. FAMOUS LONGITUDES WONDERED WHAT PHASE OF THE MOON WAS MOOING UNDER THE VAST SPARKLING BARN OF STARS IN NIGHT'S FUNNEL LIKE A BLACK FEED SACK POKED THROUGH BY ICE PICKS IN A DARK ROOM ILLUMINED BY ARMIES OF BRIGHTEST FLASHLIGHTS HELD IN THE HANDS OF SUDDENLY-CURIOUS CAMPER. CHOIRS AND CRIMINALS TUMBLE THROUGH ABBEY STAIRWELLS OF INCORRIGIBLE, SECOND-TENOR TINTERETOS.

### **MONTAUK DOG BROOMS**

BUSTER BROWN FUR DOMES ALONG THE WHARF BORDERED BY MILITARY PARADES OF TURQUOISE AND DARKEST CELANDINE SNAP-DRAGONS. BROWN SUGAR AND SAWDUST NODULES STINKING OF DUSKY CREEKS CREPT INTO THURBER'S WAR OF THE SEXES. MEMORIAL PARK TO DOGS NOSING SMALL BUGS EMPTYING INTO CULTURAL FISSURES UNEXPLORED BY ARROGANT CRITICS. AND THEN SAND, OCEAN SAND. UNDER THE BOARD WALK. UNDER THE BROAD WALK. AND THE BLEACHED-GRAY, SPLINTERED BOARDWALK. THE WINDING-TO-SOME-MISTY-VANISHING-POINT BOARDWALK.

RAMPANT DOG BROOMS LITTLE SPECS OF LONG-GONE TOURIST DUST AND THE EVERYDAY LITTER OF HALF-EATEN FRENCH FRIES, SPLATS OF KETCHUP, TEENAGERS' SPUNK TRAILS AND A GROUCHY SETTING SUN. ROOTBEER. HOTDOGS ON TRAYS WITH THAT SPECIAL LONG ISLAND MUSTARD AND THE SMELL OF CLAMS FRYING. SAND EVERYWHERE. THE WORD "BEACH" STANDS CAMEO-NEON-STILL LIKE DOGS SMELLING THE OCEAN AIR. IN OUR EARS IS THE RHYTHM OF THE SURF AND TIDES AND THE VOLTAGE OF BIG SHIPS APPEARING SMALL ON THE HORIZON AS LITTLE BIRDS LEAVE ZIPPER TRACKS IN THE WET SAND THAT ARE ERASED BY WAVES AFTER WAVES, REWRITTEN AND ERASED AGAIN.

A CREAKY OLD MAN MINING THE BEACH FOR SMALL CHANGE AND BURIED ENGAGEMENT RINGS WITH HIS BEEPING METAL DETECTOR REALIZES HE FORGOT TO WATCH THE SUN COLLAPSE AND PRAY *BUENOS NOCHES* OVER THE DARK, CORDUROY-BLUE HORIZON. ONE UGLY CHIHUAHUA, TONGUE LIKE A PINK LASAGNA NOODLE LADELING DOWN OUT OF THE SIDE OF HIS MOUTH LOOKS LOST, PERPLEXED, STUPEFIED SEARCHING FOR A DAY-GLO TENNIS BALL WHICH HAS DRIFTED FAR, FAR OUT ON THE TIDE. HIS MASTER, A SMALL BLACK DOT AT THE FARTHEST END OF THE BEACH. THE SURFACE OF THE SEA IS A GARGANTUAN TIGER SKIN – TANGERINE, ORANGE, BLACK

AND TURQUOISE WAVELETS DANCING SEDUCTIVELY TOGETHER IN SOME TANTALIZING OCEANIC TANGO.

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM, BOOM, GO THE WAVES BEATING THE CRAP OUT OF DRIFT WOOD, DEFLATED WEATHER BALOONS, MANY FRACTURED SHELLS, THE GUTTED HUSKS OF HORSESHOE CRABS, SOAKED SEAGULL FEATHERS AND WAY TOO MANY, MONSTROUS FRAGMENTS OF INAPPROPRIATE STYROFOAM.

MR. NIGHT AND MRS. END OF THE WORLD TEXT ONE ANOTHER: *NITEY NITE. DON'T LET THE BED BUGS BITE. HAVE A GOOD SLEEPY SLEEP, SWEETHEART!*

BREATHING AT THE VERY FARTHEST REACHES OF THE HORIZON, AS KING OCEAN ELEGANLY RISES AND FALLS, IS A SMALL LOBSTER TRAWLER SEEN, THEN NOT SEEN. ONE LIGHT AT THE TIPPY TOP OF ITS MAST BLINKS ON AND OFF HOPING AND IMPLOING THE NEW MOON AND VENUS TO RISE UP AND SHINE. ENUF.

### **SALT PORK IN THE LADIES WASHROOM**

GRAND MALL CLITORIS ENVY. THE EROTIC GHOSTS OF THE RECTAL TEAM. TRANSVESTITE LESBIAN GAY AND STRAIGHT SEX CAUSE BURNT PENISES TO GROAN. INSPIRE ALL TO LICK FACE AND HANDS AND THIGHS AND EXHAUSTED PUT ON GARLIC PEDAL PUSHERS AND FLY TO ST. BARTS. PRETTY DRUNK STEMS OF PAPERWHITES DECAPITATED IN STALE CAFETERIAS BOW DOWN TO CHIPPED BEEF AND RUBBERY FRENCH TOAST. SUCH LANGUID APSIRATIONS ASPRING TO THE CONDITION OF MUSIC AND MACARRONI THAT EVEN BEST FRIENDS AND THE NOTION OF FRIENDSHIP AND TRUEST LOVE ARE CALLED INTO QUESTION.

ARMED ROBBERY AND BIBLES IN THE REAL MESS OF CENTURIES OF WHITES BLACKS YELLOWS REDS TANS AND GRAYS ARE DELIVERED LIKE PERFECT PIZZAS AND LAND COLD ON DOORSTEPS MAKING RESIDENTS WONDER ABOUT THE MEANING OF DREAMS. THERE ARE SOME MIDGET ANTHROPOLOGISTS WANDERING IN THE CLOAKROOM EXPERIENCING TWINGES OF SIZE GUILT BUT KNOWING THE POWER OF BLUE CANOES. SILVER PONTIAC COLLECTIBLES FROM THE 50s ARE HEADING TO CAR WASHES EVERYWHERE FOLLOWED BY A LONG BORING LIST OF LONG LOST ONE-HOUR PARKING SIGNS.

THE UNIVERSE IS SINGING THE BLUE POTATOES BLUES AND GIVES NO CREDENCE TO THE PUTRID REHASHED SAME OLD BLAH-BLAH STORIES OF THE PRESS AND FAT-ASSED POLITICIANS. CONCEPTUAL CATS LEGS UP ARE LEAVING THEIR MARKS ON THE CELLAR DOORS OF CONVENTIONAL WISDOM AND THE NEGATIVES OF BESTIAL ARROGANCE. THE BLACK AND SPRY AND EMPY CLOUDS OF FLASHING GALLSTONE TATOOS SEE AT LAST THE TURQUOISE PYTHONS OF OLYMPIC ENLIGHTENMENT. PEACE ON EARTH. AND ONLY COMPASSION. DEEPEST COMPASSION FOR ALL LIVING BEINGS ALWAYS PRECIOUS AT EACH BIGGIE'S TO SMALL'S BEGINNINGS MIDDLES AND ENDS. STOOL FOP. FULL STOP.

### **PASTURIZED FLAMINGOES**

IF YOU REMEMBER STRAWBERRY MILK AND FLAVOR STRAWS, YOU HAVE A GREAT FEELING FOR PINK FEATHERS, LONG LEGS, NECKS AND POWERFUL WINGS MIGRATING TO DISTANT DESERT FLATS.

WHEN SHE PUT THE MEXICAN BEEF PATTY BETWEEN HER DIFFUSE AND LIGHTLY ORCHID THIGHS, IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH SIZE. TOGETHER THEY INVESTED IN AND INVENTED A LOIN FROM ELLIOT: "O THAT SHAKESPEAREAN RAG!" RAGE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT OTHER THAN SERVING AS AN EXOTIC SPICE. COMPOUNDED BY THE WEIRD DREAM OF T.S. ELLIOT IN BOOTEES CROUCHED BEHIND A VICTORIAN COUCH

TAKING NOTES FOR HIS ANOMIE. BAWLING LIKE A BALD COYOTE UNDER A BLUE SICKLE MOON.

IN THE LITERARY CANON'S BORING BED PARLOR AND RED-LEATHER ARMCHAIRS LISTENED TO THE FLOW OF ARCHETYPAL CANYON PEEPEE AS THE SELF-CONGRATULATORY AND POMPOUS ACADEMIC ASSES WATCHED THEIR OPINIONS GROW. THEIR BORED AND BROAD FOREHEADS IN THE BRIGHT BIRD-PINK LIGHT, CONFUSED ABOUT WHAT WAS WRONG OR RIGHT, DECIDED AND DERIDED THE NOTION OF COJONES. BUT THEY MISSED A LOT. AS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE SHADOWS OF EXPENSIVE BABY CARRIAGES AT SUNSET IN WELL MOWN PARKS OR THE WAY THE TREE SHADOWS ON THE CARRIAGE GREEN GONE BLACK AND HORIZONTAL AT DUSK JUST BEFORE DROP OF DARK. AND THE MEMORY OF INSTITUTIONAL HOWLING AND THOSE MAGICAL EXPLOSIONS OF STRIKES WHEN BOWLING PINS VANQUISHED BROUGHT US BACK. BACK TO THE PARROT'S NAVEL AND THE SMELL OF SAWDUST AND JUST-CUT WOOD. BROUGHT US BACK TO THE BRAZILIAN COMFORT OF WARM ALPACA RAIN AND WATER RESISTANT SHAWLS. TIME AND TIME AND TIME BACK AND BACK AGAIN. LIKE A TOOTH IN PAIN.

### **STRAUS AND BALLROOM ROLLERSKATING IN VIENNA**

OOMPAH, OOMPAH, OOMPAH. SKATING PAST VARNISHED FLOORS, GOLD-GILDED WAINSCOTTING AND BESPOKE CARVED DOORS. PAST ARCHITECTURAL FOLLIES AND FLOURISHES. AN ARCAINE FORM OF DATING WAS THE CONVENTION OF THE SILLY SCHNITZEL-RICH AND THEIR MUCH-PRACTICED-BAROQUE-BARBECUE DANCE. MINUTE MINUETS. OUTSIDE FROZEN RIVERS AND STAND ON STANDS OF RUSSIAN BIRCHES. INSIDE THEY PRANCED. INSIDE MUSTACSHIOED LORDS. HOARDS AND BEVIES OF LARGE-BREASTED COUNTESSSES. NOT TOO MANY BUT SURELY A FEW WHORES. FORCING COUNTS WITH CERTAIN ITCHES TO BEHAVE LIKE LOUTS AND OR BORES. ALL THAT VIENNESE HUMAN 'PASTRY' OFF THE SHELVES, ON DISPLAY, SET ADRIFT. CHOCOLATE IMBROGLIOS MANUFACTURED FOR LANDED GENTRY BIG-MONIED CREEPS. A KIND OF INHERITED GENETIC GIFT. SOCIETY'S, SOCIETIES' LURCHING CHURCHES OF TIME AND LIFE AND PRESSURES TO COMPLY PASSING, SPEEDING BY. A KIND OF APOPLECTIC TIC AS EACH AND EVERY ROBIN CHEEPS AND TOCKS. ALL THAT TOO-SWEET CRAP NOW CLEARLY A CULTURAL ELECTRIC BAGGAGE. THEIR MUSIC, THAT MUSIC AN OLD WORLD INSIPID VERSION OF TODAY'S EQUALLY INSIPID RAP. WISH THERE WERE AN ADAGE. THEN INSTEAD WE COULD CHARGE INSTEAD OF BY THE FLIMSY WORD, BY FULL-COLOR PAGE.

### **SPRING STILETTOS**

THE FONDUE OF MUDDY BOOTS AND UPRISINGS OF CELADINE SHOOTS. THE FLASHING NEWS TRAIL AND TRIALS OF COMA BERENICES AND CANES VENATICI MAKING BEE LINES FOR LEO MAJOR AND LEO MINOR. SUDDEN FIREFLIES TURN DULL SWAMPS INTO TIMES SQUARES. NEON GEESE SHOP FOR PEEPER'S IN THEIR SHOPPING CARTS.

SUDDENLY GREEN IS NO LONGER EXCLUSIVE BUT THE ONLY THING TO WEAR. POND ICE CREEPS AWAY FROM SHORLINES AND JOINS UP WITH WHITE MEMORIES OF FROZEN LACE AND GONE FROST TREES. TADPOLES WIGGLE WAGGLE IN THE SHALLOWS. GREEN SLIME AND DUCK WEED CEEBRATE NATIONAL DUCK WEEK.

THE LOAF OF NIGHT IS SLICED BY THE KNIFE OF SUN. DISAPPEARING LIKE LARGE RED ANTS ON THE RUN FROM LEFTOVER PIZZA BOXES. DAY BREAKS WITH BATTALIONS OF SILENT SUN DOGS ALL OUT TO PLAY LOOKING FOR FUN. BUM SNIFFERS ALL SNIFFING ONE ANOTHER'S BUMS. OLD BONES MADE NEW EMERGE FROM THE SAME COLD SEASON'S OLD TURNING ZOO MADE SPANKING NEW.

SILENT RUSTED TYPWRITERS NO LONGER TYPE IN THE GALLEYS OF SUNKEN BOATS. RAINDROPS SKIP, SKIMP AND DIMPLE PONDS OF PUDDLES. WARM WINDS MYSTERIOUSLY MUDDLE ALL. SOMWHERE DOWN A LONG DARK HALL SWEATY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN TOO-HOT CLASS ROOMS SQUIRM IN THEIR CHAIRS VAGUELY SMELLING SUMMER VACATON'S CALL.

THEIR TINY FARTS' SMALL MINI-SONIC BOOMS ADD TO THE OPENING BUDS OF BUSHES AND TREES. ALL IN ALL DAME BLOSSOM'S CASTING CALL PROVES MORE THAN ANY AND ALL CAN HANDLE. EVERY FLOWER OPENS UP TO FAME WANTS TO BE A SHOW STOPPER A STAR. A HALF A MILLION DOLLAR LUXURY CAR. AND THEN THE MIRACLE OF WARM SPRING SHOWERS BOWER, FLOWERS, MINUTES AND HOURS.

### **THE WASTED AMBROSIA OF FLOWERS**

LONE FOG PHANTOMS ROSE OVER GREAT CORAL BEDS AND OCEANS' SANDS. SUN ON HORIZON A GREAT BALL OF PHOENIX FLAME. BREADCRUMBS AND EGGSHELLS AND SEA SHELLS AND THE GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL'S CRY. FEATHERS IN THE SURF. WAVES AND THE SOFT THUNDERS OF THE EVENING TIDE. HOW CAN ANYONE SLEEP NEAR YOU AT YOUR SIDE BY THE PILLOW OF YOUR DREAM-LIKE FLOW WITHOUT FROM JOY NEEDING TO CRY.

KNOWING NOTHING LASTS, NOTHING STANDS. YOU BEAUTIFUL, DELICATE ONES RIPE AS A GREAT GRUYERE. DEEP AS A SUBTLE, PREMIER CRU CABERNET. SALT IN OUR TEARS. SALT IN OUR EYES. INTO SALT BLOCKS THOSE LOOKING OR TURNING BACK. SALT TO ACCENTUATE THE INSIGNIFICANT ARROGANT I. THE EYE'S VIOLIN, THE CELLOS, THE ANTIGENS, THE OLD LIFE OF BOURBON JARS AND JELLY BEANS AND RIPPED GENES SO AGILE IN THE HIDDEN PALM OF SOME SILENT CREATOR'S HANDS SEASON AFTER SEASON DOUBLE BACK. CLASIC CARS, SACRED XANAX, VIGILANT VODKAS AND XERXES RISE SHIMMERING IN EACH DAY'S JELLOS. SCINTILLATIONS ON SCINTILATIONS AND THE HAUNTING VIOLET SHADE OF SUMMER AFTERNOONS. LIGHT'S CLUTCHING XYLOPHONES AND STALACTITES DRIPPING POINTEDLY. RADIANT CARTOONS ON SUMMER AFTER MANY SUMMERS' PURPLE LAWNS AND AFTERNOONS.

SENSATIONS, INCRIMINATIONS AND JOY'S AND SADNESS'S DAILY INFESTATIONS. INTERVENTIONS ON INTERVENTIONS. NO SHADOWS ON THE VIOLENT CHALK BOARD OF VIOLET COVERED-WAGON CLOUDS. BENZODIOZAPENES KICKING IN AS ANCHOVY PASTE, VIRGIN OLIVE AND LEMON IN A ROBUST PUTANESCA SAUCE. PACKETS OF SUNSHINE PASSED OUT IN TOUR BUSES. ON A BED OF THINLY SHREDDED SUNDOWN WITH CARROT, BEET AND CABBAGE SKIES. THE TUTELEGE, THE TURTLE PACE OF DUST WHISKS THE DOVE'S BREAST PRISM-CLEAN TO SHOW A DESERT HOME OF TRUST AND GEORGIA O'KEEFE'S VISION OF LONELINESS. THE SO-PURPLE DESERT DUSK. IN THE GREAT EYE, THE EYE OF SOME GREAT ONE, ALL THE SMARTEST TOYS KNOW WHY. AND THEN AND THEN THE OPEN, STRAIGHT-FACED SKY THAT NEVER TELLS A LIE.

EVERYTHING BUILT TO RELISH AS MATISSE DID HIS GOLDEN-ORANGE FISH. THE SENSE OF BEING SOLITARY IN ONE'S OWN BONES. STAY THERE. REST THERE. OWN THERE. YOUR PLACE. GREEN WATERS. DIAMOND JELLY. TRUE ALCHEMY. PETALS OF STEEL. WASTED FLOWERS. WASTED AMONIA FLOWERS. JOHN BARLEYCORN FLOWER TO GROUND FLOUR IS BORN A HOLY BREAD.

THE SECONDS, MINUTES, HOURS. THE DAYS, THE MONTHS THE YEARS. THE ALTO-JESUS-BLOOD-RED-WINE OF OUR SHORT-LIVED FEARS. THE FADING NOWS, THE FADING WHYS, THE RETURNING POWERS OF STARS AND CONSTELLATIONS IN THE NIGHT-DARK SKIES. KAPOW! SHAZZAM! AS IN THE PAINTED COMIC-BOOK RHYMES OF ROY LIECHTENSTEIN. THE FRAGILE INARTICULATE AND THE MOST ARTICULATE

CARTOON OF NOW. THE WHEEL OF DAYS TURNING US ON OUR HEELS.

O DEAREST GIRLS. O BEST BOYS. EACH OF THOSE WE LOVE. IN THE HEADLIGHTS OF LOST YEARS SEE THE DANCING FIGURES ON THE GRECIAN URNS. SEE THE HERDS OF ANCIENT BEASTS LEAPING ON LASCAUX'S CLAY-RED WALLS. SAVOR AND BURN BRIGHT. O BEAUTIFUL ONES, EACH AND ALL, YOU YOUR OWN BEST AND TRUEST BOOKS. REST WELL, READ YOUR OWN TALES GENTLY AND WELL. FIND SOME PEACE IN INSIDE YOUR HEADS. SO SAY THE WASTED AMBROSIA OF FLOWERS TO US. EVER UNFAILING. FOREVER THUS.